



PANAMA: FLOODS

DREF Bulletin
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Final Report
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The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in 185 countries.

In Brief

Period covered by this Final Report: 20 October 2006 to 20 February 2007.

History of this Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF)-funded operation:

- CHF 67,922 (USD 53,934 or EUR 42,769) was allocated from the Federation's DREF on 20 October 2006 to respond to the needs of this operation.
- This operation was implemented in 4 months, and completed by 20 February 2007. In line with Federation reporting standards, the DREF Bulletin Final Report (narrative and financial) was due 90 days after the end of the operation (by 20 May, 2007).

[Click here to go directly to the Final Financial Report](#)

The International Federation undertakes activities that 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.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- In Panama: José Béliz, Director General, Red Cross Society of Panama; e-mail; cruzroja@pa.gbnet.cc; Phone (507) 315 189 or 680 3455; fax (507) 315 1401.
- In Panama: Stephen McAndrew, Head, Pan American Disaster Response Unit; e-mail Stephen.McAndrew@ifrc.org, phone (507) 316-1001; fax (507) 316-1082.
- In Geneva: Luis Luna, Federation Regional Officer, Americas Department, Geneva; e-mail Luis.Luna@ifrc.org, phone 41-22-730-4274; fax 41-22-733-0395.

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.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Background and Summary

As of 12 October torrential rains were reported in several areas in Panama. Approximately 1,900 people were directly affected by flooding and emergency situations resulting from these rains in the regions of Panama East, Panama West (in the province of Panama) and the province of Chiriquí. Authorities reported landslides and flooding mainly due to overflowing of the Chiriquí Viejo and Chico rivers.

The Red Cross Society of Panama (RCSP) offered initial response to the emergency by supporting activities such as rescue and evacuation, first aid care, needs assessments and the provision of first relief items in the form of clothing, dry food and hygiene kits. After assessing the situation, it was decided to prioritize provision of kitchen sets, hygiene kits, food, water and blankets. Relief goods were then distributed to the 380 families identified by the local Branches as the most vulnerable (see table below for affected areas). A team of water and sanitation experts from the Federation participated in the distribution activities and took the opportunity to evaluate the environmental health situation within the communities with the aim of preparing the environmental health awareness-raising campaign.



Overflowing of the rivers caused severe flooding
Source: International Federation.

Rescue, evacuation and emergency assessments were coordinated with other governmental institutions such as SINAPROC (Sistema Nacional de Protección Civil – National System of Civil Defence), the Panama Fire Brigade, the Ministry of Housing and the Ministry of Social Development that were present at the affected areas.

Coordination and communications

As mentioned above, search, rescue and evacuation activities were coordinated with SINAPROC and the Panama Fire Brigade. The Ministries of Housing and Social Development as well as local authorities conducted needs assessments and relocated families to safer areas. A report was issued through the Disaster Management Information System (DMIS) on the global Federation website.

A communications plan was designed to support the operation. It had five main target audiences: the media, Red Cross Movement, beneficiaries, local authorities and donors. The different channels of communication included national media and RCSP, the Federation regional and global websites. Special sections were created on the Federation regional website – www.cruzroja.org – as well as on the RCSP website. Two press releases were issued and distributed to national and local media, and published on the various Red Cross websites. One article was published in a national newspaper and three television interviews were given, two in Chiriquí, and one in Pacora.

Analysis of the operation – achievements and impact

In accordance with the Plan of Action, the Red Cross Society of Panama with the assistance of the Federation's Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) carried out the following actions;

Objective 1: 380 of the most affected families (approximately 1,900 persons) benefit from the distribution of food and non food items to assist them to recover from the effects of the floods.

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Volunteers from National Society local branches identified and registered the affected population in Panama East, Panama West and Chiriquí.

During the second visit to the communities, surveys were carried out in order to obtain more precise beneficiary information, which was updated accordingly.

As shown in the table below, 234 families were identified in the province of Chiriquí, 50 families in Pacora (Panama East) and 96 families in the districts of Chorrera and Arraiján, both in Panama West.

