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DREF Final Report

Colombia: La Niña phenomenon (Floods)

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF operation	Operation n° MDRCO018
Date of Issue: 23 November 2021	
Operation start date: 17 January 2021	Operation end date: 30 June 2021
Host National Society: Colombian Red Cross Society (CRCS)	Operation budget: 173,715 Swiss francs (CHF)
Number of people affected: No people were affected in target territories as the trigger 2 was not activated.	Number of National Society staff prepared: 337
Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners currently actively involved in the operation: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).	
Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation: Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies (IDEAM).	
The Colombian Red Cross Society (CRCS) spent a total of 16,037 CHF. The remaining balance of 157,678 CHF will be reimbursed to the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund.	
The major donors and partners of the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) include the Red Cross Societies and governments of Belgium, Britain, Canada, Denmark, German, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland, as well as DG ECHO, Blizzard Entertainment, Mondelez International Foundation, Fortive Corporation and other corporate and private donors. The IFRC, on behalf of the CRCS, would like to extend thanks to all for their generous contributions.	

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A. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Description of the disaster

The Colombian Red Cross Society (CRCS) created an Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA) to prepare for and respond to the likely effects of the 2021 La Niña phenomenon in Colombia. As a preventive activation plan, CRCS conducted preparedness actions to be able to address a potential emergency effectively and efficiently. Initially, this plan was to be implemented for three months (17 January to 17 April 2021) and target three departments in the country (Guajira, Magdalena, and Norte de Santander). It considered that the first annual rainy season in the country has historically brought with it intense rainfall in April and May that increase the water level of rivers, which in previous years significantly affected the areas close to their banks, especially in the targeted departments. For instance, Magdalena department is affected by the Magdalena River; La Guajira is affected by increased water levels in some streams that are used as roads during



Photo 1. PTAP operation and maintenance in Santa Marta Magdalena. Source: CRCS 2021.

the dry season but cause flooding in nearby localities during the rainy season, as well as by the Ranchería River, which causes significant impact to the population along its banks; and in Norte de Santander, the most significant impact is caused by the landslides and flooding that occur in lower lying areas of the department.

On 19 March 2021, the National Disaster Risk Management Unit (UNGRD) issued national memorandum No. 10 on preparedness and readiness measures for the first rainy season of 2021. This required municipal and departmental Disaster Risk Management Councils to activate their Emergency Plans and coordinate closely with both operational agencies of the National Disaster Risk Management System (SNGRD) and the communities likely to be affected, in order to be able to act in a timely manner to prevent risks to people's lives and, if possible, their basic assets. The memorandum activated the National Contingency Plan for the first rainy season and possible occurrence of the La Niña phenomenon in the period from 16 March to 16 June 2021. In this regard, the memorandum indicated the need of strengthening of Municipal Disaster Risk Management Council preparedness and response mechanisms, while enhancing risk communication processes by sharing official information provided by SNGRD with technical entities such as IDEAM (Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies).

In view of this memorandum issued by UNGRD, the Colombian Red Cross Society solicited a two-month no-cost extension for the DREF (to June 2021) since the rainy season-related risks would continue through June. Contrary to forecasts based on previous years, no adverse events occurred in targeted branches. However, it could not be ruled out that weather conditions could change and generate situations of concern in these departments.

Despite the forecasts issued regarding the development and occurrence of the La Niña phenomenon in Colombia in 2021, the weather phenomenon did not have the expected level of influence in the departments prioritized by the DREF at the time it was prepared. However, more constant rainfall was seen in certain areas in the country than those historically recorded in previous years. For example, in Huila department, constant rains in January and February caused increased water levels that mainly affected some community aqueducts as well as pedestrian bridges in urban areas. In the Valle del Cauca department, the constant rains in early 2021 caused the Cauca River and other large tributaries to overflow and flood some urban areas and crops. However, this situation was seasonal, and conditions quickly returned to normal. In Chocó and Antioquia departments in northwest Colombia, intense rains caused flooding along the banks of the Atrato River and landslides in certain areas in Antioquia.

Given the minor level of impact of the La Niña in the targeted departments, the planned DREF operation actions were limited to Trigger 1 (i.e., readiness actions), which are described in the following sections of this report.

Summary of the current response

Overview of Host National Society

The Colombian Red Cross Society (CRCS) has the mission to save lives, prevent and alleviate human suffering in all circumstances by strengthening community capacities, promoting a culture of peace, social inclusion, education, disaster risk management, human rights and international humanitarian law. Throughout its institutional life, the Colombian Red Cross Society, through its 250 local units, including 32 branches, subcommittees and facilities, with a wide network of 31,420 highly qualified and trained volunteers (Federation-wide Database and Reporting System- FDRS, Colombian Red Cross Society, 2018), has responded to different adverse social scenarios at the national, regional and local levels of the country.

The CRCS, in coordination with branches and the UNGRD monitors seasonal weather forecasts issued by the IDEAM on an ongoing basis. These institutions are part of this SNGRD.

Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in country

As part of the SNGRD, the CRCS provided services and support to branches since the beginning of the season, keeping the National Response Network active and articulated with the Contingency and Response plans of each

CRCS branch across the country. To coordinate and prepare the national response - based on the emerging disaster derived from the second rainy season in 2020 and the La Niña phenomenon in the first quarter of 2021 - the CRCS activated the National Response Plan, alerted branches, prepared actions to reduce response times, and periodically activated the National Crisis Room to monitor and coordinate response actions.

The CRCS complemented the government's response to emergencies that arose during the reporting period in areas other than those targeted by this operation. These included actions in response to events related to rains, landslides and flooding in coordination with Municipal and Departmental Disaster Risk Management Councils, including updating of municipal emergency response strategies and municipal and departmental contingency plans. Emergencies responded to by the CRCS include:

In Valle del Cauca: intense rains in January and February caused rivers to overflow and flooding in 30 municipalities. The Valle del Cauca branch helped with damage assessment and needs analysis (DANA) processes, humanitarian aid distributions and evacuation processes.

In Huila: flooding and damage to some rural community aqueducts. The Huila branch helped with DANA actions, logistical support during delivery of humanitarian aid provided by the CRC National Directorate and distributed bottled water to affected communities. The work was carried out in coordinated manner with Municipal Disaster Risk Management Councils in affected municipalities.

In Antioquia: intense rains caused landslides in several communities and municipalities. The Antioquia branch provided logistical support to deliver humanitarian aid arranged by the Antioquia government in articulation with Disaster Risk Management Councils, as well as helped with DANAs in affected areas.

In Chocó: rains caused increased water levels in the Atrato and other rivers, affecting several communities along their banks. With support from UNGRD, humanitarian aid was distributed and delivered by the Chocó branch and other respondent organizations.

Considering that only Trigger 1 was activated, no joint actions were conducted with other Movement members in the country.

Overview of non-RCRC actors' actions in country

The SNGRD, through the National Crisis Room and the Territorial Disaster Risk Management Committees (CTGRD), permanently monitored weather conditions and events due to La Niña. This information was relayed directly to CRCS branches and subsequently reported to the national headquarters. Through its structures at the departmental and municipal level, the SNGRD responded to needs related to La Niña during the rainy season.

Needs analysis and scenario planning

Needs analysis

In response to the weather events that generated the disaster risk mentioned above, the CRCS performed its role as an auxiliary to the State in the humanitarian field, carrying out actions to prepare early for a possible flood-related emergency through the activation of Trigger 1. No response actions related to Trigger 2 were implemented. These had considered a possible response to La Niña effects along the following targeted areas:

1. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)



The main WASH risks are associated with drinking water shortages caused by damage to municipal aqueducts; increased proliferation of vectors; partial loss of homes or belongings; difficulties in continuing with hygiene habits; and an increase in solid waste in the environment. Actions that mitigate the impact to communities are required given the potential results of these risks.

2. Livelihoods



The floods caused by La Niña rains have a major impact on the livelihoods of those who live in affected areas. The main impact in urban and peri-urban areas affected by floods is the partial or total paralysis of the economic sectors that provide access to non-urban services or that are main sources of income for large segments of the population, such as food production and sales, clothing, communications, transportation, among others. In rural areas, the population's food security, nutrition and livelihoods are mainly affected by loss of crops and livestock. The result could be a major disruption to people's livelihoods, creating a pressing need to address the population's diminishing or disappearing sources of income, which can hinder people's capacity to meet basic needs.

3. Shelter



In Colombia, hydrometeorological events derived from the rainy season and the La Niña phenomenon can cause great destruction to communities' infrastructure. There are many precarious settlements and structural gaps in infrastructure in the country; thus, one of the greatest impacts is on homes in affected communities.

Past experience suggests that providing shelter may not be the most appropriate solution, as people may have different needs. It is therefore necessary to establish agreements with financial entities to implement cash assistance to help people acquire local materials that allow them to rebuild their homes.

