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DREF operation update Argentina: floods

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF operation n° MDRAR007
GLIDE n° [ST-2013-000035-ARG](#)
12 July 2013

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) 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 emergency response. 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: 12 April to
13 June 2013.

Summary: 299,892 Swiss francs have been allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the National Society in delivering immediate assistance to some 9,600 beneficiaries.

A severe local storm on the night of 2 April 2013 had caused nearly 400 mm of rainfall in a 24 hour period and heavy flooding in La Plata, the capital of the Buenos Aires province. The flooding affected over 350,000 people, led to mass evacuations, and caused 51 deaths. DREF funds are being utilized to provide relief items, hygiene promotion and psychosocial support to 1,600 families in La Plata that were severely affected by this disaster. The current update has a small revision of the budget lines to better reflect the use of a cash transfer programme and the inclusion of a final evaluation of the operation.



The Argentine Red Cross (ARC) conducts recreational activities with children affected by the floods. Source: ARC

This operation is expected to be implemented over three months and will, therefore, be completed by 12 July 2013; a final report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 12 October, 2013).

The IFRC, on behalf of the National Society, would like to extend thanks to the Canadian Red Cross and government, the Coca Cola Foundation and the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) for their generous contributions to replenish the allocation made to this operation. The major donors and partners of DREF include the Australian, American and Belgian governments, the Austrian Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross and government, the Danish Red Cross and government, ECHO, the Irish and the Italian governments, the Japanese Red Cross Society, the Luxembourg government, the Monaco Red Cross and government, the Netherlands Red Cross and government, the Norwegian Red Cross and government, the Spanish government, the Swedish Red Cross and government, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the Medtronic and Z Zurich foundations, and other corporate and private donors.

<http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-management/responding/disaster-response-system/financial->

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The situation

According to data provided by the National Meteorological Service, between 5 pm on 2 April and 9 am on 3 April, 392 mm of rain fell on the city of La Plata, the capital of the Buenos Aires province. Out of the 392 mm worth of rain, 312 mm fell within a three-hour period. The previous maximum for a 24-hour period had been 155mm, as registered on 14 May 1980. Official figures state that 52 persons died as a result of the storm and approximately 3,000 were evacuated to 33 community shelters. In total, more than 300,000 people were affected by the storm and resulting flooding. The flooding inside certain districts of the city reached to a height of more than two metres inside the homes and caused the disruption of the electrical network and of the potable water supply in this city of approximately one million inhabitants.

Coordination and partnerships

The government of the Buenos Aires province, of which La Plata is the capital, launched a comprehensive program of citizen security in the aftermath of the storm. In addition, the government has provided storage facilities and transportation that have allowed the Argentine Red Cross to collect and distribute items donated by the general public. The Argentine Red Cross has also been coordinating with the Civil Defence and local authorities to determine the most affected areas that are in need of assistance.

The Argentine Red Cross has conducted inter-institutional coordination with a wide range of non-governmental organizations and representatives of the municipal, provincial and national governments, as well as with inhabitants and neighbourhood associations. The following is a glimpse of the coordination efforts:

- **Municipal mayor:** A meeting was held with the municipal mayor, Dr. Pablo Bruera, in which the plan of action of the Argentine Red Cross was presented, and the work of the National Society in the Villa Elvira neighbourhood was highlighted. Additionally, questions related to the work to clean up the public space and plots was also discussed.
- **Argentine Scouts:** A meeting was held with the Argentine Scouts in the Tolosa area and both institutions shared information.
- **Municipal delegates:** A meeting was held with each of the municipal delegates in each of the city's neighbourhoods. In these meetings, information on the work carried out by the Argentine Red Cross was presented and each delegate explained about the most urgent needs of the population. These meetings allowed for the initial identification of the main areas of work for the Argentine Red Cross.
- **President of the National University of La Plata (UNLP):** A meeting was held with the president of the UNLP, Fernando Tauber, in which the Argentine Red Cross presented its work and information was shared about the activities of the university's distinct academic schools. The Argentine Red Cross will coordinate its future work with certain departments of the university, mainly related to the treatment of water and solid waste in urban areas.
- **The provincial Ministry of Social Development:** In the meeting held with Martin Ferré, the participants suggested the establishment of coordinated work, and the ministry shared valuable information with the Argentine Red Cross.
- **La Plata Municipality Directorate for Social Volunteering:** The Argentine Red Cross was requested to actively participate in this entity due to the National Society's experience in volunteer management and administration.
- **Emergency Operations Centre (EOC):** During the initial days of the emergency, the Argentine Red Cross participated in the EOC established in the provincial Ministry of Safety, coordinating the work with a range of emergency response bodies (the Ministry of Social Development, the Argentine Armed Forces, the Security Forces and Emergency Provincial Council, among others).
- **Villa Elvira firefighters:** With the aim of having a meeting point and a location to work in the neighbourhood, a meeting was held with the head of the firefighters in Villa Elvira. The Argentine Red Cross coordinated a range of community work together with the firefighters.
- **Communications Battalion 601 of the Argentine Armed Forces:** A meeting was held with Coronel Pastor, the head of this battalion in City Bell, to discuss future joint work.
- **Permanent Council for the Study and Prevention of Emergencies and Climatic Catastrophes (at the provincial level):** At the request of the president of the provincial deputy chamber, the Argentine Red Cross participated in two meetings with the council, which was created following the flooding.

