

Operations update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Nepal: Potential diarrhoea outbreak

Emergency appeal n° MDRNP004
Operations update n°2
10 June 2010

**Period covered by this
Operation Update: 27 May
2010 to 9 June 2010.**

Appeal target (current):
CHF 738,960 (USD 664,175
or EUR 527,232).

Appeal coverage: With
contributions received to
date, the appeal is 12.6 per
cent covered in cash and
kind. Funds are urgently
needed to support the Nepal
Red Cross Society operation
in reducing the risk of a
diarrhoea outbreak in the
vulnerable districts of Nepal.

Appeal history:

- This Emergency Appeal was launched on 13 May 2010 seeking CHF 738,960 (USD 664,175 or EUR 527,232) in cash, kind, or services to support the Nepal Red Cross Society to assist 189,000 beneficiaries for nine months in seven districts of Jajarkot, Rukum, Achham, Dadeldhura, Bajura, Baitadi and Bajhang.
- CHF 200,000 (USD 179,855 or EUR 142,718) was allocated from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support this operation



The Water and Sanitation Kit 2 was deployed from Kuala Lumpur in the first two weeks of the operation and a two-day training was organized for the Nepal Red Cross Society by the Asia Pacific water and sanitation coordinator on 3-4 June. Photo: Nepal Red Cross Society.

Summary:

Over the past few weeks, diarrhoea cases have been increasing in remote districts of the mid- and far-western regions of Nepal with the start of the monsoon season. The latest reports from the government's Epidemiology and Disease Control Division (EDCD) of the Department of Health Services indicate that 21 deaths and 609 cases of infection have been registered to date. In Baitadi district, a localized outbreak was reported with three diarrhoea-related deaths and 109 new cases recorded, doubling the original number.

Among those worst affected were children and the elderly. The government is on high alert and has given instructions to all district health offices (DHO) to be well prepared for further outbreaks.

Considering the situation, further funds are urgently needed to scale up the national society's efforts for reducing the risk of potential outbreaks in the vulnerable mid- and far- western remote districts where the Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) is the only operational organization.

Key activities undertaken during the reporting period are as follows:

- Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) coordinators for all seven districts were given a one-day orientation on the operation, working procedures and media/communications and have been deployed to the districts.
- NRCS district chapters, in coordination with the WASH cluster and district disaster relief committees (DDRC), have identified the target village district committees (VDCs) within each district and are currently selecting WASH mobilisers for each VDC.
- Procurement of the diarrhoea prevention kits, information, education, communication (IEC) materials and volunteer visibility material has commenced.
- The Water and Sanitation Kit 2 arrived in Nepal from the International Federation regional logistics warehouse in Kuala Lumpur and a two-day orientation was provided to 20 participants from NRCS headquarters and some districts. Relief materials from the kit will be repackaged and deployed to Baitadi district.
- A series of one-day orientation sessions for district chapters and a three-day day emergency WASH training for staff and volunteers are ongoing, involving 21 participants from all seven districts. WASH mobilizers and local NRCS volunteers will also be trained in the coming weeks.
- A baseline survey questionnaire has been jointly developed and translated by members of the WASH cluster at the central level and will be undertaken jointly with partners in the affected districts during June.
- A detailed plan of action for the next eight weeks of the operation has been developed, which takes into account the current level of funds available.
- A monitoring and evaluation plan has been finalized and a training plan has also been drafted.
- Terms of reference for an interdepartmental coordination committee for quality assurance and technical assistance is being drafted and will be shared with senior management and concerned departments.
- National Sanitation Week (5-11 June) will be used as a further opportunity for mass awareness raising in affected districts by NRCS together with efforts from DDRCs and the WASH cluster.

This operation is expected to be implemented over nine months, and will therefore be completed by 13 February 2011. A final report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 13 May 2011). Partners which made contributions to the appeal to date include the American Red Cross, Japanese Red Cross and Spanish Red Cross.

The International Federation, on behalf of the Nepal Red Cross Society, would like to thank all partners for their generous response to this appeal.

The situation

The increasing number of reported diarrhoea cases across the country and confirmed deaths has triggered concerns in Nepal, which faces an outbreak of diarrhoea every year due to unsafe hygiene practices, open defecation and lack of access to safe drinking water. The peak of diarrhoea outbreaks usually occur during the monsoon period when higher temperatures and heavy rains increase the spread of water-borne diseases.

