

# DREF operation final report



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Argentina: Floods

DREF operation n° MDRAR003  
GLIDE n° FL-2008-000038-ARG  
22 May 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 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.

**Summary: CHF 127,836 (USD 116,267 or EUR 84,257)** was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Argentine Red Cross (ARC) in delivering assistance to 2,200 people severely affected by flooding.

Approximately 17,000 families were affected and 11,600 people were isolated in the Rivadavia and Santa Victoria Este communities in the province of Salta, due to the floods that affected Northern Argentina in March 2008.

The ARC responded to immediate emergency needs by providing essential relief items and pre-hospital care, as well as support for the affected families through early recovery activities. Delays caused by political and social tensions in the agricultural sector led to a four-month extension of the operation, and the inclusion of new objectives in the ARC Plan of Action that include additional relief items, the extension of psychosocial support (PSP) and the inclusion of activities to stimulate the reactivation of local livelihoods.

The operation was completed at the end of July 2008, reaching 300 families (approx. 2,200 people given the large size of families in indigenous communities) with direct distributions of relief and recovery items, as well as an estimated 5,500 people with community out-reach services, including psychosocial support and health promotion activities.

[<Click here for the final financial report, or here to view contact details>](#)



Argentine Red Cross volunteers collecting data from the affected people in Embarcación.

Source: [www.embarcacionssalta.com.ar](http://www.embarcacionssalta.com.ar)

## The situation

Constant and heavy rains during January 2008 led to severe flooding in the Salta province, causing the Bermejo, Pilcomayo and Carapari rivers to overflow in the beginning of March. The rivers affected the Aguaray and Embarcación provinces with flood water, temporarily blocking pathways and roads, and damaging bridges, leaving communities isolated. The flooding of the Pilcomayo River exacerbated the effects of heavy rainfall that occurred earlier in the year in neighbouring country of Bolivia. The capital city of Salta was directly affected by the heavy rainfall and flooding in particular the sectors of La Paz, 1ra Junta, Solidaridad, Libertad and to a lesser extent communities in the northern part of the city.

Approximately 17,000 families were affected and 11,600 people were isolated and unable to access outside assistance. The indigenous families from the Wichi ethnic group residing close to the river basin in east Bermejo and from the north of the province including Santa Victoria Este were particularly affected. The police and fire departments evacuated affected families from the flooded sectors in Salta, relocating them to evacuation centres where medical services were provided by the local hospital. In Embarcación, in the south of the San Martín province, approximately 600 people from the neighbourhoods of San Juan, El Tráfico and Tierras Fiscales were relocated to three shelters during one month. In addition, 103 families (618 people) voluntarily evacuated the affected areas to the centres set up by the authorities.

Although general services did not collapse, approximately 45,000 people from the Aguaray and Salvador Mazza regions were left without water due to damages to the water purification plant caused by mud and rain. Additional significant damages included the closing of major and minor roads. While major roads have since been reopened, infrastructure remains affected, in particular bridges and smaller access routes.

Local authorities responded to the emergency with support from the national government, prioritizing the distribution of basic humanitarian assistance and emergency health services to those affected. The Provincial Secretariat for the Interior (Secretariado Provincial del Interior - PSI) distributed food items to families in the evacuation centres, and later directly to communities once the families had returned home. The PSI also supported community kitchens, as well as provided support in the distribution of family kits, clothes and footwear. The ARC and local authorities re-established and increased local medical assistance in addition to services provided directly to the shelters. The national government initially allocated USD 1,000,000 to the emergency response with several housing projects and repairs for the water treatment plant under development to respond to long term needs after the emergency.

Identified needs varied considerably due to the distinct geographic areas affected and the differing levels of vulnerability among families prior to the floods. The most immediate priorities identified by the ARC, government authorities and community-based organizations included the provision of food and non-food relief items, the provision of health services including psychosocial support, the improvement of sanitary conditions primarily through the cleaning of houses, as well as support to families in re-establishing their livelihoods affected by the loss of crops, livestock and tools.

In May 2008 social and political tensions between the government and the agricultural sector initially caused delays in the distribution of aid to the affected communities. Furthermore, general strikes in the transportation and agricultural sectors, along with a shortage of fuel, led to sharp price increases and the shortage of basic items. This delayed the emergency response and resulted in modifications to the implementation timeframe.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The International Federation has supported the ARC by providing technical and financial assistance through the Regional Representation for South America based in Lima, Peru, (now the Regional Representation for the Andean Region) and the Pan-American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) in Panama.