Targeting

Risks scenarios

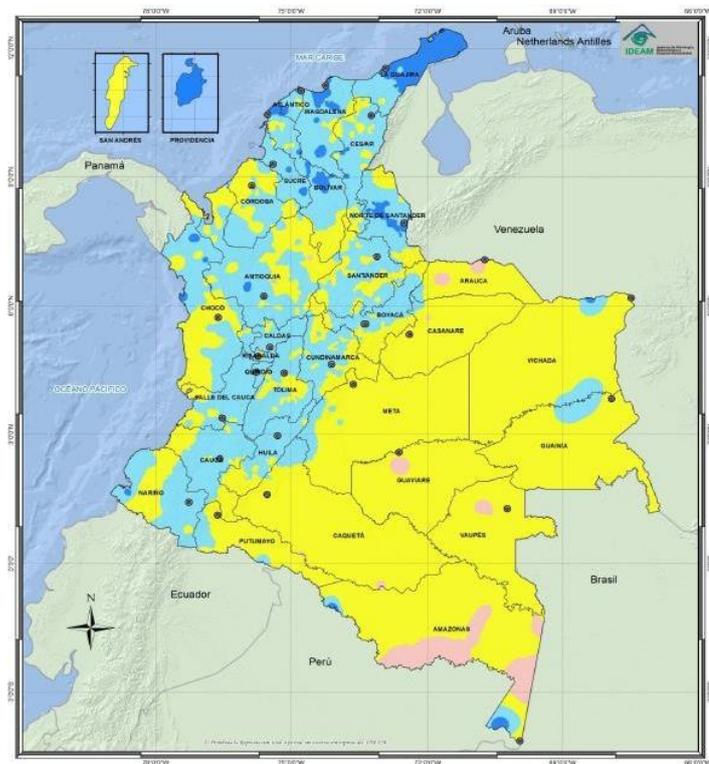


Figure 1. Most likely changes in rainfall during a typical La Niña phenomenon, especially in La Guajira, Magdalena and Norte de Santander. Source: ideam.gov.co.

When preparing the DREF Plan of Action in December 2020, IDEAM reported a 95 per cent probability of a La Niña phenomenon occurring between January and March 2021 and a 57 per cent probability of it occurring between March and May 2021, forecasting above-normal rainfall in large areas of the Caribbean regions, the Archipelago of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina, La Guajira, Magdalena, Bolívar, Cesar and Córdoba, as well as in the northern Pacific region, north and central Andean regions and central-western region of Llanos Orientales (see Figure 1). The report mentioned that major rivers continued to rise significantly, including some sectors of the Magdalena and Cauca rivers, nearly reaching flood level values. Additionally, IDEAM reported that the first rainy season of the year would begin in the week between 28 March and 3 April 2021, causing above-normal rainfall and sometimes thunderstorms and wind in certain areas

because of the La Niña phenomenon.

Vulnerability factors

¹http://www.pronosticosyalertas.gov.co/documents/78690/113226610/087_IDA_MARZO_28_2021.pdf/24a9c791-d909-4d0e-9ce0-5912850389a3?version=1.0

According to the National Planning Department's Municipal Disaster Risk Index adjusted for Capacity (2019), 88 per cent of disasters in Colombia are of hydrometeorological origin - of these, 35 per cent are floods. In the last 20 years, an average of 2,800 homes have been destroyed and 160 people have died per year due to landslides, floods and torrential flows attributed to the La Niña phenomenon. In 13 departments, including Magdalena and Norte de Santander, more than 40 per cent of the population is exposed to hydrometeorological hazards; and in 15 departments, including Atlántico and Bolívar, more than 50 per cent of the population lives in socially vulnerable conditions. According to the DNP's 2020 Monetary Poverty Information by departments, La Guajira was the department with the highest incidence of monetary poverty in 2020, which makes it extremely vulnerable to hydrometeorological phenomena.

Occurrence of the emergency

The UNGRD² indicated that, as of 26 March 2021, 521 events had been attributed to rains - including 277 landslides, 83 floods, 50 windstorms, 51 flash floods, 41 storms (gale with heavy rains), 12 torrential floods, 5 hailstorms and 2 thunderstorms - in 275 municipalities in 25 departments. Cundinamarca, Nariño, Antioquia, Huila, Cauca and Valle del Cauca suffered the greatest impact from the rains, which left 53 people dead and 33 injured in its wake. These emergencies directly affected 8,734 families but did not exceed local entities' capacity to respond. The CRCS carried out operational response actions with said entities, complementing the institutional response to emerging emergencies. It is important to mention that these actions did not fall under this DREF operation because the emergencies occurred in areas not targeted by the DREF's EPoA and therefore were not considered for the activation of Trigger 2.

Trigger-based mechanism

As a forecast-based early preparedness operation, this DREF operation was based on the monitoring of weather forecasts and studies issued by UNGRD and IDEAM that would lead to the activation of preparedness and response actions, considering that alert levels are defined and issued on an ongoing basis by these two entities. Once an event occurs and is detected by the SNGRD, the Disaster Management Crisis Room is convened to direct actions aimed at meeting the needs of affected communities. Given the former, the DREF EPoA consisted of two different stages that responded to strict criteria called triggers, as follows:

The activation of this DREF's Trigger 1 launched the implementation of the early preparedness actions planned. The trigger was reached once IDEAM's local forecasts (monthly bulletin 11)³ indicated a 60 per cent probability that rainfall would exceed normal values in Caribbean and Andean regions in January 2021.

Trigger 1 activated Livelihoods- and WASH-related preparedness actions, which entailed two activities:

- A rapid training workshop on livelihoods and cash transfer for staff and volunteers in the three targeted branches. Workshops were held in two phases: a virtual phase via the Teams platform and a hands-on phase for practicing actions in vulnerable communities.
- A study to assess the feasibility of implementing a multipurpose cash transfer programme, which involved a household survey on the cash's management and use. The work was carried out with focus groups, community leaders and local community council representatives.

