

DREF operation final report



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Costa Rica: Floods

DREF operation n° MDRCR003
GLIDE n° TC-2008-000147-CRI
26 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 81,000 (USD 73,636 or EUR 50,155) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 17 September 2008, to support the Costa Rican Red Cross (CRRC) in delivering assistance to 1,000 families or 5,000 people severely affected by floods.

The influence of several tropical storms hitting the region during the second semester of 2008, led to heavy rainfall and severe flooding in various areas of the country, with the worst affected areas in the province of Guanacaste in the Chorotega region, as well as in the districts of Puntarenas and Montes de Oro.



Costa Rican Red Cross volunteer cleaning water well in Filadeldia community. Source: CRRC

The CRRC launched an emergency response operation conducting search and rescue activities, evacuating stranded families, providing medical care and distributing relief items, including food, bottled water, blankets and mattresses. Additional actions financed by the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) were identified in coordination with national and local governmental agencies, with activities undertaken to rehabilitate family water wells whilst providing community talks on hygiene promotion to enable families to recover from the devastating effects of the floods.

Severe continued rainfall caused by Tropical Depression 16 led to some delays in the implementation of activities in the field, and the extension of the implementation period to 17 March 2009. At the close of the operation, the CRRC has reached and exceeded its proposed targets, reaching a total of 1,209 families or 6,045 people.

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The situation

Tropical storms Hanna, Ike and later Josephine greatly affected Central America during the hurricane season of 2008. The influence of Tropical Storm Hanna brought heavy rainfall causing rivers to burst their banks, landslides and severe flooding, leaving many communities stranded. On 2 September, the Costa Rican government declared a state of national emergency, with the Chorotega and South Pacific regions particularly affected and placed on red alert, followed by the Central Pacific region on yellow alert, and the regions of Brunca, Alajuela, Cartago, San José and Heredia placed on green alert. By 8 September, the emergency alerts were lifted for all regions, with the exception of Carillo and Santa Cruz in the region of Chorotega which remained on red alert.



Costa Rican Red Cross volunteers cleaning a water well in the Nosara community. Source: CRRC

Official reports from the National Committee for Emergencies (Comité Nacional de Emergencias – CNE) indicate that 87 communities were affected, with the districts of Santa Cruz, Liberia, Bagaces and Cañas in the province of Guanacaste sustaining significant damage. A total of 21 communities were left completely isolated with roads blocked by landslides, whilst six communities suffered from the additional effects of mudslides caused by the heavy rainfall. A total of 5,375 people were directly affected by the floods with considerable damage to homes and personal property, whilst over 5,000 people were affected indirectly, including those who lost their main source of income due to losses sustained by local agriculture and tourism which are the main economic sectors in the area.

The CNE activated regional and local emergency operations centres and distributed emergency relief items including blankets, foam mattresses and food to those affected. 30 shelters including six family-run shelters were set up to provide refuge to approximately 2,500 evacuated people in the Guanacaste province, whilst an additional shelter was set up in Puntarenas. As of 8 September, six shelters housing 509 people remained open, although all shelters have now been closed.

On 14 October, Tropical Depression 16 made landfall in Central America bringing heavy rains and causing further severe floods, landslides and the blocking of major and minor roads. The most affected areas included the North, Central, South Pacific and the Central Valley regions, affecting communities already suffering the effects of the earlier flooding. CNE reports indicate that 279 communities (10,365 people) were affected by Tropical Depression 16.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The CRRC responded rapidly to provide assistance to affected communities, activating its National Emergency Operations Centre in San José and mobilizing staff to the field, with National Intervention Team (NIT) members deployed to six command posts in Liberia, Santa Cruz, Cañas, Miramar and Nicoya-Filadelfia. A further 154 volunteers, 75 vehicles and seven regional branches were activated to respond with immediate actions focused on search and rescue activities, the evacuation of affected people, the provision of emergency medical services and the distribution of emergency relief items, including drinking water, food, blankets and mattresses.

The International Federation through its Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and Regional Representation Office for Central America and Mexico have supported the CRRC since the onset of the emergency, providing technical and financial support in the development and implementation of its subsequent Plan of Action (PoA). The CRRC established a course of action in coordination with the CNE and the Ministry of Health, focusing on the re-establishment of access to safe drinking water through the distribution of jerry-cans and the cleaning of wells contaminated by flood water. A Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member specialized in water and sanitation from the Red Cross Society of Panama was deployed to support the CRRC in the development of actions in this area, as well as to build capacity of

CRRC personnel in water and sanitation. Additional assistance included the distribution of two Federation vehicles and two water well cleaning kits to the CRRC for use in the operation.

Heavy rainfall ensuing as a result of Tropical Depression 16 caused delays in the implementation of activities planned in this operation, and resulted in a one-month extension of the operation. All field activities have now been completed, with additional actions in institutional capacity-building planned.