<i>Province</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>Affected Families</i>
<i>Chiriquí</i>	<i>Rural communities</i>	<i>Chiriquí Viejo</i>	88
		<i>Finca Santa Ana</i>	33
		<i>El Matadero</i>	16
		<i>Pedregalito</i>	48
		<i>Finca San Antonio</i>	4
		<i>Cruce de los Guabos</i>	5
		<i>Jacú</i>	31
		<i>Orilla del Río David</i>	9
<i>Subtotal</i>			234
<i>Panamá (East)</i>	<i>Pacora</i>	<i>Complejo las Garzas (sectores: Hugo Spadafora, El Tecal, La Mireya.)</i>	50
<i>Subtotal</i>			50
<i>Panamá (West)</i>	<i>Arraiján</i>	<i>Realengo</i>	76
	<i>Chorrera</i>	<i>Mastranto Final</i>	20
<i>Subtotal</i>			96
<i>TOTAL</i>			380

During the identification of the most affected families, suitable distribution points for relief items were selected. In Chiriquí and in Panama West relief goods were distributed in each community, while in the case of Panama East it was necessary to place the items more strategically (in a community that was not affected by the floods) and have beneficiary families come to collect the assistance.

Provisions were transported by two RCSP trucks from PADRU's central warehouse and from RCSP's warehouse in the capital. The use of a secondary depot was only necessary in Chiriquí, due to the distance between this province and the capital city.

380 Hygiene kits, 380 kitchen sets, 380 family food parcels and 1,140 blankets (3 units per family) were distributed to each of the 380 selected families to assist them in recovering from the effects of the floods.

Objective 2: Affected communities benefit from raised awareness in environmental health topics as a result of talks given by Red Cross volunteers during the operation.

The following actions were carried out to achieve this objective:

During distributions to the affected communities, the Red Cross was able to more accurately identify the situation and needs of the population. A team made up of a Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member and the water and sanitation officer in PADRU gathered data through interviews and meetings with the population and assessment visits to communities in order to determine the conditions of latrines and water systems. The situation was extremely vulnerable, especially in the affected zones of Chiriquí and Panama East, and an intervention in the form

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of awareness-raising talks within the population was required. The talks addressed correct use of water and latrines in order to improve the health situation and prevent disease.

With this purpose, a training workshop was carried out for a selected group of 20 Red Cross volunteers who disseminated this knowledge within their branches and later on within the communities. The different RCSP departments involved in this activity (health, training, communication and relief) worked together in the design of the material for the environmental health workshop for volunteers of Red Cross branches in the affected zones. The workshop's agenda addressed different topics such as: emergency assessments, hygiene promotion at community level, vector control, SPHERE standards and basic concepts in water and sanitation

The workshop in environmental health took place from 17 to 19 November in the National Society headquarters, in Panama City. Educational and information materials were developed by the RCSP and were distributed amongst beneficiaries to support and enhance the awareness raising talks.



Health and hygiene promotion activities by the Red Cross Society of Panama. Source: International Federation

In the last weeks of January, awareness raising talks with respect to health and hygiene promotion were carried out by RCSP volunteers in each of the communities where relief distributions took place. In order to carry out proper and effective awareness raising activities, the population was divided into different age groups. The topics and methods varied and were adjusted according to the age group that received the information. Volunteers gave first aid training and environmental health promotion to the youth (up to 18 years of age) using participatory and dynamic methods. The adult population received awareness raising talks on hygiene promotion and health, using the same participatory methods. In case of the children, activities promoting proper hygiene habits were carried out through plays and group games. Overall, health and hygiene promotion activities reached around 50 percent of each community and were mainly attended by women, the elderly, youth and children. The Red Cross Society of Panama remains present in these areas by carrying out other projects.

Impact

During the emergency operation 380 of the most affected families saw their basic needs met through the timely distribution of relief items. The timing of the distributions was coordinated in order to ensure that goods were provided when people needed them the most.

Based on beneficiaries' input and visits to the communities, it was possible to identify the actual water and sanitation needs within the communities. The environmental health promotion activity not only considered this local reality but also reached different age groups, thereby raising awareness amongst different layers of the community. The hygiene promotion activities were very well received within the communities and were particularly useful considering the fact that the health situation was extremely vulnerable and most people were not aware of these health issues.

Furthermore, the environmental health workshop strengthened the capacity of the RCSP volunteers involved in this health and hygiene promotion.

These health and environmental promotion activities are in line with the Federation's aim to increase beneficiary participation and provide humanitarian relief according to SPHERE standards, with an increased effort to achieve longer term impact.