With the onset of monsoon, there have already been reports of 21 deaths in the mid- and far- western districts and a total of 608 reported cases of infection including some 300 cases between April and May; however it is estimated that the total number of cases is under-reported. The diarrhoea situation has also been gaining more attention over the past two weeks, with mass media reporting a higher number of cases. Ghetma village district committees (VDC) in Rukum district reported in more than 100 diarrhoea cases within a week. This same VDC

was severely affected by the outbreak in 2009 and it is anticipated that more communities and districts are at risk of a similarly rapid spread of diarrhoea, as has been seen in previous years.

Similar to the experience of 2009, all deaths reported this year have been the elderly and children, and have occurred in homes. Poor infrastructure and difficult access to health services in remote districts continue to pose great challenges for remote communities. This is particularly so for marginalized groups and for those whose traditional beliefs and practices discourage them from seeking medical treatment. Although the current situation is not officially declared as an outbreak, it has triggered the concern of the government, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations and the media to act more rapidly this year. Further, all kinds of support is highly appreciated to prevent mortalities.

On 28 April 2010, the Office of the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator issued a press statement in response to the current situation calling for a dramatic increase in investment in water and sanitation facilities in high risk communities to break the tragic cycle of waterborne illnesses. Given previous trends, it is anticipated that without an immediate and sustained intervention, the country could soon be facing an outbreak with numbers of deaths similar to or higher than previous years. In 2009, there were more than 370 diarrhoea deaths, mostly in western Nepal, according to the Epidemiology and Disease Control Division (EDCD). In addition, there were some 67,000 diarrhoea cases reported across the country in 2009. Based on the trends of the past five years, the government has classified the 75 districts of the country into three risk categories: high (category A) – 26 districts; medium (category B) – 33 districts; and low (category C) – 16 districts, based on the situation reports and historical frequency of disease occurrence. Out of the seven target districts, five fall under the high risk category and two under the medium risk category.

On 28 May 2010, a WASH cluster coordination meeting was organized to update the current diarrhoea situation. Participants included representatives from the World Health Organization, UNICEF, Oxfam, NRCS, Concern, Ministry of Health and Population, Ministry of Physical Planning, drinking water supply and sanitation office, Save the Children and Care Nepal. The meeting highlighted the WASH mapping (who, where, what) and some gaps were identified in WASH coverage with partners encouraged to explore opportunities to contribute.

UNICEF proposed a standard package to ensure greater consistency and effectiveness of joint efforts, which includes: diarrhoea prevention kits (chlorine/soap/oral rehydration solutions), trainings and social mobilization, standard messages and information, education, communication (IEC) materials and joint/common monitoring and evaluation. A joint baseline survey is planned for mid-June, where all concerned actors in the affected districts will be responsible for data collection. For this purpose, NRCS volunteers will be oriented together with other local volunteers and mobilized door to door. Further, the joint partnership for WASH activities could take the form of a national campaign for the next six months.

Coordination and partnerships

National / district coordination mechanisms

Current efforts to reduce the risks of an outbreak are being led by the EDCC and district committees together with the WASH cluster (which includes NRCS), at both national and district levels. During the planning process, several coordination meetings have been conducted at district level involving district authorities, WASH cluster partners and other relevant organizations and a mapping exercise has been undertaken to identify the capacities in each highly vulnerable district.

During the reporting period, NRCS and the International Federation continued coordination with the WASH cluster through exchange of information on planned activities, target village district committees and discussions over the standard approach for diarrhoea prevention in all districts. The plans for NRCS to scale-up activities were praised by key stakeholders, considering the immediate needs on the ground and the imminent monsoon season already setting in. The International Federation has also been active in sharing information with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee about the launch and progress of this appeal.

Coordination within NRCS and with Movement Partners

Terms of reference for an NRCS interdepartmental coordination committee have been drafted and will be finalised by the second week of June. The committee will meet on a monthly basis and will serve as a platform for quality assurance, monitoring and long-term planning. Finance management, organizational development, communications and humanitarian values departments will also be complementing the operation as and when required.



Nepal Red Cross Society staff and volunteers had a two-day training on the usage of a deployed the Water and Sanitation Kit 2 on 3-4 June. Photo: International Federation.

The International Federation and NRCS have continued to share information about this operation with partner national societies and the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC). The International Federation Asia Pacific disaster management unit deployed an operations coordinator from 16 -31 May to support with coordination, planning and fundraising for the appeal, and the Asia Pacific water and sanitation coordinator was deployed to provide technical support and training facilitation from 29 May-5 June.