The ARC has worked intensively since the outset of the emergency to meet the most immediate and urgent relief needs, as well as designing a broader and longer term strategy to support affected populations in their recovery from the floods. At national level, the ARC activated its Technical Crisis Committee to oversee wider actions, including monitoring of the humanitarian context, the design and implementation of the intervention and the inclusion of communications and resource mobilization campaigns to support the financing of the national Red Cross relief effort.

The Argentine Red Cross volunteers started damage and need assessments since January 2008. Several volunteers were deployed to the area since they were informed of the overflowed Pilcomayo River due to rain affecting the neighbouring country of Bolivia.

At local level, the Salta branch mobilized its volunteers who provided training in core emergency roles. Initial actions prior to the drafting of a wider Plan of Action (PoA) focused on the data collection of damages, needs and the provision of first aid administered to those injured during the flooding. The ARC subsequently drafted its PoA to respond to the emergency including complementary activities based on gaps in assistance identified in coordination with other actors involved in the response. The ARC intervention focused on the Lote 75 and El Tráfico communities of Embarcación where large indigenous families from the Wichi ethnic group reside. Support was provided as well to the most affected families from the La Paz neighbourhood of Salta City. Beneficiary criteria included families who evacuated, the degree of affectation and vulnerability,

the presence of community-based organizations to avoid duplication of efforts, and the local institutional capacity of the ARC branch located in Salta city. Additional support was provided to individuals in non-traditional family-settings, as well as to core community resources, including schools, health centres and community-based organizations to ensure an integral response to the emergency.

As mentioned above, the political and social tensions during the month of May caused delays in the procurement, transportation and distribution of relief items, as well as in the mobilization of personnel to the affected areas. Additional detailed assessments undertaken at this time indicated that although the initial national response had been efficient, gaps continued to exist in the provision of aid. The ARC revised its PoA, including further actions with the distribution of additional emergency relief items, health activities and the reactivation of traditional livelihoods.

The operation was extended to the end of July 2008 to adapt to challenges posed by the volatile socio-political climate and changing humanitarian situation. Additional actions to those originally considered in the plan of action were also made possible in part thanks to private donations, which allowed for DREF funds to be re-allocated to support further the affected populations..

## Progress towards objectives

### Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

#### Objective 1: Humanitarian aid is distributed to 300 families affected by the floods.

##### Activities implemented:

- Identification and census of beneficiaries
- Purchase and distribution of kit relief items (cleaning and kitchen products, blankets, pull-overs and school materials).

The kits were designed with basic essential items to assist families to recover from the emergency, including families returning from evacuation centres set up to house those most affected. Each kit contained sufficient items for a family of seven people for one month to ensure that the needs of the large indigenous families were covered.

The kits were distributed in coordination with local community organizations and local authorities, as follows:

##### Cleaning kit

- Bucket, broom, brushes, sponges and cloths
- Detergent, bleach and washing powder

Area	Number of cleaning kits	Number of families
Embarcación - Lote 75	150	150
Embarcación - El Trafico	80	80
Salta City - La Paz	70	70
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>300</b>

##### Kitchen kits

- Plastic plates and cups
- Cutlery and serving utensils
- Assorted cookware
- Jerry cans (20 litres)

Area	Number of kitchen sets	Number of families
Embarcación - Lote 75	150	150
Embarcación - El Trafico	80	80
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>230</b>

Additional selected kitchen items were provided to schools and community health centres to support community-based initiatives such as collective kitchens.

##### Blankets and pull-over kits

- Five single blankets and one double blanket

- Ten pull-overs of assorted sizes

Area	Number of blanket and pull-over kits	Number of families
Embarcación - Lote 75	150	150
Embarcación - El Tráfico	80	80
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>230</b>

Given the acute need to assist people not located in traditional family settings, additional kits were distributed on a per unit basis assisting a further 145 people from the above communities, as well as covering the needs of local health centres, including the Embarcación Hospital.

#### **School kits**

- Satchel
- Notebooks, folders and loose paper
- Pencils, pencil sharpeners and assorted markers
- Geometry set
- Glue, eraser, scissors and other miscellaneous items

Area	Number of school kits	Number of students
Embarcación - Lote 75	190	190
Embarcación - El Tráfico	150	150
FUDHU Organization	30	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>370</b>

Local suppliers supported an additional 60 students with school kits from the La Paz neighbourhood in Salta City.

