DREF operation update

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Argentina: Floods

DREF operation n° MDRAR006
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Update n° 1
8 January 2010

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 and 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.

Period covered by this update: 3 December to 30 December 2009.

Summary: CHF 230,629 (USD 229,848 or EUR 152,957) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 3 December 2009 to support the Argentine Red Cross (ARC) in delivering assistance to some 944 families.

The Parana and Uruguay Rivers, in the northeast of Argentina overflowed due to heavy rain from the previous month. The floods affected more than 22,000 people from the provinces of Entre Ríos, Chaco and Corrientes. After the completion of damage and needs assessments, the ARC is focusing its efforts on providing the affected people with basic health care, essential relief items, and health and hygiene promotion.

During this reporting period the Argentine Red Cross, through its local branches, has provided psychosocial support and health talks to more than 7,431 people in the cities of Resistencia, Concordia, Concepción del Uruguay and Mercedes.

As a result of savings in the cost of relief items the National Society will be able to reach 1,000 families with basic non-food items.

Argentine Red Cross volunteers conduct census lists in a collective centre, Entre Rios province. Source: Argentine Red Cross

This operation is expected to be implemented in three months, and will therefore be completed by 2 March 2010. In line with Federation reporting standards, the Final Report (narrative and financial) will be made available 90 days after the end of the operation (by 2 June 2010).

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

<click here to view contact details>

The situation

On 23 November 2009, heavy storms severely affected the provinces located in the north-eastern region of Argentina. The provinces of Chaco, Corrientes, Entre Rios, Formosa, northern Salta and Santa Fé were affected by the storms and floods that caused damages in several communities. The Parana and Uruguay Rivers overflowed in the north-eastern region and caused the death of seven people and more than 15,000 people were evacuated in the provinces of Entre Ríos, Chaco and Corrientes, while 7,000 people sought refuge in the homes of friends and family.

According to official data, more than 22,000 people were affected in the three provinces and the city that sustained the most damages was Concordia located in the province of Entre Rios. Nevertheless, all basic utility services have been re-established.

To date, 2,200 people (300 families) are in 28 collective centres that remain open since the onset of the emergency in the city of Concordia. Currently the Parana and Uruguay Rivers's water levels have returned to normal and have been in constant decline.

Actions by the Government

The three levels of the government have been involved since the beginning of the emergency (national, provincial and municipal authorities), including the Armed Forces and Security Forces (Naval and provincial police). At national level, technicians and public officials from the Ministry of Social Development and the National Department of Sanitary Emergencies (Dirección Nacional de Emergencias Sanitarias) were mobilized and the main actions accomplished were:

- Dispatch of complementary humanitarian assistance.
- Mobilization of specialized technical personnel to the affected areas
- Deferral of emergency scholarships to students in the affected areas, until students are able to return to classes.
- Logistical support (Armed Forces)
- Rescue and evacuations (Armed forces and Naval prefecture: coast guard)

At local level, the rescue activities, rehabilitation of basic services and first response activities were carried out by the municipal authorities with the support of the provincial authorities. Additionally, municipal authorities have been completing cleaning activities in the flooded areas. Moreover, the Administrative Commission of Salto Grande's Special Funds (Comisión Administradora de Fondos Especiales de Salto Grande) is responsible for carrying out cleaning activities, reconstruction and construction of houses in the city of Concordia (Entre Ríos province).

Argentine Red Cross volunteers conduct interviews with affected families in a collective centre to complete census lists, Chaco province. Source: Argentine Red Cross

The Argentine Red Cross plan of action focuses on the cities of Resistencia (Chaco province), Mercedes (Corrientes province), Concepción del Uruguay and Concordia (Entre Ríos province). The ARC has been carrying out activities outlined in its plan of action through the established Emergency Operation Committees (Comites Operativos de Emergencia, COE). To date, there are two remaining COE open in the cities of Concepción del Uruguay and Concordia.

The municipal government of Concordia is withdrawing its support to the collective centres in the city, but the sheltered people are reluctant to leave until their homes are rehabilitated.