National Society Capacity Building

NRCS has accumulated significant experience in the area of public health and has effectively carried out awareness-raising through social mobilization on health-related issues over many years. Its role as an ex-officio member of the district disaster relief committee (DDRC)

and its extensive volunteer network place it in a unique position to respond to public health emergencies. Its effective response to the outbreak of acute watery diarrhoea in 17 districts in 2009 has also enabled NRCS to develop its capacities at both central and district levels.

Currently, NRCS has a water and sanitation national disaster response team, approximately 60 water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) volunteers, and 27 personnel trained in public health emergencies. With these capacities on the ground, NRCS is in a good position to respond rapidly and effectively to the current situation. However, there is still a need for NRCS to further strengthen its preparedness and response mechanisms to reach the most vulnerable and isolated communities and to ensure that interventions are focused not only on the short term needs of communities but are able to address underlying risk factors. Through this operation, NRCS also aims to build capacities at local levels to ensure effective responses by local Red Cross units.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The focus of the NRCS operation covered by this Emergency Appeal is to address the gaps, identified from the resource mapping undertaken by the government and the WASH cluster, to reduce the immediate risk of a diarrhoea outbreak as well as the long-term risk of waterborne diseases. NRCS will conduct intensive water, sanitation and hygiene promotion campaigns including awareness-raising and information about treatment facilities through volunteer mobilization and will provide diarrhoea prevention kits (soap, oral rehydration solution and chlorine tablets) and other supplies like information, education, communication materials, and stretchers at community level. In addition, NRCS will undertake longer term activities to ensure the vulnerable communities remain resilient to outbreaks in the future.

Progress towards outcomes

Significant progress has been made during the reporting period to mobilize personnel and materials for the operation, as described below.

NRCS district chapters, in coordination with the WASH cluster and DDRC, have identified the target VDCs) within each district and are currently selecting WASH mobilisers for each VDC. Selection was based on Disadvantaged Group (DAG) and resource mapping and gaps identified by the DDRC and WASH cluster, as

well as the presence of Red Cross networks (sub-chapters, youth and junior circles) and availability of trained personnel. Most of the VDCs selected were amongst those severely affected by the outbreak in 2009.

Additionally, the NRCS team has prepared a detailed plan of action which identifies the key priorities for the next eight weeks given the available funds and has commenced planning for longer term activities.

Outcome: The risk of a diarrhoea outbreak is reduced in seven of the most vulnerable districts in the mid- and far- western region of Nepal, through support provided to 31,500 households (189,000 beneficiaries).

Expected result 1: Provision of safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, diarrhoea prevention kits and referral services to the most vulnerable communities and households in seven districts.

Activities planned	Achievements within the reporting period
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation and training for relevant district level staff and volunteers in WASH, epidemic control and rapid assessment and the mobilization of 2,000 trained volunteers. • Procurement of 33,500 diarrhoea prevention kits¹ in accordance with the International Federation procurement procedures. • Immediate distribution of 31,500 diarrhoea prevention kits to identified households and repositioning of additional 2,000 diarrhoea kits in the mid- and far- western region warehouses for use in current and other potentially affected districts in the region. • Training for and deployment of the Water and Sanitation Kit 2 from the Kuala Lumpur regional logistics unit warehouse, to provide safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene promotion to vulnerable households in selected village development committees. • 350 community orientation sessions to promote point of use water treatment options, specifically use of chlorine tablets, boiling and Sodish (solar treatment) during volunteer household visits. • Provision of support to 700 selected households to construct low cost latrines through maximum utilization of local raw 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of one-day orientation sessions for district chapters and a three-day day emergency WASH training for staff and volunteers are ongoing, involving 21 participants from all seven districts. WASH mobilizers and local NRCS volunteers will also be trained in the coming weeks. • Procurement has commenced for half of the diarrhoea prevention kits, reflecting the current available funding. • Already commenced and expected to arrive by the third week of June. • The Water and Sanitation Kit 2 arrived in Nepal from the International Federation Regional Logistics Warehouse in Kuala Lumpur and a two-day orientation was provided to 20 participants from NRCS headquarters and some districts. Relief materials from the kit will be repackaged and deployed to Baitadi district. • Already arrived in Nepal and being rearranged to be deployed to Baitadi. • Planned to commence by the third week of June. • Planned to commence by end of June.

¹ Diarrhoea prevention kit includes: chlorine, hand washing soap, oral rehydration salts and bag for 1 household for 2 months. This is the standardised WASH cluster kit for Nepal.