Constraints

There were no major constraints or difficulties during the operation. However, lack of access and communication in some communities was an issue that somewhat delayed the initial response action. With respect to the lack of communication and due to the equipment needs for the operation, six VHF radios were purchased to increase the RCSP capacity for the operation.

Lessons learned

- The methods utilized to carry out the awareness raising talks took into consideration the main needs and context in which adults, youth and children can maintain their motivation and attention. This initiative enabled the RCSP to reach not only the general population, but also reach groups with specific needs and specific motivation requirements.
- The pre-distribution visits to the communities and selection of suitable distribution points increased the effectiveness of the distributions, as well as the security and comfort of personnel.
- The importance of the serious commitment and motivation of RCSP volunteers for the successful completion of the emergency operation was evident. The capacity of National Society could be strengthened more by providing these committed and motivated volunteers with better equipment in order to improve future actions.
- Overall, the inter-agency coordination during the emergency operation was effective. However, in the first phase of the operation there were some duplicated efforts in terms of need assessments and evaluation. Joint assessment missions would certainly accelerate the response of the operation without overwhelming the affected population.
- Although longer term impact is desirable concerning the structural water and sanitation problems, the Federation, National Societies and local branches strive to contribute to this through the initiatives carried out in health and community work and disaster preparedness activities. The longer-term impact on structural problems remains limited due to the character of a direct disaster response operation.

[Final financial report below;](#)
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International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

MDRPA001 - Panama - Floods

Final Financial Report

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2006/1-2008/04
Budget Timeframe	2006/1-2007/05
Appeal	MDRPA001
Budget	APPEAL

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

I. Consolidated Response to Appeal

	Health & Care	Disaster Management	Humanitarian Values	Organisational Development	Coordination & Implementation	TOTAL
A. Budget		67,912				67,912
B. Opening Balance		0				0
Income						
<u>Cash contributions</u>						
DREF		68,069				68,069
C1. Cash contributions		68,069				68,069
C. Total Income = SUM(C1..C5)		68,069				68,069
D. Total Funding = B + C		68,069				68,069
Appeal Coverage		100%				100%

II. Balance of Funds

	Health & Care	Disaster Management	Humanitarian Values	Organisational Development	Coordination & Implementation	TOTAL
B. Opening Balance		0				0
C. Income		68,069				68,069
E. Expenditure		-68,069				-68,069
F. Closing Balance = (B + C + E)		0				0

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Reporting Timeframe	2006/1-2008/04
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III. Budget Analysis / Breakdown of Expenditure

Account Groups	Budget	Expenditure					TOTAL	Variance
		Health & Care	Disaster Management	Humanitarian Values	Organisational Development	Coordination & Implementation		
A		B					A - B	
BUDGET (C)		67,912					67,912	
Supplies								
Clothing & textiles	4,903		4,903				4,903	0
Food	9,476		9,476				9,476	-0
Water & Sanitation	5,600		5,555				5,555	45
Utensils & Tools	9,373		9,373				9,373	-1
Other Supplies & Services	8,741		8,739				8,739	1
Total Supplies	38,092		38,046				38,046	46
Land, vehicles & equipment								
Computers & Telecom	2,438		2,438				2,438	0
Total Land, vehicles & equipment	2,438		2,438				2,438	0
Transport & Storage								
Distribution & Monitoring	734		734				734	-0
Transport & Vehicle Costs	7,715		7,715				7,715	0
Total Transport & Storage	8,449		8,449				8,449	-0
Personnel								
Regionally Deployed Staff	3,270		3,270				3,270	0
National Staff			313				313	-313
National Society Staff	4,673		4,360				4,360	313
Total Personnel	7,943		7,943				7,943	0
General Expenditure								
Travel	1,116		1,116				1,116	0
Information & Public Relation	4,494		4,494				4,494	0
Office Costs	966		225				225	741
Communications			407				407	-407
Professional Fees			400				400	-400
Financial Charges			90				90	-90
Other General Expenses			37				37	-37
Total General Expenditure	6,576		6,769				6,769	-193
Programme Support								
Program Support	4,414		4,424				4,424	-10
Total Programme Support	4,414		4,424				4,424	-10
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (D)	67,912		68,069				68,069	-157
VARIANCE (C - D)			-157				-157	