The CRRC has actively responded to two other emergencies during the period of implementation. At the end of November 2008, the CRRC launched a response operation to assist families affected by further severe floods in the Caribbean, Northern and Central Valley regions, followed by an additional response operation to the earthquake that struck the provinces of Alajuela, Heredia, San José and Cartago on 8 January 2009. The CRRC responded efficiently with the mobilization of personnel at the national and regional levels to conduct actions covering search, rescue and evacuation activities, the provision of emergency medical services and the distribution of relief items to affected families. DREF funds were allocated to support the CRRC in both emergencies, with an Emergency Appeal launched on 1 December 2008 to mobilize funds for the floods response operation.



Costa Rican Red Cross volunteers cleaning mud out of a water well in the Upala community. Source: CRRC

Progress towards objectives

Water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion

Objective: To ensure safe water supply by cleaning the water wells and promote good hygiene practices among 1,000 affected families.

Activities planned:

- Organization of a workshop for Red Cross volunteers on post-flood water well restoration and the management of clean water.
- Cleaning and rehabilitation of 1,000 family wells by two CRRC teams.
- Delivery of drinking water to affected families by water tanker.
- Informative talks on best hygiene practices with beneficiary families.

The CRRC response was developed in close coordination with municipal and national authorities, including the CNE, the Costa Rican National Water and Sewerage Institute (Instituto Costarricense de Acueductos y Alcantarillados - AyA), the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Costa Rican Social Security Fund (Caja Costarricense del Seguro Social – CCSS).

A specialized workshop on water and sanitation was organized by the water and sanitation RIT member from 14 to 18 October at the Liberia regional CRRC branch. A total of 21 CRRC local volunteers were trained from the affected areas of Guanacaste and Puntarenas, as well as volunteers from flood-prone areas in the South, the province of Limón and the national headquarters in the capital city of San José.

Prolonged heavy rains and ensuing flooding from Tropical Depression 16 caused water levels to rise and wells to be water-logged with contaminated water. The rehabilitation of family wells was therefore set back until water levels had returned to near normal conditions. From 10 November to 13 January, wells from the following communities were rehabilitated, reaching a total of 1,209 families (6,045 people):

Area / Community	Number of wells	Number of families	Area / Community	Number of wells	Number of families
Cañas	38	38	Las Vegas	13	13
Hotel	17	17	Las Vegas, Talolinga, Polvazal, La Bolsa	23	23
La Libertad, Parcelas	21	21	Marbella, Cacao Rio Seco	23	23
Filadelfia	122	124	Marbella, Pitaya, Veracruz, Manzanillo	31	31
Bambú	15	17	Ortega, Las Vegas	18	18
Bambú	25	25	Ortega, Las Vegas	17	17
Bambú	19	19	Ortega, Lagartero, Bolsón	17	17
Bambú, Parcela 3, Guanislama	20	20	Ostional Centro	14	14
Cantarana, Corralillo, Puerto Ballena, Guinea	18	18	Ostional, El Rayo, Culiacán, Rio Montaña	42	42
Corralillo, Guanislama	25	25	Ranchos Linderos, Hernández Bejuco	31	31
La Cruz	78	78	Rio Cañas, Nuevo Los Churucos	20	20
Cuajinicuil	12	12	Rio Rosario, Progreso, Jazminal	19	19
Las Brumas, Bellavista, Piedras Azules	22	22	San Pedro, Viejo Paraíso, Las Pilas	31	31
Las Brumas, El Jobo, La Cruz	22	22	Santa Cruz (Bernabela)	10	10
Santa Cecilia, Esperanza, La Brumas, Argendora	22	22	Bernabela	10	10
Nosara	199	199	Upala	311	311
Barco Quebrado, Bo Panama	32	32	Colonia Victoria, Porvenir	21	21
Esterones, Buena Vista, San Carlos	12	12	La Cruz	29	29
Los Ángeles de Santa Teresita	39	39	La Cruz Colonia	22	22
Nosara, Garza, Delicias	22	22	Manzano	24	24
Playa Pelada, Los Angeles	24	24	Manzano	29	29
San Carlos, San Pedro, Santa Marta	25	25	Manzano, Méjico	25	25
San Ramon	28	28	Méjico, Manzano	34	34
Santa Teresita, San Pedro, Hollywood	17	17	Méjico, Puebla	20	20
Santa Cruz	449	449	México, Manzano, Upala	16	16
Barrio Limón, Chirco, Pte.Negro	21	21	Palmera	22	22
Cebadilla, San José Pinilla	38	38	Puebla, San Ramón	20	20
Delicias	23	23	San Fernando	6	6
La Bolsa	23	23	San Ramón, El Salto	21	21
Las Cuestas, Paraíso Venado, Lagartillo	45	45	Victoria Porvenir	22	22
			TOTAL	1,207	1,209

Impact:

Many vulnerable families, especially those located in rural and remote areas rely on domestic wells having neither access nor funds to connect to the national water system network. Flood water had contaminated these family wells and left many people without access to safe drinking water. The rehabilitation of wells has therefore assisted affected families to return to their normal routines in the aftermath of the floods. Families also benefited from hygiene talks which have assisted in raising awareness on the safe management of clean water sources, thus contributing to the prevention of water-borne illnesses.