Coordination and partnerships

Since the onset of the emergency the Argentine Red Cross has maintained constant communication with other agencies to improve the impact of the response and guarantee a safe operation. The objectives of this coordination included to: a) ensure the immediate needs are met avoiding duplicity of actions, b) ensure the identification of the affected and most vulnerable communities that have not received any assistance, c) involve the affected population in the relief operation, and d) guarantee the safety of personnel and resources in the operation.

The provincial authorities of Chaco, Corrientes and Entre Rios along with the municipal authorities from the affected cities (Resistencia, Concordia, Concepción del Uruguay and Mercedes) coordinated the response activities. Several meetings were held to share information and make decisions based on the completed assessments.

Several State organizations, non-governmental-organizations (NGOs) and the media have provided essential equipment and resources (logistical and administrative) to the Argentine Red Cross in order to carry out initial assessments and draw up a plan of action.

The Argentine Red Cross has maintained communication with several governmental and non-governmental organizations including the governor of the province of Entre Ríos, authorities from the Ministry of Social Development in the Entre Ríos and Chaco provinces, the municipal authorities of Concordia, Concepción del Uruguay and Mercedes, the Civil Defence of Concordia, collective centres, the Police Department, the Fire Department and several NGOs, including Caritas and Save the Children.

An Argentine Red Cross volunteer carries out recreational activities with children in a collective centre. Source: Argentine Red Cross

Additionally, the ARC is part of the Risk Management Institutional Network (the Argentine Emergency Network) along with Save the Children, Comisión Cascos Blancos, Caritas, Scouts of Argentina, Acción Sur and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The ARC has also been in constant communication with the Civil Protection National Department to obtain information on the affected areas.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Several types of emergencies have affected Argentina in the past year including drought and floods. Since 1 October 2009, the ARC has been monitoring the climatic trends and sharing information with local branches. An intervention strategy was designed based on the assessments and local evaluations completed. Additionally, national resources were mobilized in the affected areas including one technician who was deployed to Concordia (the most affected city due to the overflowed Uruguay River).

During this reporting period the ARC has maintained open the headquarters' Technical Crisis Committee which has been carrying out the following activities:

- Conducting damage and needs assessments to provide support to the affected local branches.
- Designing national intervention strategies (based on the assessments and local evaluations carried out by the local branches and/or technicians deployed to the areas).
- Mobilization of national resources to the most affected areas. Two missions were carried out:

- A local emergency assessment mission and support to the Concordia branch in disaster management (1 technician: National Intervention Team member - NIT)
- A general assessment mission and support to the Resistencia, Concordia and Mercedes branches to draw up the plan of action for this DREF-funded operation (1 technician: NIT member).

- Drawing up a plan of action to request DREF support.
- Management of DREF funds in coordination with the four affected local branches.
- Hiring of one regional technician.
- Hiring of two local part-time technicians in Concordia.
- Dispatching of visibility material (t-shirts, caps, flags and humanitarian assistance bags).
- Dispatching of volunteer protective equipment to the affected local branches.

The following volunteers have been participating in this emergency response operation:

Local branch	Number of ARC volunteers
Resistencia	20
Mercedes - Corrientes	8
Concepcion del Uruguay	15
Concordia	26
Total	**69**

Progress towards objectives

The ARC initially drew up a plan of action to assist approximately 944 families. During this reporting period the ARC obtained savings due to reduced costs of relief items, therefore it will aim to assist 1,000 families in the cities of Resistencia, Concordia, Concepción del Uruguay and Mercedes - Corrientes. This DREF operation is focusing on distribution of relief items, provision of emergency health care, as well as water, sanitation and hygiene promotion. To date, the following actions have been accomplished:

- Emergency damage assessments
- Identification of needs and design of a plan of action
- Beneficiary assessments and partial beneficiary census (the total number of beneficiaries has increased to 1,000 families, therefore additional beneficiaries are being identified)
- Provision of psychosocial support to children and adults (PSP) in 46 collective centres and 15 communities (done through house visits)
- Provision of first aid in 17 temporary shelters
- Community health talks in 46 temporary shelters
- Procurement of the initial quantity of relief items

To date, the ARC has reached approximately 7,431 people with psychosocial support and health talks:

City	Beneficiaries (approx.)
Resistencia	3,910 people
Concordia	2,220 people
Concepción del Uruguay	953 people
Mercedes - Corrientes	348 people

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)
Objective: 944 families will receive hygiene kits, cleaning kits and kitchen kits in the provinces of Chaco, Entre Ríos and Corrientes.
Activities planned: • Develop beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system to deliver intended assistance. • Procurement of items for the kits. • Preparation of kits to be distributed. • Distribute relief supplies and control supply movements from point of dispatch to end user. • Monitor and evaluate the relief activities and provide reporting on relief distributions. • Develop an exit strategy.

Due to savings incurred on pricings of relief items, 1,000 families will receive essential relief items instead of the 944 initially planned. The relief items will be distributed in the following affected cities:

Province	City
Chaco	Resistencia
Entre Rios	Concordia
	Concepción del Uruguay
Corrientes	Mercedes

The kits will contain the following items:

Hygiene kit (adult)	
1 Family for 7 people for 1 month	
7	Body soaps
7	Toothbrushes
3	Toothpaste
3	Hygiene pads
12	Rolls of toilet paper
1	Shampoo
1	Comb
3	Small towels
3	Large towels
3	Disposable shaving razors

Children's Hygiene kits	
For children up to 36 months for 1 month	
120	Diapers (small, medium and large)
2	Cotton bags
1	Shampoo
1	Body soap

Kitchen kits	
1 family for 1 month	
7	Plastic cups
7	Plastic plates
7	Stainless steel spoons
7	Stainless steel forks
7	Stainless steel knives
1	Pot with handles from 5 to 10 litres
2	Match boxes of 250 each
1	Kettle

Cleaning kits	
1 family for 7 people for 1 month	
1	Broom
1	Mop
1	Hand brush
1	Concentrated detergent (5 litres)
10	Plastic trash bags (10 units)
1	Kitchen gloves
1	Chlorine (5 litres)
2	Floor rags
1	10 to12 litre bucket
2	Sponges
2	Kitchen towel
3	White soap
1	Garbage pail

Progress:
To date, the ARC has procured items for:

- 944 hygiene kits for adults and children and kitchen kits (742 beneficiary families have been identified).
- 444 cleaning kits (402 beneficiary families have been identified).

The first distribution is scheduled for the second week of January 2010.

Challenges:
No challenges have been identified within this objective

Emergency health

Objective: The well-being of the affected families is improved through the provision of psychosocial support to the affected people and recreational activities for children in collective centres in the provinces of Chaco, Entre Ríos and Corrientes.
Activities planned: • Carry out recreational activities with children in collective centres or that have been evacuated. • Carry out psychosocial support workshops for men and women in collective centres. • Distribution of informational material on stress management. • Establish contact and agreements with mental health centres and hospitals.

Progress:
The Argentine Red Cross psychosocial support intervention in the four targeted cities has reached a total of 7,431 people in collective centres and communities. Of the people who received support, 30.7 per cent were children.

Recreational activities were carried out in 46 collective centres and 9 communities, reaching 2,279 children, described as follows:

City	Collective Centre	Number of children
Concordia	Polifuncional	30
	Almafuerte School	40
	29 collective centres	650
Subtotal		**720**

Concepción del Uruguay	**Collective Centre**	
	SUM (B. Lanus)	**143**
	Physical Education Centre	
	Santiago del Estero School	
	CIC (B. 30 de Octubre)	

Resistencia	**Community**	
	Barranqueras x 6	30
	MAPIC	30
	Collective Centre	
	404 School	**1,140**
	130 School	
	969 School	
	184 School	
	963 School	
	MAPIC School	
	Toba School	
	Villalba School	
	Villa los Lirios School	
	942 School	
	242 School	
Subtotal		**1,200**

Mercedes	**Community**	
	Las Garzas	68
	Noreste	148
Subtotal		**216**
TOTAL		**2,279**

Psychosocial support was also provided to adults in the 46 collective centres and 15 communities reaching 5,152 adults described as follows:

City	Collective Centre	Number of adults
Concordia	Polifuncional	51
	Almafuerte School	60
	29 Collective centres	1,389
Subtotal		**1,500**

	Community	
Concepción del Uruguay	Cantera 25	220
	Lanas	50
	San Isidro	25
	Villa Itape	30
	San Jose	50
	Islas	250
	Collective Centre	
	Lanu Multi-Purpose Hall	30
	Centro de educacion fisica Physical Education Centre	50
	Santiago del Estero School	50
	Integrated Community Centre	55
Subtotal		**810**

	Community	
Resistencia	Barranqueras x 6	550
	MAPIC	760
	Collective Centre	
	404 School	**1,400**
	130 School	
	969 School	
	184 School	
	963 School	
	MAPIC School	
	Toba School	
	Villalba School	
	Villa los Lirios School	
	942 School	
	242 School	
Subtotal		**2,710**

Mercedes	**Community**	
	Las Garzas	88
	Noreste	44
Subtotal		**132**
TOTAL		**5,152**

In the three local branches in Concordia, Concepción del Uruguay and Resistencia, the main activity accomplished to date has been working in collective centres to develop census lists of the affected people, as well as the provision of psychosocial support and talks on prevention of disease. On the other hand, in Mercedes the ARC local branch is focusing its efforts on communities.

Challenges:
There have been no challenges identified within this objective

Water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion

Objective: 944 families will receive vector control kits and 444 families will receive water and sanitation kits to reduce the spread of water-borne diseases in the affected provinces of Chaco, Entre Rios and Corrientes.

Activities planned:
- Identification and census list of beneficiaries.
- Procurement of items for the kits.
- Preparation of kits to be distributed.
- Distribution of 944 vector control kits and 444 water and sanitation kits
- Monitor and evaluate the activities and provide reporting on distributions.
- Conduct two workshops on prevention of disease (focusing on respiratory infections, diarrhoea, venomous animals, yellow fever, dengue fever and HIV)
- Distribution of material with information on disease prevention in schools, health centres, hospitals and community centres.
- Dissemination of key messages through radio spots (already designed).
- Conduct community talks on waste management and safe water handling.
- Mobilization of people to assist in community cleaning activities.

The vector control kits will contain the following items:

Vector control kits	
1 family for 7 people for 1 month	
5	Aerosol repellents (adults)
3	Cream repellents (children)

The water and sanitation kits will contain the following items:

Water and sanitation kits	
1 family for 7 people	
1	10 litre jerry can with cover
1	2 litre water jug
2	1 litre of chlorine
1	Dropper

Progress:
The ARC has procured the items for 944 vector control kits (742 beneficiary families have already been identified) and 494 water and sanitation kits (402 beneficiary families have been identified in Concepción del Uruguay, Resistencia and Mercedes). The distributions are scheduled for the second week of January 2010. In addition, the ARC has distributed 40 volunteer protection kits which included the following items:

Volunteer protection kit	
1	Working gloves
2	Insect repellent
1	Rain coat
1	Pair of waterproof boots
2	Antibacterial gel

In order to disseminate information at the community level on health and hygiene promotion to reduce the risk of water-borne and other diseases, the following ARC branches received community health material:

Local branch	Poster	Flyers	Triptych	Condoms
Resistencia	1,400	13,600	700	1,440
Mercedes - Corrientes	1,400	13,600	700	1,440
Concepción del Uruguay	1,400	13,600	700	1,440
Concordia	1,400	13,600	700	2,880
TOTAL	**5,600**	**54,400**	**2,800**	**7,200**

The communication materials include information on dengue, chagas, leishmaniasis, leptospirosis, HIV, diarrhoea, safe water handling, acute respiratory infections, breastfeeding, yellow fever and waste management.

The ARC will conduct the two workshops on prevention of diseases (focusing on respiratory infections, diarrhoea, venomous animals, yellow fever, dengue fever and HIV) along with the distribution of the hygiene kits, cleaning kits and vector control kits. Nevertheless, informal health talks were conducted in 46 collective centres in Concordia, Concepción del Uruguay and Resistencia reaching approximately 5,000 people.

Challenges:
There have been no challenges identified in this objective.

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

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