In the second half of April, some response coordination efforts were gradually put into effect. In addition to the various state portfolios at the national, provincial and municipal levels, the following institutions were also

involved: UNICEF, Caritas, the Evangelical churches, the Argentine Scouts, the Art of Living Foundation, A Roof, the Food Bank Foundation, United and Organized (La Campora), the Adventist Agency for Development and Relief (ADRA), the Solidarity Network and different unions, among others. Generally speaking, except for those organizations with a broad territorial reach (i.e. Caritas) or those that have the ability to distribute in all neighbourhoods (i.e. United and Organized), the rest are concentrated in a specific neighbourhood or support the local community kitchens, schools, libraries, etc. The general lines of work are: donation distributions, recreation, psychological support, neighbourhood clean-ups and reconditioning homes. ADRA's "Clothes washing in solidarity" initiative was particularly noteworthy; this organization installed transportable industrial machines at an army battalion headquarters in Arana, where they washed huge quantities of clothing for the affected population.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Since the beginning of the disaster, the National Society activated its Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and some 50 volunteers assisted with search and rescue, reception and distribution of donated items, coordination with local authorities, and carrying out detailed damage and needs assessments throughout the affected areas. Twelve hours after the start of the flooding, the Argentine Red Cross already had installed a primary care post in one of the areas where there were still people trapped inside their homes due to the flooding.

The Argentine Red Cross, in collaboration with the Argentine Navy, worked together in rescue and evacuation, as well as first aid. Immediate care was provided to more than 40 people, out of which approximately 12 had to be transferred to hospitals due to the seriousness of their cases. Additionally, psychosocial support was implemented from the beginning for the people and households affected by the flooding.

Once the rescue and initial assistance ended, the Argentine Red Cross started actions to provide other types of humanitarian aid. The Argentine Red Cross administered a collection centre for donations from individuals, which were received, classified and distributed. More than 3,000 tonnes of clothes, shoes, safe and clean water, food, mattresses, toys, hygiene items, cleaning items, diapers, etc. were distributed to nearly 80,000 people in 800 dispatches (using the trucks of the Argentine Army).

IFRC deployed an innovation officer to train the National Society on beneficiary registration techniques utilizing tablet computers that connect to a cloud-based software program for efficient information management. Additionally, a disaster management delegate assisted in the development of the plan of action and advised on the cash transfer programming process.

Progress towards outcomes

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)
Outcome: 1,000 affected families in La Plata will benefit from the provision of essential food and non-food items to alleviate the effects of the emergency.
Output 1: 1,000 families in La Plata are able to purchase needed kitchen and hygiene items.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system to deliver intended assistance; • Detailed damage and needs survey conducted with each family; • Agreements created with local merchants; • Voucher designed and printed; • Distribution of vouchers; • Monitoring of voucher exchange with merchants; • Monitoring of the procurement of items by beneficiaries; • Payment to merchants.

Progress: A total of 1,100 families in La Plata were reached with a gift card that allowed them to purchase the household and hygiene items needed. One hundred more families than initially planned have received gift cards, thanks to the generous donation of 100 extra cards by the company where those were purchased.

After the first two weeks of the emergency in La Plata, and alongside the implementation of the Argentine Red Cross' activities based on its plan of action in the communities initially identified, a process was undertaken to redirect and prioritize the most affected communities (Ringuelet, Tolosa, San Carlos, Los Hornos, La Loma, Altos de San Lorenzo and Villa Elvira). This assessment was conducted together with all stakeholders:

- a) authorities from different municipal areas, NGOs, public/private institutions and
- b) inhabitants from the affected neighbourhoods.

