

DREF operation update



Nicaragua: Floods

DREF operation n° MDRNI003
GLIDE n° FL-2010-000106-NIC
Update n° 1
16 November 2010

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) 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 emergency response. 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: 17 September to 27 October 2010.

Summary: 242,122 Swiss francs were allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 17 September 2010 to support the Nicaraguan Red Cross (NRC) in delivering assistance to some 1,000 families (5,000 beneficiaries).

After Tropical Storm Agatha struck Nicaragua, the country was affected by continuous rains, increasing the impact on the population. More than 71,000 people are affected, of whom 9,904 are living in collective centres. As of the reporting period, the Nicaraguan Red Cross has reached 621 families with relief items and more than 500 with psychosocial support.



The community of Las Avellanas, Managua department, Tipitapa municipality received relief items on 1 October 2010. Photo source: Nicaraguan Red Cross.

This DREF update reflects the addition of the León, Chinandega and Jinotega departments as target areas for relief distributions. Some communities within the initial four target departments were restricted for access only by the military forces; therefore, the National Society is targeting affected households in other departments.

This operation is expected to be implemented in 3 months, and completed by 17 December 2010. In line with IFRC reporting standards, the Final Report (narrative and financial) is due 90 days after the end of the operation (by 17 March 2011).

The Canadian Red Cross contributed 30,000 Canadian dollars; the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) contributed 20,000 Canadian dollars; the Netherlands Red Cross contributed 20,000 euro and ECHO contributed 127,400 euro to the DREF, replenishing 100 per cent of the allocation made for this operation. 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>

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The situation

Heavy rains continued to fall in Nicaragua after Tropical Storm Agatha struck the country. More than 71,000 people are affected and 66 have died, including five members of the Nicaraguan Red Cross and a journalist who were delivering relief items to affected communities. Official numbers state that 9,904 people are living in collective centres while the Managua Lake has not yet returned to its normal levels. In its auxiliary role to the government, the National Society is supporting the collective centres in Estelí and Managua.

In addition, a health emergency has arisen. On 28 September, while rain continued, the Nicaraguan government declared a health alert related to the possible increase of dengue, leptospirosis, diarrheic diseases and pneumonia. Two weeks later, on 16 October the alert became a state of emergency and to date there are 395 confirmed cases of leptospirosis and 16 deaths in 15 departments around the country. Currently, the government is providing prophylaxis treatment to a target population which according to a local newspaper¹, is of 1.8 million people. The National Society has not received a formal request for support from the government in light of this emergency.

Coordination and partnerships

The National Society and the IFRC country delegation hosted five coordination meetings with members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in the country. Several Partner National Societies are supporting the NRC in the operation. The Canadian Red Cross and the Netherlands Red Cross contributed to the replenishment of the DREF allocation. In addition, the Spanish Red Cross (SRC) is supporting with transportation, fuel and equipment. A water and sanitation Emergency Response Unit delegate from the SRC evaluated the National Society's water purification plants. Finally, the IFRC mobilized two Regional Intervention Team members (RITs), one for disaster management and one for reporting and Communications to support the strengthening of the National Society.

There is also external coordination with local authorities and the Ministry of Health. Local authorities participated in the damage and needs assessments, and are guaranteeing security within the communities. Constant communication is ensured with the Ministry of Health concerning the epidemiological situation in the country and the response actions which have taken place.

Public information and media: The press department of the NRC is active in the promotion of the National Society's activities and the impact has been high in the general population. The National Society carries visibility material during operations and journalists have joined the crew during distributions. As of the reporting period, interviews have taken place and newspaper articles written by: Tu Nueva Radio Ya, Canal 10, Canal 8, Canal 11, Diario Hoy, Estéreo ABC, CANAL 49, Dinámica de Jinotega, El Nuevo Diario, Radio la primerísima, Radio Mi Favorita, TV CANAL 6, Radio Atena, Veritas estéreo, Estéreo ABC, CANAL 49, Dinámica de Jinotega, Radio San Cristóbal, Digital TV canal 49 and Radio Yes. A photo and media archive will be available soon.



Mi Nuevo Diario had press coverage during operations in San Gabriel community, Jinotega Department on 16 October 2010. Photo source: Nicaraguan Red Cross.

The National Congress has acknowledged the service and efforts of the NRC to the country, the President of the Republic granted the title of humanitarian heroes to the volunteers who died whilst delivering assistance, and their families have been assigned a monthly stipend as support.

¹ <http://www.laprensa.com.ni/2010/10/26/nacionales/41784>

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Even though there was a small pause in NRC activities due to the death of their volunteers in the accident of 2 October, around 60 per cent of the beneficiaries assessed have received relief items and more than 500 families have benefited with psychosocial support to date.

Progress towards outcomes

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)
<p>Outcome: The impact of rains and floods on the livelihoods and food security of 1,000 vulnerable families in the Boaco, Managua, Chinandega, León, Jinotega, Granada and Matagalpa departments is reduced.</p>
<p>Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,000 families in the departments of Boaco, Managua, Chinandega, León, Jinotega, Granada and Matagalpa have their basic nutritional needs covered for a period of one month through the provision of food parcels. • 1,000 families in the departments of Boaco, Managua, Chinandega, León, Jinotega, Granada and Matagalpa are assisted to return to normalcy through the provision of non-food relief items
<p>Activities planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct rapid emergency needs and capacity assessments. • Develop beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system to deliver intended assistance. • Distribute food and non-food relief supplies and control supply movements from point of dispatch to target families. • Monitor and evaluate the relief activities and provide reporting on relief distributions.