A WASH-related training activity was conducted in the Magdalena, Norte de Santander and La Guajira branches, which was complemented by WASH in emergencies virtual workshops funded with the National Society's own funds. These two workshops trained volunteers to carry out emergency WASH activities aimed at strengthening knowledge regarding water-related diseases, basic sanitation and personal hygiene, vector control and solid waste management.

To respond to any potential emergency caused by the La Niña phenomenon, the CRCS contemplated the activation of Immediate Response Teams to supply safe water in the Magdalena, Norte de Santander, and La

²<http://portal.gestiondelriesgo.gov.co/Paginas/Noticias/2021/Continua-asentandose-la-primera-temporada-de-lluvias-del-ano.aspx>.

³<http://ideam.gov.co/documents/21021/552445/Bolet%C3%ADn+Agroclim%C3%A1tico+No.+11+-+Noviembre.pdf/5f521158-3b00-47a4-b365-3e30d04d3fa3?version=1.0>

Guajira branches. To this end, training on deployment of drinking water treatment plants (PTAP) was held simultaneously with the in-person workshops, to prepare for the supply of safe water during emergencies. Additionally, a hands-on training was delivered to provide corrective and preventive maintenance to the PTAPs, and some volunteers were trained in the PTAPs' operation processes for water treatment, deployment of equipment, physical and chemical water testing, lab equipment handling, types of water bodies, among others.

Trigger 2 would have launched interventions directly with communities once the National Crisis Room was convened in response to a flood risk Red Alert issued by the UNGRD and IDEAM, due to flooding in any of the target departments. This situation would have led to the activation of the EPoA; however, this trigger was not activated because the risk scenarios involving heavy rains, floods, or landslides did not occur in targeted departments between January and June 2021. Other lines of intervention were not activated within the CRCS because the emergency situations were deemed to be low intensity and were addressed with local State capacities.

During the first months of 2021, the water levels in riverine areas in Magdalena remained normal and did not affect communities or municipalities, where flooding emergencies normally occur. While intense rains occurred in some places, the volume was not enough to affect river flows and water levels in those areas. In La Guajira, high average temperatures with low rainfall levels were seen between January and June 2021, so no emergency situations occurred in that region. The situation in Norte de Santander was similar with high temperatures, scattered rains and few events caused by the La Niña phenomenon.

Scenario planning

Scenarios	Humanitarian consequences	Potential response
<p>Worst case scenario: High-impact floods and landslides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Rainfall levels are 70 per cent above normal. -More than ten departments are affected by the floods. -More than 100,000 families are directly affected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Main roads are blocked, basic services collapse and local trade is paralyzed. Affected families require assistance to meet their basic needs, including medical care, shelter, food, water, hygiene, protection, among others. A national emergency is declared. -The COVID-19 emergency worsens in affected areas and may lead to disruption of the public order. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -All government capabilities are mobilized through the UNGRD to assist with the emergency with the SNGRD. -The government declares a national emergency and requests international support. -The CRCS mobilizes all its capabilities in accordance with response perimeters and actions included in its contingency plans, as well as requests the support of other Red Cross Movement members. -The government declares a departmental and/or municipal disaster.
<p>Most likely scenario: Moderate flooding and landslides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Rainfall levels are 50 per cent above normal. -More than five departments are affected by the floods. -Between 10,000 and 100,000 families are directly affected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are humanitarian effects and gaps for families, with partial impact to basic services and local trade. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government capabilities are mobilized through the UNGRD to support emergency response with the SNGRD. - The CRCS mobilizes its capabilities, and requests the Red Cross Movement's support based on needs - According to Law 1523 of 2012, declarations of emergencies are made when an emergency exceeds local capacities.
<p>Best case scenario: Low-impact floods and minor landslides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Rainfall levels are within normal parameters. 	<p>Minimal effects to communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Authorities are able to meet humanitarian needs with their local capacities, through Departmental or Municipal Disaster Risk Management Councils and the UNGRD. -CRCS branches provide support to local response actions in coordination with the SNGRD at the territorial level.

-The impact of floods and other emergencies affect fewer than 10,000 families.		
The La Niña phenomenon merges with the normal rainy season in March 2021	There are long-term effects for communities, becoming a long-term emergency	- Need for assessment to expand CRCS operations in coordination with UNGRD.

Risk assessment

Internal risks

- Persistence of hydrometeorological phenomena in January 2021 in the Caribbean area.
- 95% probability of occurrence of La Niña phenomenon in the first quarter of 2021.
- First rainy season in Colombia in March 2021.
- COVID-19 pandemic.
- Obstruction of access roads to at-risk communities.

External risks

- Increased incidence of COVID-19 across the country.
- Roadblocks and public demonstrations associated with nationwide civil unrest.
- Disruptions to public order, such as thefts and assaults against the humanitarian personnel.

