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DREF final report

Albania: Extreme winter conditions

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF operation n° MDRAL004
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The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of unearmarked 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.



Red Cross Team delivering the relief assistance in Kukes Town



Distribution in Shllak Commune in Shkodra Prefecture

CHF 129,185 was allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 9th February 2012 to support the Red Cross of Albania in delivering immediate assistance to some 1,000 families (5,000 beneficiaries) and to replenish disaster preparedness stocks.

Summary:

Harsh winter with unusually abundant snowfall (1-1.5 meters of snow in rural areas with temperatures averaging minus 10 degrees Celsius) hit the northern and eastern parts of Albania. Several major highways and side roads were blocked by the snow. According to official sources, the total number of snow-trapped people in the communes of Puka, Shkodra, Kukes, Peshkopia, Librazhd, Korça districts amounted to 230,000 at its height. Five people lost their lives due to the extreme cold.

The initial objective of the operation was to support 1,000 affected families with humanitarian assistance but owing to the fact that the areas occupied by snow grew rapidly and so even more families were in need, the Albania Red Cross had to address the needs of the 2,150 most vulnerable families (11,000 people), mainly poor ones with sick and elderly members, who were completely isolated by the heavy snow and nearing the end of their food reserves. Their most urgent needs were food, hygienic kits and blankets. The Albanian Red Cross provided them with the needed relief items, and assisted them in preserving their health in the harsh weather conditions.

The Albanian National Society launched a national fundraising campaign and therefore managed to engage other donors such as the German Red Cross and the Vodafone Foundation who contributed to this relief operation. The Canadian Red Cross and the Canadian International Development Agency contributed with CHF 18,455 to the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund in replenishment of the allocation made for this operation.

This operation was implemented for two months: it started on 10th February 2012 and was completed on 9th April 2012.

The major donors and partners of DREF include the Australian, American and Belgian Governments, the Austrian Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross and the Canadian Government, the Danish Red Cross and the Danish Government, the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), the Irish and the Italian Governments, the Japanese Red Cross Society, the Luxembourg Government, the Monaco Red Cross and the Monaco Government, the Netherlands Red Cross and the Netherlands Government, the Norwegian Red Cross and the Norwegian Government, the Spanish Government, the Swedish Red Cross and the Swedish Government, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the Medtronic and Z Zurich Foundations, and other corporate and private donors. The IFRC, on behalf of the Albanian Red Cross, would like to extend their thanks to all donors and partners for their generous contributions. Details of all donors can be found at http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/Active/MAA00010_2012.pdf

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

The situation

During January and the beginning of February in 2012, unusually abundant snowfall (1-1.5 m of snow in rural areas with temperatures averaging minus 10 degrees Celsius) hit the northern and north-eastern parts of Albania. In Bulqiza the temperature dropped to 25 degrees Celsius below zero. The snow blocked some major highways and many side roads, which resulted in a high number of people cut off from the rest of the country in the communes of Puka, Shkodra, Kukes, Peshkopia, Librazhd, Korça in the north-eastern districts and in other communes in Gramsh, Permet, Tepelene Skrapar in the south-eastern districts.

The population living in the most affected areas is usually prepared to face the challenges of the winter weather; however, the conditions during January and February 2012 were extraordinary with extreme low temperatures and snow blockades. Poor families and older people residing in the remote villages and communes were especially vulnerable due to being isolated, running out of food and being unable to keep their homes warm enough.

Due to the worsening weather conditions, the situation in the isolated areas deteriorated further and resulted in more affected communes and towns and more blocked roads, especially in the north-eastern part of Albania. According to the figures provided by the Directorate of Civil Emergency, the total number of the affected people increased to 230,000 residents.

The media reported about five people frozen to death during the coldest days. The communes that were cut off reported interruptions in electricity supply due to sporadic network malfunctions caused by the heavy snow.

The Ministry of Education and Science had advised the Education Directories to suspend or temporarily limit the operation of primary, secondary and higher education institutions in these areas to ensure the safety of students and save energy.