Challenges:

Continued heavy rains and further flooding over the implementation period caused delays in cleaning activities in the field. The operation was extended for three additional months (until 17 March 2009) to allow for all activities to be completed. The extension enabled the operation to reach more families than initially planned, including families affected by Tropical Depression 16.

Conclusion

The CRRC response operation to the floods has had a positive impact on the lives of the affected families. Whilst generous in-kind donations from the Costa Rican public were distributed to meet emergency needs, the CRRC developed actions to fill gaps in assistance contributing to efforts enabling families to return to their homes.

Despite challenges presented by further floods over the 2008 hurricane season, the National Society has succeeded in meeting project objectives, and in reaching a greater number of families than originally planned. Savings due to sharp decreases in fuel prices during the implementation period have also assisted the CRRC to extend its actions to meet a greater number of families than originally foreseen and the possibility of procuring additional volunteer rescue equipment.

The operation has had a significant impact in strengthening institutional capacities, internal processes and external relations which have served to support subsequent emergency response operations in the country, including the floods that struck the provinces of Limón, Alajuela and Heredia during November 2008.

- **Institutional capacity-building:** The organization of specialized training in water and sanitation has been particularly valuable, forming a core team of volunteers and staff available to assist in emergencies which occurred in other areas of the country. The volunteer equipment provided by this DREF operation was utilized in the subsequent emergency response operation, Costa Rica and Panama - Floods (MDR43005), in the province of Limón. This confirms that the capacity of the National Society has been strengthened in order to face new emergencies.
- **Strengthening of inter-institutional links:** Close coordination with government actors responsible for the emergency response, social welfare, as well as for the provision of water was required throughout the operation from the initial planning stages to the actual implementation of activities. The active involvement of government officials in the monitoring of the work undertaken has provided quality control and approval, as well as ensuring the effective transfer of capacities in this area which contributes to the sustainability of the intervention over the medium term.
- **Strengthening of community links:** The development of actions in water and sanitation has enabled both volunteers and staff to consolidate links with community members, enhancing their understanding of community social development processes and existing needs. Given the frequent nature of this type of emergency in the region, the training provided under this operation provides skills vital for future interventions.
- **Public and media relations:** The CRRC national appeal requesting relief items from public and private donors, and subsequent articles and interviews in the affected areas has contributed to raise public awareness of the emergency and associated community needs. It is hoped the public has gained greater awareness of the role of the Red Cross, not only in the immediate response to the emergency but in its wider role supporting the rehabilitation of affected communities.

Water and sanitation field activities were completed by January 2009. The procurement of replacement material for water and sanitation and volunteer rescue equipment was completed in the first week of March 2009. The CRRC volunteers worked to raise awareness amongst the targeted communities in water and hygiene promotion between February and March 2009.

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

MDRCR003 - Costa Rica - Floods

Final Financial Report

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2008/9-2009/5
Budget Timeframe	2008/9-2009/5
Appeal	MDRCR003
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
A. Budget	81,000					81,000
B. Opening Balance	0					0
Income						
<u>Other Income</u>						
<i>Voluntary Income</i>	70,314					70,314
C5. Other Income	70,314					70,314
C. Total Income = SUM(C1..C5)	70,314					70,314
D. Total Funding = B + C	70,314					70,314
Appeal Coverage	87%					87%

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. Opening Balance	0					0
C. Income	70,314					70,314
E. Expenditure	-70,314					-70,314
F. Closing Balance = (B + C + E)	0					0

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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
BUDGET (C)		81,000					81,000	
Supplies								
Water & Sanitation	45,000	26,936				26,936	18,064	
Utensils & Tools		11,818				11,818	-11,818	
Total Supplies	45,000	38,754				38,754	6,246	
Transport & Storage								
Storage		123				123	-123	
Distribution & Monitoring	2,000	1,886				1,886	114	
Transport & Vehicle Costs	10,735	7,754				7,754	2,981	
Total Transport & Storage	12,735	9,763				9,763	2,972	
Personnel								
Regionally Deployed Staff	700	1,707				1,707	-1,007	
National Staff		637				637	-637	
National Society Staff	11,500	12,418				12,418	-918	
Total Personnel	12,200	14,762				14,762	-2,562	
Workshops & Training								
Workshops & Training	1,800	2,256				2,256	-456	
Total Workshops & Training	1,800	2,256				2,256	-456	
General Expenditure								
Travel	800	829				829	-29	
Information & Public Relation	600	194				194	406	
Office Costs	1,500	220				220	1,280	
Communications	600	91				91	509	
Professional Fees		38				38	-38	
Financial Charges	500	-2,282				-2,282	2,782	
Total General Expenditure	4,000	-909				-909	4,909	
Programme Support								
Program Support	5,265	4,493				4,493	772	
Total Programme Support	5,265	4,493				4,493	772	
Services								
Services & Recoveries		1,194				1,194	-1,194	
Total Services		1,194				1,194	-1,194	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (D)	81,000	70,314				70,314	10,686	
VARIANCE (C - D)		10,686				10,686		