Mitigation actions

- Assessment of local context regarding the incidence of COVID-19 and of restrictive measures imposed by local authorities in targeted departments. This led to changes to the dates set for hands-on activities in the field with communities; however, said actions were rescheduled and carried out once assessments indicated a decrease in COVID-19 cases and local measures were eased.
- Implementation of preventive measures against COVID-19 infection, including the use of face masks, frequent hand washing, physical distancing, and no convening of large numbers of people.
- The National Society restricted the field only for essential purposes until disruptions to the public order decreased. Once the CRCS's teams were allowed to travel to the field, branch offices were asked about security conditions prior to deployment, both as a preventive measure and to determine the feasibility of holding group activities with communities.
- Planned WASH activities were carried out on the dates indicated in the schedule before the COVID-19 contagion waves occurred in the capital cities of targeted departments.
- The beginning of the activity's implementation coincided with a third peak of the COVID-19 cases in Colombia, and also with the beginning of the protests related to the nationwide strike that led to roadblocks and generalized insecurity. As a mitigation measure, it was decided that the WASH workshops and the corrective and preventive maintenance to PTAPs would be carried out simultaneously in all three targeted branches, with support from three WASH National Intervention Team (NIT) delegates, the Disaster Risk Management directors, and the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene focal points of target branches.
- Due to procurement issues for the acquisition of PTAP maintenance supplies, related to the implementation of the National Society's new accounting information system, said items were loaned from the CRCS Disaster Risk Management Team's WASH Programme stock, to be able to meet the deadlines established in the DREF's activities schedule.
- To prevent the spread of COVID-19 among volunteers, staff, and focal points, and in line with the CRCS's instructions, measures, guidelines and use of PPE established in biosafety protocols, no more than 20 people were allowed to attend WASH workshops and work on the PTAPs' maintenance.

B. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

Proposed strategy

Overall Operational objective

To prepare prior to the emergency and be ready to provide services to 1,000 families (4,000 people) that will be affected by the rainy season in the departments of La Guajira, Magdalena and Norte de Santander, through the implementation of humanitarian assistance in WASH, livelihoods, and basic needs.”

Livelihoods

- A rapid training workshop on livelihoods and cash transfer for staff and volunteers, in two phases: a virtual phase via the Teams platform and a second, in-person phase working with communities. A total of 44 volunteers were trained.
- A study to assess the feasibility of implementing a multipurpose cash transfer programme in targeted branches, through a household survey on the cash's management and use, work with focus groups and rapid market assessment. The information collected for this study through the surveys, meetings and assessments in the three branches, was systematized in a single study document, which confirmed the feasibility of conducting a cash transfer assistance process, in the event Trigger 2 response actions are activated.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- Initial inventory of the equipment, tools and supplies required for maintenance of the six PTAPs in the three targeted branches.
- Planning and scheduling of WASH activities. Training of volunteers in WASH activities, through WASH in emergencies workshops, and in PTAP deployment, operation and maintenance.

Operational support

Human resources

The positions in the National Society that participated in the planning and implementation of Trigger 1's early preparedness actions on Livelihoods and WASH were the following:

- 1 Disaster/Crisis Management Manager
- 1 Risk Reduction Manager
- 1 WASH officer
- 1 Livelihoods officer
- 5 logistics and operations support staff
- 5 WASH National Intervention Team (NIT) delegates
- 1 accountant
- 1 assistant accountant
- 23 volunteers and 17 staff from branches supported livelihoods activities on the ground.

Logistics and supply chain

To carry out the procurement and shipping process for Trigger 1's actions, an initial equipment inventory was made, to identify the necessary tools and supplies required for maintenance of the six PTAPs in the three targeted branches, in coordination with Disaster Risk Management directors, NIT delegates and focal points of the Magdalena, Norte de Santander and La Guajira branches.

To provide maintenance to the six PTAPs in the three targeted branches within the established times, equipment, materials, tools and supplies loaned by CRCS's WASH programme.

Communications and CEA

The operation planned to have a communication strategy and a communications plan to ensure a fluid flow of information between the communities served and the CRCS work team. However, considering that only Trigger 1 was activated, only the plan for internal communications among the National Society team was implemented for early readiness activities.

For Livelihoods, community leaders were contacted beforehand to inform them about the activities that would be carried out in their communities, i.e., the household survey and the local market assessments. They were also invited to participate in the focus group activity. All was aimed at gathering information for the feasibility study and as part of the hands-on phase of the livelihoods and cash transfer workshops.

Information Technology

Since only Trigger 1 was activated, staff were trained via the CRCS' Virtual Classroom used to train volunteers who assist with the Livelihoods and WASH work strategy. This has increased the capacity of trained personnel, who will serve as local capacity available to support future interventions.

For Livelihoods, the Kobo information gathering tool was used to carry out surveys for the rapid market assessments via mobile devices (cell phones).