The Albanian Government was closely observing the situation. The Prime Minister declared a state of emergency on 12th February 2012. The government set up an inter-ministerial commission led by the Minister of Interior that was assigned to be in charge of managing the situation with all the actors asked to respond to the situation within their mandates.

The Albanian Government was responsible for road cleaning works and other immediate damage repairs. The State Reserves prepared and distributed the relief for 500 families implemented by helicopters from the Ministry of Defense. The helicopters of the Ministry of Health were evacuating sick people with urgent cases from the blocked areas to Tirana Hospital, in total 25 patients.

Coordination and partnerships

The Albanian Red Cross was coordinating its response activities with the authorities at both national and local level.

The President of the Albanian Red Cross contacted the Prime Minister and the Inter-Ministerial Commission in a letter informing them about the Albanian Red Cross action and relief operation. The secretaries of Red Cross branches in the isolated areas were members of the communal emergency structures and participated

in all the meetings of the Emergency Management Commissions in order to help coordinating the response efforts.

The Secretary General of the Albanian Red Cross and its Disaster Management Programme Coordinator worked closely with the National Directorate for Civil Emergency, the Operational Centre of the Ministry of Interior and other stakeholders involved.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The initial objective of the operation was to support 1,000 affected families with humanitarian assistance including food and non-food items. Owing to the fact that the snow-buried area grew larger and more families were in need, the Albanian Red Cross was able to address the needs of a total of 2,150 families due to the support from the IFRC, the German Red Cross (with a support of EUR 40,000) and the Vodafone Foundation,

Achievements against outcomes

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

Outcome: 2,150 most vulnerable families (approximately 11,000 people) blocked by snow will preserve their health through the provided food, hygiene items and blankets.

Outputs (expected results) and activities planned: The food and hygiene needs of the most vulnerable people will be met through distribution of food and non-food items.

- Conduct the needs assessments and prepare the list of beneficiaries with local authorities.
- Procure food and non-food items for distribution and replenishment.
- Prepare a system of data reporting and monitoring distribution.
- Organise distribution to the beneficiaries.
- Monitor and evaluate the relief activities and provide reports on relief distributions.

The Albanian Red Cross intervention is based on its Plan of Action for Disaster Management corresponding and aligned to the National Plan for Civil Emergency Situations. The National Society's mandate is to act with the purpose of alleviating as much as possible the sufferings of the vulnerable, in accordance with its capacities and access to the affected population.

The Albanian Red Cross took the following steps in order to respond to the situation:

- 18 branches of the Albanian Red Cross (Shkodra, Dibra, Kukes, Puka, Librazh, Korça, Bulqiza, Tropoja, Erseka, Permeti etc.) situated in the isolated areas were carefully following the situation as well as participating in the meetings of the Emergency Commissions set up at Prefecture and Commune levels to coordinate the response.
- Cooperation was established at national level with the Directorate of Emergency Situations in the Ministry of Interior.
- The Albanian Red Cross Society prepared the existing disaster preparedness stock for distributions and started the initial relief distribution to help 300 families identified as the most vulnerable in the isolated areas. The immediate relief assistance consisted of a family package containing: blankets 4 pieces, wheat flour 25 kg, white beans 5 kg, cooking oil 5 litres, sugar 5 kg, rice 5 kg, and hygiene kit 1 box.
- A commission at the Headquarters was established for procurement of the food items according to the Albanian Red Cross procurement procedures in line with the IFRC standards.

Due to the bad road conditions, the data available was provided via telephone through the Red Cross branches and later on when access was possible the assessment was conducted through visiting the communities in the area. The assessment confirmed that in these communes there were a considerable number of extremely poor families with almost depleted or no food reserves whose urgent needs were met with food and other non food items.