To implement the plan of action, the La Plata branch of the Argentine Red Cross convened regular coordination meetings to share information and plan with governmental offices and other civil society organizations. Simultaneously, the branch volunteers, together with the technical staff from the central headquarters, conducted meetings, visits, activities, and surveys in the neighbourhoods with local inhabitants and neighbourhood focal points from churches, health centres, political organizations and soup kitchens.

These meetings resulted in a decision as to where each organization would work, as explained below:

- **Tolosa and Ringuélet:** Solidarity Network, La Cámpora, the Argentine Scouts and Caritas;
- **San Carlos and La Loma:** The municipality, Children's Forum of the Buenos Aires province, the provincial health office of Buenos Aires and the professional association of psychologists from the UNLP;
- **Los Hornos:** the Argentine Scouts, Children's Forum of the Buenos Aires province, the provincial health office of Buenos Aires, the professional association of psychologists from the UNLP, and Caritas;
- **Altos de San Lorenzo:** Children's Forum of the Buenos Aires province, La Cámpora group;
- **Villa Elvira:** La Cámpora group, Caritas, the Argentine Scouts, and DINESA.

While all of the neighbourhoods mentioned were affected in one way or another, it was agreed upon that the La Plata branch would implement the activities identified in the plan of action in Villa Elvira. The Argentine Red Cross has been working in this neighbourhood since the first days of the emergency.

1. Detailed damage and needs survey conducted with each family

The Argentine Red Cross conducted a census with 1,552 families and identified 1,100. The selection of beneficiaries for the Argentine Red Cross' HELP card was conducted based on the information from the door-to-door surveys completed in April. Using this survey as the starting point, large-scale data was collected for three modules: health, vulnerable age-groups, and living conditions of the household; the latter was separated into structural and service issues. The following questions, corresponding to each module, were used to calculate the needs.

- Health: number of pregnant women, people with disabilities, people with various illnesses;
- Vulnerable age-groups: number of children under the age of 5 and of adults over 65;
- Living conditions of the household:
 - Structural: type of roof, walls and floor;
 - Services: running water, domestic gas network, well or sewer systems, and electricity.

2. Agreements created with local merchants

The Terms of Reference for the HELP card were produced. Three large chain stores (Wal-Mart, Carrefour and Cencosud) with local presence were identified and invited to present their bids. The contract was signed with Cencosud because its bid was closest to the Terms of Reference.

3. Voucher designed and printed

The HELP card was distributed through Cencosud S.A., which has the following affiliated stores: Jumbo, Disco, Easy, Veá and Blaisten. With this card, each beneficiary family received 1,000 Argentine pesos to purchase items that were deemed necessary for the members of the family (alcoholic beverages were not permitted). The card:

- Has a one-month validity and can be used in Cencosud's affiliated stores in La Plata region;
- Has the identification data of the head of the household, in addition to the security codes of the bank credit and debit cards;
- In order to be used, the main card holder has to show his/her national identification document.

4. Distribution of vouchers

Between 1 and 2 June (prior notification has been provided), 861 cards were distributed in the Argentine Red Cross' La Plata branch. A total of 41 inquiries were also resolved (errors in the national identification number,



Voucher used during the operation. Source: the Argentine Red Cross

names, etc.). Thirty volunteers participated in this activity and received the support from four police officers who ensured their safety and the safety of the distribution site.

5. Monitoring of voucher exchange with merchants

The company contracted to provide the cards has a call centre, which was available to offer answers to beneficiaries' questions.

6. Monitoring of the procurement of items by beneficiaries

A survey will be conducted with the beneficiary families to identify their use of the card. This survey will be designed in a manner to provide detailed information regarding beneficiaries' purchases (for example, for construction materials, food, and educational material, among others).

Emergency health

Outcome: Psychosocial support is provided to children and family members in the affected areas, in order to increase their resilience and coping mechanisms.

Output 1: 1,600 affected families participate in psychosocial support activities and receive hygiene promotion materials;

Output 2: 4,000 children are able to return to school and continue their recovery process.

- Volunteer teams are formed and trained to provide psychosocial support and hygiene promotion activities to affected families;
- Carry out psychosocial support and hygiene promotion campaigns to affected groups;
- Distribute a total of 400 school kits to four schools.

Progress:

Output 1: 1,600 affected families participate in psychosocial support activities and receive hygiene promotion materials.