#### **Impact:**

Stagnant water and mud had severely damaged people's homes and personal property, leaving everything damp and dirty. On their return to normal life, many vulnerable families faced enormous costs in the replacement of essential items for daily routines. A large amount of flood-damaged furniture and personal items had to be cleaned or disposed of in the period following the emergency. The cleaning kits have played a crucial role to assist people in these efforts. In a similar way, the basic items included in the kitchen sets ensured that families received the necessary utensils to resume normal cooking routines to facilitate their return home.

Heavy rainfall during the month of June, along with the intense cold temperatures typical to the region at that time of year resulted in the local affected population being exposed to harsh conditions following the loss of their personal belongings. The provision of warm blankets and pull-overs has contributed to the prevention of prevalent diseases in such cases, in particular to contain common respiratory and flu-type illnesses among vulnerable groups such as young children and the elderly.

Although classes were disrupted during the immediate aftermath of the flooding, school authorities took action quickly to reopen education centres and to continue with classes. Evaluations undertaken by field staff indicated that many students initially missed classes to assist with the recovery of their families and when they returned to school they lacked basic materials essential for day-to-day use. The shortage of necessary school materials was particularly noticeable amongst lower-income families and especially amongst the ethnic minority groups. Given that distributions targeted families with limited economic means, the provision of school kits has helped vulnerable families in their recovery from the emergency, as well as ensuring that children had access to items which are essential for their education.

#### **Emergency health**

**Objective: 127 evacuated families will receive psychosocial support and will be more aware of water borne diseases; the Health Community Centre in Embarcación will receive basic medical supplies.**

#### **Activities implemented:**

- Recreational activities and stress management workshops with people evacuated to temporary shelters

- Health promotion workshops focusing on the prevention of diarrhoea, HIV and AIDS, dengue and other vector-transmitted diseases
- Design and distribution of informative materials and the organization of a communications campaign
- Procurement and distribution of medical equipment

Key emergency health actions were designed to complement the existing medical care provided by local authorities to families in evacuation centres as well as to families on their return home. These actions focused on the provision of psychosocial support to children and adults experiencing stress-related symptoms resulting from the emergency, conveying essential information on the prevention of common diseases, and the refurbishment of local health services.

### **Psychosocial support**

At the end of March the ARC organized 24 psychosocial workshops, carrying out recreational activities assisting approximately 200 evacuated children per event. The workshops included sports, games, drama and painting activities with informative materials and special children's packs distributed to the participants. Activities to support adults suffering from stress following the flooding were organized in communities in Embarcación and included structured workshops and informal talks with vulnerable groups, specifically with women worried about the psychological effects on their children.

### **Health promotion**

The ARC conducted eight workshops for approximately 320 community members in different areas of the city of Embarcación and three workshops for 150 people in the city of Salta. The workshops focused on the prevention of respiratory diseases, diarrhoea, skin infections, dengue and yellow fever identified by the participants as a cause for concern in the aftermath of floods. Visual materials, pamphlets and fliers with information on respiratory infections and other diseases were handed out during the workshops and disseminated among local and regional health centres. In addition, two radio spots with health awareness messages were designed and aired on local radio stations.

### **Infrastructural support**

The La Salita community health centre in Embarcación was provided with basic medical equipment to replace items damaged by the floods, including scales for adults and children, stretchers, nebulisers, stethoscopes, thermometers and first aid supplies among other items. In addition, first aid kits were also donated to schools in the communities which were provided with assistance in Embarcación.

### **Impact:**

The provision of psychosocial support has had a positive impact on the lives of those affected, contributing to the acceptance and understanding of the emergency and promoting coping mechanisms to deal with associated losses, as well as addressing the stress arising from evacuation, rehabilitation and recovery. This support is vital to reduce vulnerability and to re-establish human dignity.

Community talks on the prevention of diseases prevalent in post-flood situations has provided valuable and much-needed information prioritized by the beneficiaries themselves and contributing to the containment of illnesses prevalent at this time. Additional talks on sanitation have supported these actions, assisting communities in the clean up after the floods, as well as promoting best practices including the handling of solid waste.

The La Salita community health centre had suffered serious infrastructural damage and loss of vital medical supplies. While the regional Embarcación Hospital secured funding to repair infrastructural damage, funds were not available to provide equipment to the centre. The contribution of key medical supplies by the Argentine Red Cross has permitted the centre to function properly, providing community members with regular access to medical care (daily presence of nursing staff and access to general practitioners three times per week).