Security

The following security measures included in action and response protocols were implemented:

- Monitoring of weather and social conditions through CITEL and the branches involved.
- Sortie and travel reports to national and local CITELs.
- Self-protection measures such as use of personal protection equipment (PPE), antibacterial gel, distancing and hand washing.

Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER)

To properly monitor technical implementation of the DREF operation's Trigger 1, the PMER team (made up of the CRCS Officer and the IFRC Officer) prepared a monitoring instrument in Excel format that allowed monitoring the activities' implementation on a weekly basis and tracking their progress, providing results as percentages. This mechanism enabled generating internal alerts to prioritize the implementation of activities that were running behind schedule.

A lessons learned workshop was held after the end of project operations. The workshop was coordinated by the IFRC PMER officer and attended by 22 people (34% female - 66% male) from 3 targeted branches and CRCS headquarters involved in the operation.

Administration and Finance

Financial processes were implemented by the Accounting Department in accordance with institutional procedures and as agreed with the IFRC.

C. DETAILED OPERATIONAL PLAN



Livelihoods and Basic Needs

People reached: 44 (volunteers trained)

Female: 27

Male: 17

Livelihoods and Basic Needs Outcome 1: Communities, especially in disaster and crisis affected areas, restore and strengthen their livelihoods

Livelihoods and Basic Needs Output 1.1: Households are provided with cash and voucher assistance to address their basic needs

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of cash feasibility studies and rapid market assessment.	3	3
# of families reached with unconditional cash transfers	1,000	N/A

Narrative description of achievements

Livelihoods

Cash feasibility study and rapid market assessment

The following activities were carried out for the feasibility study:

- 100 household surveys on cash use and management - seeking to learn about money management practices through questions such as: Who decides how the household money is used? Does money management generate conflicts at home? - as well as on use of mobile technology (phones) and preferences regarding the humanitarian assistance modality.
- Implementation of the survey in six markets as part of the rapid assessment. Two local markets or stores were visited in each community to identify characteristics such as availability of basic items, average price of main commodities or markets accessibility.
- Identification of the financial operators in the area with which the CRCNS has an agreement in place or with which it has already worked with cash transfers. Financial operators were assessed based on criteria such as geographic coverage, transaction costs, beneficiary identification mechanisms, and current agreements and experience with the CRCNS. The feasibility study document provides the results of this assessment.
- Held one work session with ten community leaders from three target neighbourhoods, during which participatory community assessment tools under the IFRC's Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) strategy were applied. The leaders' participation varied, as some neighbourhoods were represented by several leaders while others by only one.

These activities were carried out with 23 volunteers and 17 staff members who participated in the hands-on phase of the Livelihoods and Cash Transfer workshop. The feasibility study found that it would indeed have been feasible to implement a cash transfer programme in the event Trigger 2 had been activated during a La Niña phenomenon.



Photo 1. VCA tool workshop in Santa Marta, Magdalena. May 2021. Source: CRCS 2021

The goal of the Livelihoods and Cash Transfer training process to staff in targeted branches, was aimed at improving emergency response capacities via cash transfer programmes in areas exposed to the negative impacts of the 2021 La Niña phenomenon. The topics addressed during the workshops included an introduction to livelihoods, multipurpose cash transfer implementation, rapid market assessment, of online surveys for beneficiary selection, and post-distribution monitoring.

A two-phase methodology was used for the Livelihoods training:

1. Phase 1: delivered virtually via the Teams platform on 20-21 March to 44 attendees. The two virtual sessions touched on theoretical aspects of the topics mentioned above, using tools such as presentations, group workshops, videos and case studies.
2. Phase 2: delivered in person in targeted branches, including practical work in the classroom and in communities. Below is an overview of these activities.

Complementary Livelihoods activities

The following activities were carried out in the three targeted branches to complement the workshops' methodology:

- Visit to one target community to reconnoitre the area and establish the perimeter within which the surveys would be applied. Local markets were identified, and community awareness talks were delivered to inform about the application of the cash use survey.
- A workshop on the VCA tool.
- Practical exercises in the field as part of the workshop's hands-on phase and primary information gathering for the feasibility study - specifically, the household and market surveys previously mentioned. This included training on how to carry out a market survey using technology (survey in KOBO), analysing the surveys, tabulating the answers and identifying common points, determining the advantages and limitations of using cash, and analysing the VCA tools.



Photo 2. Household survey on use of cash in Riohacha, Guajira. 27 May 2021. Source: CRCS 2021

Trigger 2, which was not activated as previously mentioned, considered the two following Livelihoods-related activities:

- Delivery of cash transfers to 1000 affected families.
- Design and implementation of a CEA Plan and administering of a satisfaction survey.

Challenges

- Field activities had to be postponed and rescheduled because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The presence of the CRCS in communities generated expectations regarding aid and service delivery. Community leaders were informed of the specific activities that would be carried out in their communities.
- When conducting market assessments, some store owners refused to provide prices, product availability and other information, and also refused to say why they would not do so. The survey was therefore carried out only in the markets that agree to provide information.