The assessment identified the following number of the poorest families in need in the isolated communes according to the prefecture administrative division as following:

- Shkodra Prefecture (12 Communes): 580 families
- Kukes Prefecture (9 Communes): 430 families
- Dibra (8 Communes): 420 families
- Elbasan (5 Communes) 150 families

- Korca (10 Communes): 420 families
- Gjirokastrë (5 Communes): 150 families

A total of 2,150 vulnerable families in need were planned to be assisted through this operation. Their needs were mostly for warm clothes, hygiene items, and food as most of their efforts and funds have went into securing firewood and heating fuel.

The operation was carried out in cooperation with the authorities in the Prefectures situated in the Communes affected by the snow. After receiving the lists of affected people from the authorities, the Red Cross branches prepared final lists of families to be reached and informed the families about the date and place of distributions.

The families to be reached were selected according to the following criteria:

- Families situated in the area blocked by snow
- Families with damages to their homes, poor families with very low income, elderly households, or older individuals living alone, as well as families with sick members.

There was only one round of distribution, so each family received one standard full package that consisted of the following pieces of relief items: food parcel 20 kg, wheat flour 25 kg, hygienic kit 1 piece, and blankets 4 pieces.

Impact

The Albanian Red Cross Branches mobilized volunteers (8-10 volunteers at each branch) and staff trained in disaster preparedness and response to distribute the packages according to the list prepared by Prefectures and Communes.

Normally the transport of goods to the destination was done by the National Society trucks whereas the local authorities provided their trucks to reach the most isolated settlements to the communes where the roads were blocked.

Table of distribution areas according to the Donors contributions

No	The districts / ARC Branches	Albanian RC stock distributed	DREF		German RC	Vodafone Foundation	Total distributed
			Distributed	Replenishing ARC stock			
1	Shkoder	50	140			80	270
2	Kukes	50			180		230
3	Diber	50			50	60	160
4	Puke	50			50	60	160
5	Malesi e Madhe	50			50	50	150
6	Librazhd	50	50				100
7	Korce		100		60		160
8	Burrel		50		50		100
9	Has		50		50		100
10	Tropoje		50		50		100
11	Bulqize				60	100	160
12	Devoll		50				50
13	Pogradec		110				110
14	Kolonje		50		50		100
15	Gramsh		50				50
16	Petmet				50		50
17	Tepelene				50		50
18	Skrapar				50		50
	Replenishing DP stock			300			
	Total	300	700	0	800	350	2150

Table of food and non-food items distributed

	Quantities distributed in total	Quantities covered by Albanian RC stock	Quantities covered by DREF		Quantities covered by German RC	Quantities covered by Vodafone Foundation
			Distributed	Replenish ARC stock		
Food items						
White flour (KG)	53,750	7,500	17,500	7,500	20,000	8,750
Rice (KG)	10,750	1,500	3,500	1,500	4,000	1,750
Vegetable oil(Lt)	10,750	1,500	3,500	1,500	4,000	1,750
Sugar (KG)	10,750	1,500	3,500	1,500	4,000	1,750
White beans(KG)	10,750	1,500	3,500	1,500	4,000	1,750
Non food Items						
Blankets (pieces)	8,600	8,600	--	10,000	--	--
Hygiene kits	2,150	300	700	300	800	350

Procurement of food and non-food items

The purchase of food items was in general procured from suppliers selected by the Albania Red Cross (ARC) commission, with whom the National Society had signed agreements in advance. The National Society's tender commission negotiated quantities and prices with the suppliers and then signed contracts with them. The quantities purchased for each item were calculated by taking into consideration the number of beneficiaries, standard rations and donor contributions. Also the National Society signed another contract with the suppliers for the amount of items that each donor contributed for this relief operation.

Due to financial crisis and bankruptcy, the suppliers did not have pre-positioned stock ready in advance for the other three food items (sugar, rice and beans) according to agreements with the Albanian RC. Therefore, the procurement was done through a tendering procedure that was managed by the tender commission, following the necessary steps specified by the Albanian Red Cross administrative regulations. Six companies provided offers and item specifications of the items. Based on that information, the commission did a comparative bid analysis and decided to sign agreements with the best bidders.