## **Rehabilitation of livelihoods**

**Objective: 200 affected families in Embarcación will re-establish their livelihoods in order to improve their economic security.**

### **Activities implemented:**

- Identification and census of beneficiaries
- Purchase and distribution of small-scale handicraft tool kits
- Purchase and distribution of agricultural reactivation kits that included tools, livestock and feed

Families faced severe hardships in recovering their means for survival having lost essential tools and crops. The agricultural reactivation kits were designed with basic necessary items to assist families in their recovery from the emergency. Recovery efforts were oriented towards supporting traditional Wichi practices where families work together in clan groupings, sharing communal tools and products.

The kits were distributed in coordination with local neighbourhood community organizations with support from local municipal authorities, and national agencies including the Unit for Private Consumption (Unidad de Productiva de Auto Consumo – UPAC) and the national INTA-Prohuerta Programme (a food security programme targeted at populations under the poverty line), ensuring coherence and sustainability with existing services.

The main content and distributions of the kits are as follows:

#### **Handicraft tool kits**

- Saws for wood and metal
- Assorted files and instruments for polishing
- Assorted needles for textile production

Area	Number of handicraft kits	Number of families
Embarcación - Lote 75	46	150
Embarcación - El Tráfico	19	80
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>230</b>

#### **Agricultural reactivation kits**

- Agricultural tool kit: Spade, pick, rake, hoe, axe, hose-pipe, hammer, tongs and saw
- Livestock: Three chickens and chicken feed

Area	Number of agricultural reactivation kits	Number of families
Embarcación - Lote 75	33	150
Embarcación - El Tráfico	15	80
Community centre (Lote 75)	1	-
School (El Tráfico)	1	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>230</b>

#### **Impact:**

Damages and needs assessments undertaken by the ARC indicated that damages to local livelihoods were significant. Many indigenous families expressed their concern regarding the problems they faced to re-establish their livelihoods, having lost expensive tools vital for local handicraft and agricultural production, as well as suffering severe damage to crops grown for subsistence.

The additional actions to support agricultural reactivation have had a positive impact in the recovery from the effects of the floods. The provision of necessary tools has had a relatively quick impact in supporting farmers' food security and livelihoods, enabling them to sow, tend and in the not-too-distant future harvest their crops. The provision of hens for laying and feed has also facilitated the production of eggs for consumption, enhancing daily dietary intake, whilst the handicraft tool kits provide the direct means to enable families to supplement their financial income.

## **Conclusion**

The ARC-DREF funded operation has achieved its objectives in providing immediate emergency assistance to the most affected families from Embarcación and Salta, as well as providing integral support to assist in their early recovery from the devastating effects of the floods. While socio-political tensions caused delays in initial planned activities, close coordination with other actors responding to the emergency and with the communities themselves facilitated the reprogramming of activities to ensure that assistance met evolving needs as the humanitarian context developed.

#### **Lessons learnt:**

The operation had a notable impact on the institution, strengthening existing processes and highlighting capacity-building areas for future emergency response operations:

- **Institutional capacity-building:** The development of the operation has served to strengthen links between the ARC national headquarters and the local ARC branch in Salta, not only improving internal relations but also building capacity in the technical and operative roles of emergency management.
- **Training and stimulation of volunteers:** All emergencies create an urgent need to act quickly to respond to the needs of those affected. The response to the floods has provided the opportunity to train volunteers at local and national level in diverse aspects from procurement to distributions, as well as community outreach activities. Given that most workshops were held at the local level, volunteers were able to directly put into practice techniques developed greatly enhancing their learning experience.
- **Strengthening of inter-institutional links:** Close coordination with all actors involved in the emergency response was required, improving relations with national and local authorities, as well as with non-governmental actors and the private sector. This has served to consolidate existing and new partnerships vital to respond not only to this but to future emergencies.
- **Strengthening of community links:** The DREF operation clearly served to strengthen links with communities which were assisted, not only in the immediate emergency response, but also in the early recovery and recovery phases. Community links helped to provide understanding of community needs and establish priorities for continued action in these areas, including a focus on community health (disease prevention, reproductive health and hygiene promotion), as well as community organization in disaster risk reduction.