During the first two weeks of the operation, different psychosocial support activities with boys and girls were conducted. Recreational activities were organized in areas which have been seriously affected by the flooding. This work was later complemented with two recreational activities, using games and puppets, in the Villa Elvira neighbourhood.

Neighbourhood/community/evacuation centre	Number of children participating	Average age
Villa Elvira (second week of the operation)	85	7 years
Villa Elvira Subsequent activities	125	7 years
TOTAL	210	

Psychosocial support was conducted during the emergency, as well as in the post-emergency period. A technical team was deployed from the central headquarters and more than 39 people were visited. A walkthrough was done in the most affected neighbourhoods, visiting some of the affected families. In addition to the 210 children reached with recreational activities, the Argentine Red Cross assisted 90 people who had been directly affected by the flooding, including people whose family members had died during the emergency.

The Argentine Red Cross distributed 2,000 flyers with sanitation recommendations for the families returning home. These were handed in during the nearly 100 humanitarian aid distributions that were conducted in the first week of the emergency.

A community meeting with 15 locals was held to identify the immediate needs, according to the inhabitants of the area. The locals mentioned issues related to waste (garbage) treatment, safe and clean water, speed bumps and children's illnesses, among others.

Neighbourhood /community/ev acuation centre	Workshops	Meetings and/or talks	Participants
Villa Elvira	1	1	15

To support these activities related to psychosocial support and hygiene promotion, 32 volunteers were trained on 27 April, and the National Society expects to train and mobilized 40 additional volunteers. With their support, and that of the neighbourhood leaders, the National Society will expand their reach at community level.

Output 2: 4,000 children are able to return to school and continue their recovery process.

The activities relating to this output have been cancelled because the Argentine government took on the responsibility to provide school supplies and to repair and rehabilitate the schools. The budget allotted for this activity was redirected to the HELP cards to increase the amount of money provided to households. In addition, the National Society now plans to conduct a final evaluation of the operation. Details of the result will be provided in the final report.

Logistics

All the items to be distributed with DREF support will be acquired locally as they are available at the country level.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- **Argentine Red Cross:** Osvaldo Manuel Antonio Ferreropresident of the Argentine Red Cross, phone: 54 11 4952-7200email: info@cruzroja.org.ar
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DREF history:

- This DREF was initially allocated on 12 April 2013 for CHF 299,892 for three months to assist 9,600 beneficiaries.
 - The current operation update revises the budget to adapt it to the current approach of cash transfer instead of in-kind donations.
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[Click here](#)

1. Revised DREF budget [below](#)
 2. Click [here](#) to return to the title page
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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](#) 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.
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DREF OPERATION

10-Jul-13

Floods Argentina

		DREF Grant Budget CHF
Budget Group		
500	Shelter - Relief	
501	Shelter - Transitional	
502	Construction - Housing	
503	Construction - Facilities	
505	Construction - Materials	
510	Clothing & Textiles	
520	Food	
523	Seeds & Plants	
530	Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	0
540	Medical & First Aid	
550	Teaching Materials	17,241
560	Utensils & Tools	0
570	Other Supplies & Services	0
578	Cash Disbursements	196,635
	Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES	213,876
580	Land & Buildings	
581	Vehicles	
582	Computer & Telecom Equipment	
584	Office/Household Furniture & Equipment	
587	Medical Equipment	
589	Other Machinery & Equipment	
	Total LAND, VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT	0
590	Storage, Warehousing	
592	Distribution & Monitoring	
593	Transport & Vehicle Costs	2,796
594	Logistics Services	
	Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE	2,796
600	International Staff	10,251
661	National Staff	
662	National Society Staff	11,947
667	Volunteers	8,611
	Total PERSONNEL	30,809
670	Consultants	2,796
750	Professional Fees	
	Total CONSULTANTS & PROFESSIONAL FEES	2,796
680	Workshops & Training	3,728
	Total WORKSHOP & TRAINING	3,728
700	Travel	11,183
710	Information & Public Relations	6,523
730	Office Costs	4,194
740	Communications	3,728
760	Financial Charges	1,957
790	Other General Expenses	
799	Shared Office and Services Costs	
	Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES	27,585
830	Partner National Societies	

831	Other Partners (NGOs, UN, other)	
	Total TRANSFER TO PARTNERS	0
599	Programme and Services Support Recovery	18,303
	Total INDIRECT COSTS	18,303
	TOTAL BUDGET	299,892