Lessons learned

- This DREF focused on early preparedness was an opportunity to strengthen the CRCS staff on Livelihood’s emergency response, because it included practice sessions and activities with communities.
- Market assessments allowed understanding the local essential and priority goods dynamics and services that need to be recovered following disasters and crises.
- Technological means such as internet’s meeting platforms make it possible to conduct virtual training processes, reducing costs, saving time and preventing exposure to health risks such as COVID-19.
- Engaging with communities and scoping out the communities’ sites prior to carrying out activities such as surveys, focus group meetings, interviews, among others, is essential because it facilitates the work with communities and the understanding of vulnerability contexts.
- Given the uncertain nature of certain climate phenomena, these types of DREF operations focused on readiness, should allow for the possibility that a change in the places where the predicted adverse climate events would occur may be needed, and not be dependent on triggers related to official emergency declarations by authorities, but rather on effective monitoring of predictor and assessments in the field.



Water, sanitation and hygiene

People reached: 293 (volunteers trained)
Female: 125
Male: 168

WASH Outcome1: Immediate reduction in risk of waterborne and water related diseases in targeted communities.

WASH Output 1.1: Continuous assessment of water, sanitation, and hygiene situation is carried out in targeted communities.

Indicators	Target	Actual
# of initial WASH needs assessments.	1	N/A

Narrative description of achievements

In the Operational Plan, this activity fell under Trigger 2, which was not activated due to the reasons mentioned in the Trigger-based Mechanism section.

WASH Output 1.2: Daily access to safe water which meets Sphere and WHO standards in terms of quantity and quality is provided to target population

Indicators	Target	Actual
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# of maintenance and preparation of 6 water treatment plants	5	6
# of in-person workshops for volunteers on WASH in emergencies and maintenance, operation and deployment of drinking water treatment plants	3	3
# of volunteers trained in the virtual WASH workshop for volunteers	500	783

Narrative description of achievements

WASH equipment inspection and maintenance: branch in Norte de Santander

The purpose of this activity was to determine the current condition of the type A water treatment plant and all its parts (generator, motor pump, chemical dispenser) and whether it would operate under normal conditions. Proper maintenance was provided to the water treatment plant, including changing filters, tune-ups and cleaning electrical generators and motor pumps.

WASH equipment inspection and maintenance: branch in La Guajira



Photo 3. Delivery of supplies, tools, and equipment to the branch in Norte de Santander. Source: CRCS 2021.

In La Guajira branch, a technical review of the available PTAP unit was carried out. It included an inspection of all the plant's components to assess its current condition and identify the necessary corrective and preventive maintenance actions. The equipment was found to be very deteriorated because of the long time without use (approximately four years) and the lack of maintenance during that time lapse. Among other issues, the plant had not been properly stored, which had led to dirt build-up and deterioration. This was addressed by providing the proper corrective and preventive maintenance, including cleaning, and washing.

WASH equipment inspection and maintenance: branch in Magdalena

The purpose of the activity in Magdalena was to inspect, provide maintenance to and perform an inventory of the equipment allocated to the Santa Marta branch's WASH programme, as well as confirm whether the water treatment plants were in good working order, so that they could be used to provide immediate response in the event of an emergency in this region. The PTAPs were inspected to assess their condition and carry out the necessary corrective and preventive maintenance, including changing filters, changing damaged and leaky pipes, and parts adjustments and replacement.

All plants' motor pumps and generators were provided maintenance and inspected to confirm their condition, identifying repairment needs that required greater investment of funds or totally replacing the damaged equipment. Guidelines for a maintenance plan were provided to the branch as part of assessment and maintenance actions, which includes inspections by a specialized technical service, together with testing and scheduled periodic maintenance, to prevent this equipment from suffering damages and ensure it is in good working order during future emergency responses.



Photo 4. PTAP maintenance at the La Guajira branch. Source: CRCS

In-person WASH training in communities and in emergencies workshops

An in-person workshop was delivered in each branch with support from two WASH National Intervention Team (NIT) members from the Atlántico branch and one delegate from the Nariño branch. These were held simultaneously in all three branches while preventive and corrective maintenance was being provided to PTAPs.

The workshops were attended by 60 volunteers and staff (37 men and 23 women). Participants acquired knowledge in:

- Sphere Handbook - theory and practice
- National Society WASH capacities
- Water suitable for human consumption
- Physical and chemical characteristics of water
- Physical and chemical analysis of water

- Water-related illnesses
- Water treatment plant deployment and operation (theory)
- Water treatment plant deployment and operation (practice)
- Solid waste management
- Vector control

Four volunteers from the Norte de Santander branch were trained on the maintenance required by the water treatment plants. A practical field test was held on the last day of training to assess volunteers' plant operation knowledge. Participants were also taught how to use and care for the complementary equipment. The workshop at the La Guajira branch lasted 12 hours and was attended by 17 individuals.