<p>materials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of animal shed management support to 700 vulnerable households. • During household visits, volunteers to provide referral services to people affected by diarrhoea to encourage them to visit health posts for treatment, in coordination with national/local health authorities. • Through grass root networks of volunteers, support national/local health authorities in household level surveillance of diarrhoea cases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned to commence end of June. • Was planned to commence end of May, delayed.
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Expected result 2: Improved hygiene practices through increased water, sanitation and hygiene awareness for 31,500 households in 70 village development committees.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical orientation by volunteers to 31,500 households, to prepare oral rehydration solution and chlorine solution and ensure proper use. • Dissemination of daily WASH messages through FM radio in all seven districts. • Reproduce health education/information, information, education, communication materials. • Conduct household visits by trained volunteers on hygiene awareness, water treatment and sanitation including distribution of diarrhoea kits and information, education, communication materials. • Initiation by volunteers of five community-organised drinking water source improvement campaigns in all 70 village development committees. • Volunteer-organised street drama events in all 70 village development committees. • Ten hand washing demonstrations and hygiene promotion in schools and communities in all 70 village development committees. • Volunteer-organised 'Ignition Participatory Rural Appraisal', to discourage open defecation in five village clusters in all 70 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned to commence by the third week of June. • Two radio shows were broadcast on issues of water and sanitation including an interaction programme, jointly operated by NRCS and Radio Sagarmatha involving the Deputy General Manager of Water and Sewerage Department, Government of Nepal. • Procurement and reproduction of IEC materials has commenced. • Planned to commence beginning of July. • Planned to commence beginning of July. • Planned to commence by beginning of July. • Is a part of the WASH training at the VDC level and will commence by the third week of June.
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<p>village development committees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement and distribution of brochures/pamphlets, hoarding boards and banners for awareness for 70 village development committees as well as 77 volunteer mobilizer support and visibility packs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already commenced and materials will be sent to district by end of June.
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Expected result 3: Strengthened capacity of NRCS for responding to public health emergencies and to undertake longer-term activities to improve the overall health condition of communities.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for relevant headquarter and district level staff and volunteers in water and sanitation national disaster response team and public health in emergencies. • Conduct baseline assessments in all seven districts with a view to developing a transition plan from short term response to a longer-term development approach, in consultation with other relevant stakeholders. • Strengthen community-based health and first aid activities to create a sustainable community approach through training of trainers/volunteers, and involvement of community leaders and members. • Ensure the implementation of a common approach to volunteer mobilisation, induction, support and recognition across all programmes that leads to strengthened branch volunteer base and volunteer management capacities for the future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned to commence in August and September. • A baseline survey questionnaire has been jointly developed and translated by members of the WASH cluster at the central level and will be undertaken jointly with partners in the affected districts during June. • Planned to commence in July. • Throughout the operation.
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The focus over the next few weeks will be on mobilization of volunteers, procurement of supplies (diarrhoea prevention kits, information, education and communication materials and volunteer support supplies), WASH training for WASH mobilizers and community volunteers, community education and awareness raising campaigns, and community-based low cost latrine construction and animal shed management activities.

Challenges:

Lack of adequate funding is the key challenge which is most likely to affect the progress of the operation, as some donors have had difficulty allocating emergency funds prior to the declaration of an outbreak. Nevertheless, the International Federation and NRCS are treating this operation as an emergency to prevent the further loss of life from diarrhoea in the identified districts and VDCs.

An unstable political situation in Nepal may also pose challenges during the implementation.

Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

Communications has been identified as a key area of development for the district level WASH coordinators. A media and communications session was conducted as part of the orientation training provided to six coordinators, which focused on media relations and external communications, ensuring consistent messaging

in times of emergency and dealing with media at the district level. The coordinators also shared approaches for representing vulnerable people, undertaking advocacy in national and international forums as well as the importance of capturing good photographs of community-level activities. In the next quarter, the coordinators will join a workshop on better writing capacity to gain further skills in preparing community level news, feature articles, case studies and giving interviews to the media. The above activities will help to improve communications with beneficiaries and the media, and will increase the visibility of NRCS and its partners.

Also during the reporting period, two radio shows were broadcast on issues of water and sanitation. In an interaction programme, jointly operated by NRCS and Radio Sagarmatha, the Deputy General Manager of Water and Sewerage Department, Government of Nepal, announced that the government is preparing a special relief support programme in Jajarkot and Rukum to provide full subsidies to the underprivileged communities for constructing latrines, and further committed to localize prevention activities.

NRCS is also involved in activities during National Sanitation Week (5-11 June), particularly through a mass campaign on level special awareness through schools and communities to promote sanitation in 13 districts. A success story on sanitation featuring a local community in Lalitpur was also broadcast through Radio Nepal.

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.

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[<Map of affected area below; click here to return to the title page>](#)