Meanwhile, for the hygiene kits, the purchase was done with the company that the ARC selected as the winner during its open tender procedure for the replenishment of the disaster preparedness stock that had happened recently. The purchase for replenishing blankets distributed from the disaster preparedness stock was conducted by the Federation Logistic Unit in Dubai with support from the IFRC Europe Zone Office in Budapest.

Evaluation of the operation

The evaluation of the operation was carried out at the headquarters of the Albanian Red Cross, with the participation of governance members, volunteers who were involved during the distribution, and secretaries of the Red Cross branches involved in the operation.

Results of the evaluation of the operation were the following:

- At the initial phase of the operation the information gathering and assessment activities were limited due to the situation that some settlements could not be reached. The only way of communication was through mobile telephones with the heads of villages and communities in the area. Therefore the National Society concluded that the extension of the National Society volunteer network in communes and villages is needed in order to receive first hand information from the affected areas in a short period of time.
- The Albanian Red Cross established good cooperation with the Emergency Management Commission at central level and with local authorities, to coordinate the distributions and to avoid duplicating the contributions.

- The parcels distributed by the Albanian Red Cross were highly appreciated by the people reached during the operation, not only because of their contents, but also due to the fact that families received standard rations, meaning that all families received similar amount of items.
- One of the principles in disaster is “Help to be helped”. This means that the communities themselves need to be prepared in normal time, such as creating reserves in basic food items, fire-wood, medicine etc. The National Society can see its role in raising awareness of the communities for the risks threatening them and the measures that they can take in advance for reducing risks.
- Some areas were inaccessible to deliver the relief to the communes with trucks. Therefore alternative ways for delivering the relief support to the affected areas should be elaborated and partners should be found who are able to support the National Society with alternative means of transportation.
- Volunteers previously trained in assessment and disaster response proved to be an invaluable part of the operation. Their continuous training has to be followed-up and ensured to keep up their motivation and involvement in different types of activities of the National Society.
- The early warning system for this kind of emergency didn’t function properly in terms of information sharing such as announcement of weather conditions and steps to be taken by the governmental structures for keeping the main roads available. It has been agreed that the early warning system should be improved in the future.

Challenges

The major challenges were the road blocks caused by the snow, which limited the accessibility for the Albanian Red Cross teams to reach the areas and meet the target people. However these issues were solved as the activities were first implemented in the suburb of towns and as soon as roads were cleaned by the responsible authorities the Red Cross teams managed to reach vulnerable people in the commune areas.

The distribution process was not combined with any other awareness raising activity. There is need to work more intensively to raise the awareness of communities of risks and preparedness they can do themselves to mitigate the effects of the disasters.

While the purchase of food items was planned according to pre-signed contracts with suppliers, due to the financial crisis two suppliers went bankrupt, so the purchase of three food items was done with tender through comparative bid analyses.

Communications

Albanian Red Cross activities were reflected regularly on the website and magazines of the Albanian RC. The communications coordinator of the National Society regularly prepared and shared information with the media.

Red Cross visibility was ensured in all phases of the operation through the Red Cross emblems indicated on the food packages. The volunteers wore uniforms, and visible Red Cross logos were placed on the trucks and boards.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- **Red Cross of Albania:** Zamir Muça, Secretary General, phone: +355 42227508; email: zmuca@kksh.org.al
- **IFRC Europe Zone:** Alberto Monguzzi, Disaster Management Coordinator (acting); office phone:+36 1 8884 500; email: alberto.monguzzi@ifrc.org
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DREF history:

- This DREF was initially allocated on 9th February 2012 for CHF 129,185 for two months to assist 5,000 beneficiaries.
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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.

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Saving lives, changing minds.



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.



Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2012/2-5
Budget Timeframe	2012/2-4
Appeal	MDRAL004
Budget	APPROVED

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

I. Funding

	Disaster Management	Health and Social Services	National Society Development	Principles and Values	Coordination	TOTAL	Deferred Income
A. Budget	129,185					129,185	
B. Opening Balance	0					0	
Income							
<u>Other Income</u>							
<i>DREF Allocations</i>	129,185					129,185	
C4. Other Income	129,185					129,185	
C. Total Income = SUM(C1..C4)	129,185					129,185	
D. Total Funding = B +C	129,185					129,185	
Coverage = D/A	100%					100%	

II. Movement of Funds

	Disaster Management	Health and Social Services	National Society Development	Principles and Values	Coordination	TOTAL	Deferred Income
B. Opening Balance	0					0	
C. Income	129,185					129,185	
E. Expenditure	-129,185					-129,185	
F. Closing Balance = (B + C + E)	0					0	

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2012/2-5
Budget Timeframe	2012/2-4
Appeal	MDRAL004
Budget	APPROVED

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

III. Expenditure

Account Groups	Budget	Expenditure					TOTAL	Variance
		Disaster Management	Health and Social Services	National Society Development	Principles and Values	Coordination		
A							B	A - B
BUDGET (C)		129,185					129,185	
Relief items, Construction, Supplies								
Clothing & Textiles	32,000						32,000	
Food	65,000						65,000	
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	15,000						15,000	
Total Relief items, Construction, Supplies	112,000						112,000	
Logistics, Transport & Storage								
Distribution & Monitoring	1,700						1,700	
Transport & Vehicles Costs	4,200						4,200	
Total Logistics, Transport & Storage	5,900						5,900	
Personnel								
National Society Staff	500						500	
Volunteers	200						200	
Total Personnel	700						700	
Workshops & Training								
Workshops & Training	2,000						2,000	
Total Workshops & Training	2,000						2,000	
General Expenditure								
Communications	500						500	
Financial Charges	200						200	
Other General Expenses		0				0	-0	
Total General Expenditure	700	0				0	700	
Contributions & Transfers								
Cash Transfers National Societies		121,300				121,300	-121,300	
Total Contributions & Transfers		121,300				121,300	-121,300	
Indirect Costs								
Programme & Services Support Recov	7,885	7,885				7,885	0	
Total Indirect Costs	7,885	7,885				7,885	0	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (D)	129,185	129,185				129,185	-0	
VARIANCE (C - D)		-0				-0		

DREF OPERATION

MDRAL004 Albania Red cross

08/02/2012

06/07/2012

Budget Group	DREF Grant Budget CHF	Actual expenses CHF	Variance
Shelter - Relief			
Shelter - Transitional			
Construction - Housing			
Construction - Facilities			
Construction - Materials			
Clothing & Textiles	32,000	52,482	-20,482
Food	65,000	38,847	26,153
Seeds & Plants			
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	15,000	17,344	-2,344
Medical & First Aid			
Teaching Materials			
Ustensils & Tools			
Other Supplies & Services			
Emergency Response Units			
Cash Disbursements			
Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES	112,000	108,673	3,327
Land & Buildings			
Vehicles Purchase			
Computer & Telecom Equipment			
Office/Household Furniture & Equipment			
Medical Equipment			
Other Machiney & Equipment			
Total LAND, VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT	0	0	0
Storage, Warehousing			
Dstribution & Monitoring	1,700	2,766	-1,066
Transport & Vehicle Costs	4,200	6,073	-1,873
Logistics Services			
Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE	5,900	8,838	-2,938
International Staff			
National Staff			
National Society Staff	500	1,039	-539
Volunteers	200	2,178	-1,978
Total PERSONNEL	700	3,217	-2,517
Consultants			
Professional Fees			
Total CONSULTANTS & PROFESSIONAL FEES	0	0	0
Workshops & Training	2,000	0	2,000
Total WORKSHOP & TRAINING	2,000	0	2,000
Travel			
Information & Public Relations			
Office Costs			
Communications	500	578	-78
Financial Charges	200	0	200
Other General Expenses			
Shared Support Services			
Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES	700	578	122
Programme and Supplementary Services Recovery	7,885	7,885	0
Total INDIRECT COSTS	7,885	7,885	0
TOTAL BUDGET	129,185	129,191	-6