Progress: The first phase of relief distribution ended after reaching 621 families, about 60 per cent of the intended target.

After coordination meetings with national and local authorities, the NRC revised its intended target, as some communities within the target departments had restricted access only to the military forces. The first phase of the programmed relief distributions took place in the departments of Boaco, Managua, Chinandega, León, Jinotega and Matagalpa. The table below details the items distributed in each area. Currently, the National Society is revising the list of communities affected in order to prioritize the families to be reached during the second phase of distributions to take place as of late October.

Department	Date of distribution	Families reached	Food Parcels	Hygiene Kits	Kitchen Kits	Tarpaulins	Mosquito Nets (2/fam)	Blankets (3/fam)	Jerry cans (2/fam)
León	14 Oct	70	70	70	70	0	140	210	140
Chinandega	18 Oct	163	163	163	163	163	326	489	326
Jinotega	15-16 Oct	31	31	31	31	0	62	93	62
Matagalpa	15-16 Oct	108	108	108	108	0	216	324	216
Managua	1 Oct	114	114	114	114	114	228	342	228
Boaco	2 and 19 Oct	135	135	135	135	135	270	405	270
TOTAL		621	621	621	621	412	1,242	1,863	1,242

The DREF covered two blankets and the additional one was provided by the National Society. On 27 October 2010, the second phase of distribution started in the department Granada delivering food and non-food relief items for 53 families living in shelters. The NRC-Granada branch will distribute 13 more packages of relief items to affected families living in islands in the Nicaragua River.

Challenges: On 2 October, volunteers of the NRC and accompanying journalists distributed relief items to communities in the Boaco department. On their way back from distribution, an unexpected flash flood caught two of their vehicles with 11 people inside. Unfortunately, only five of them could be rescued. The loss of four of their companions and a journalist, together with significant material losses, had a deep impact on the National Society. For many days, they focused their efforts on comforting the families of the deceased volunteers and reassessing their resources, and the relief distribution efforts slowed down for a period of

some two weeks. During the accident, a truck and an ambulance, as well as relief items and money were lost. The NRC will issue a complete report on the incident and losses.

Emergency health and psychosocial support

Outcome 1: Prevention and control of transmissible diseases amongst target families in community shelters have improved.

Outcome 2 The effects of stress in members of families living in emergency community shelters are reduced.

Output:

Members of target families living in three emergency community shelters receive talks on how to prevent waterborne epidemics and psychosocial support.

Activities planned:

- Improve sanitation and ensure hygiene promotion with the epidemics control tool for families living in three emergency community shelters in Tipitapa.
- Provide psychosocial support to children living in three emergency community shelters in Tipitapa.

Progress: The psychosocial support activities are being carried out successfully, reducing the effect of stress in the families living in collective centres. The DREF funds enabled the National Society to work with 60 families in the Estelí municipality and with 360 families in Tipitapa. The NRC also plans to reach 265 additional families in the Condega municipality outside of this DREF allocation. In total, nineteen volunteers are working to reach four collective centres. Estelí and Condega are both located in the department of Estelí, while Tipitapa is a municipality within Managua.

Through games, paintings and group sessions, children are learning to identify risks and to express their emotions and fears, as well as hopes, in regards to their communities.

Additionally, mothers in the centres received diverse talks on family health care, as well as educational materials on HIV, reproductive health, breastfeeding and personal hygiene. Posters with information were also fixed on the centres' walls.



Children in collective centres are receiving psychosocial support to help them cope in a healthy manner with the changes and losses suffered. Photo source: Nicaraguan Red Cross.

Although the DREF did not have an outcome on water and sanitation, the continuous assessment showed an increased need for water services in Chinandega. Thus, the National Society decided to deploy a National Intervention Team member specialized in health to assess situation.

Currently, the NRC also has the support of a Spanish Red Cross ERU water and sanitation delegate who is in the country to assess the 10 one-thousand-litres water treatment plants owned by the National Society (donated to the National Society by the SRC during previous emergencies). The delegate will also train NRC volunteers to improve their recently formed water and sanitation unit. They are working in coordination with the local office of the water plant supplier to develop a budget to make the water treatment plants operational, as some of them require different levels of repair and maintenance.

Challenges and changes: The health department of the NRC is reassessing how to continue the psychosocial support activities and the implementation of health and hygiene promotion activities to meet the new needs regarding the incidence of leptospirosis. Currently, the health coordinator is in constant communication with the national health authorities to guarantee understanding of the actions taken to prevent the spread of the illness. The National Society will add preventive and awareness activities regarding leptospirosis while carrying out the scheduled psychosocial and hygiene promotion work.

Moreover, after the accident on 2 October, the psychosocial activities with the affected population living in centres was interrupted. At that time, psychological support focused on the relatives of the accident victims,

as well as on the affected Red Cross youth of the Boaco branch and on the National Society's personnel. However, the activities within the collective centres have now resumed.

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 \(NGO's\) 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.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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