Although the operation has officially ended, the ARC continues its work to respond to community needs, addressing broader risk reduction issues. The Salta branch of the ARC has continued to organize health promotion activities at the community level while working with local authorities on fair-trade initiatives for the sale of local handicrafts. The National Society has also organized workshops drafting emergency response plans in the cities of Embarcación and Salta with the participation of governmental and non-governmental organizations, in response to the emergency and as part of its wider risk reduction programme to strengthen preparedness capacities for future emergencies.

## 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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**International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

MDRAR003 - Argentina - Floods

Final Financial Report

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2008/3-2009/5
Budget Timeframe	2008/3-2009/5
Appeal	MDRAR003
Budget	APPEAL

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

**I. Consolidated Response to Appeal**

	Goal 1: Disaster Management	Goal 2: Health and Care	Goal 3: Capacity Building	Goal 4: Principles and Values	Coordination	TOTAL
<b>A. Budget</b>	127,836					127,836
<b>B. Opening Balance</b>	0					0
<b>Income</b>						
<u>Other Income</u>						
<i>Voluntary Income</i>	127,634					127,634
<b>C5. Other Income</b>	127,634					127,634
<b>C. Total Income = SUM(C1..C5)</b>	127,634					127,634
<b>D. Total Funding = B + C</b>	127,634					127,634
<b>Appeal Coverage</b>	100%					100%

**II. Balance of Funds**

	Goal 1: Disaster Management	Goal 2: Health and Care	Goal 3: Capacity Building	Goal 4: Principles and Values	Coordination	TOTAL
<b>B. Opening Balance</b>	0					0
<b>C. Income</b>	127,634					127,634
<b>E. Expenditure</b>	-127,634					-127,634
<b>F. Closing Balance = (B + C + E)</b>	0					0

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

MDRAR003 - Argentina - Floods

Final Financial Report

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2008/3-2009/5
Budget Timeframe	2008/3-2009/5
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Budget	APPEAL

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

### III. Budget Analysis / Breakdown of Expenditure

Account Groups	Budget	Expenditure					TOTAL	Variance
		Goal 1: Disaster Management	Goal 2: Health and Care	Goal 3: Capacity Building	Goal 4: Principles and Values	Coordination		
A		B					A - B	
<b>BUDGET (C)</b>		<b>127,836</b>					<b>127,836</b>	
<b>Supplies</b>								
Clothing & textiles		26,749				26,749	-26,749	
Seeds,Plants	4,681	5,518				5,518	-837	
Medical & First Aid		2,279				2,279	-2,279	
Teaching Materials	6,216	5,068				5,068	1,148	
Utensils & Tools	51,080	36,139				36,139	14,940	
Other Supplies & Services	6,714	505				505	6,209	
<b>Total Supplies</b>	<b>68,690</b>	<b>76,258</b>				<b>76,258</b>	<b>-7,567</b>	
<b>Transport &amp; Storage</b>								
Storage	6,443	45				45	6,398	
Distribution & Monitoring		836				836	-836	
Transport & Vehicle Costs	4,603	3,100				3,100	1,503	
<b>Total Transport &amp; Storage</b>	<b>11,046</b>	<b>3,981</b>				<b>3,981</b>	<b>7,065</b>	
<b>Personnel</b>								
Regionally Deployed Staff	17,005	168				168	16,837	
National Society Staff		17,358				17,358	-17,358	
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>17,005</b>	<b>17,526</b>				<b>17,526</b>	<b>-521</b>	
<b>Workshops &amp; Training</b>								
Workshops & Training	10,100	4,120				4,120	5,980	
<b>Total Workshops &amp; Training</b>	<b>10,100</b>	<b>4,120</b>				<b>4,120</b>	<b>5,980</b>	
<b>General Expenditure</b>								
Travel		4,138				4,138	-4,138	
Information & Public Relation	3,306	1,009				1,009	2,297	
Office Costs	6,102	1,826				1,826	4,276	
Communications	1,059	1,749				1,749	-690	
Professional Fees	643						643	
Financial Charges	1,576	8,731				8,731	-7,155	
<b>Total General Expenditure</b>	<b>12,686</b>	<b>17,452</b>				<b>17,452</b>	<b>-4,767</b>	
<b>Programme Support</b>								
Program Support	8,309	8,296				8,296	13	
<b>Total Programme Support</b>	<b>8,309</b>	<b>8,296</b>				<b>8,296</b>	<b>13</b>	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE (D)</b>	<b>127,836</b>	<b>127,634</b>				<b>127,634</b>	<b>202</b>	
<b>VARIANCE (C - D)</b>		<b>202</b>				<b>202</b>		