Photo 5. Cúcuta – Norte de Santander. WASH workshop in Norte de Santander. Source: CRC

In-person WASH workshop in the Magdalena CRC branch:

The workshop in Magdalena was attended by 18 volunteers. It included both a theoretical and a practical component, including an equipment maintenance exercise and a drill involving the deployment, installation and operation of the water treatment plant. The training took place in an open, well-ventilated space with good lighting, in line with biosafety protocols. Volunteer participation showed willingness and interest in the topics presented.



Photo 8. Rioacha – Guajira. WASH workshop in Guajira branch- Source: CRC

A virtual workshop on WASH in emergencies was also held, which were well-received and attended by 783 individuals (384 men and 399 women) from 33 branches. The workshops included a formative evaluation mechanism to determine the level of knowledge acquired by attendees. The test was passed by 233 participants.

Challenges

- Conducting purchasing processes in short periods of time is a challenge for the National Society, since no distinction is made for the actions' timeframes, i.e., whether these are for projects or emergency operations. Some purchasing processes can take up to five months, and no special priority is given to or provisions made for these kinds of operations, to expedite procurement in order to be able to meet the deadlines established for response by DREFs. Furthermore, the National Society does not have a large warehouse with a significant stock of items that can be used and quickly deployed in an emergency.
- Optimizing financial resources to provide maintenance to six PTAPs, since only five had been initially considered but a total of six were covered.
- Carrying out activities during COVID-19 contagion waves.
- Shipping to the field materials, supplies and equipment in time to coincide with the arrival of the CRCS's National Intervention Teams delegates to targeted branches.
- Having all the required documentation for the legalization of the funds received and executed ready on time.

Lessons learned

- Sometimes there are no technical or professional WASH personnel available in the National Society to conduct WASH projects in the field. Therefore, this operation turned to the CRCS NIT members, who have training, knowledge and expertise as instructors in WASH-related topics, including the PTAPs' operation and maintenance.
- Procurement of supplies, tools and equipment were hindered at the beginning of the operation due to changes in the National Society's administrative and accounting information system, which prevented expediting the maintenance to PTAPs as desired. To avoid further delays, the team requested the CRCS Disaster Risk Management Team to loan them, the necessary maintenance supplies from their National WASH Programme.
- Having a good team of professionals with experience, knowledge and willingness to participate made it possible carry out several WASH activities; however, it is necessary to reinstate in-person WASH workshops to train more volunteers and NITs.
- It is important to train both CRCS's branch and national-level project teams in reporting, document handling and funds legalization issues, as many are new staff still unaware of the processes, policies and documents required or established by IFRC or the CRCS to legalize expenses.
- Immediate response WASH equipment, such as water treatment plants, water suction equipment and basic sanitation systems, needs to be kept ready for deployment and use.

WASH Output 1.4: Hygiene promotion activities which meet Sphere standards in terms of the identification and use of hygiene items provided to target population

Indicators	Target	Actual
# of people reached with hygiene promotion activities	850	N/A

Narrative description of achievements

Hygiene promotion

In the Operational Plan, this activity fell under Trigger 2, which was not activated.

Challenges

N/A

Lessons learned

N/A

SFI 1: Strategies for Implementation

S1.1: National Society capacity building and organizational development objectives are facilitated to ensure that National Societies have the necessary legal, ethical and financial foundations, systems and structures, competences and capacities to plan and perform.

Output S1.1.4: National Societies have effective and motivated volunteers who are protected

Indicators:	Target	Actual
% of volunteers with personal protective equipment	100%	100%

Narrative description of achievements**Insurance coverage for volunteers**

Volunteers were insured from 25 April 2020 to 23 August 2021 through funds by the CRCS's National Disaster Risk Management, which covers 180,000 volunteers. Uniforms and other supplies were purchased and provided to volunteers and staff who carried out the WASH and Livelihoods activities.

In-depth briefings on the role of volunteers and the risks they face

These activities were carried out during the training phases and are based on protocols and memoranda issued by the Office of the President of the Colombian Red Cross.

Actions that ensure volunteers' awareness of their rights and responsibilities

The deployment of volunteers is validated with branch focal points and the National Volunteer Team, who permanently validate the scope of the actions by CRCS volunteer personnel, during the interventions they support. All measures established by national regulations for volunteers are applied, as are the Safer Access framework, operational security measures, protocols to protect against COVID-19, and other aspects based on the operation to be conducted. A stock of uniforms was left for the Disaster Risk Management Team as part of strengthening and emergency preparedness in the country.

Safety training to ensure the well-being of volunteers:

During the training carried out in this DREF operation, volunteers learned about aspects of safe interventions and actions to avoid risks during the performance of their work. As a standard, a briefing on the work methodology is always provided to volunteers, before initiating any work in the field to stress that their work must comply with safe work and actions, both for their sake and for the sake of the communities involved.

Provide volunteers with appropriate personal protective equipment:

PPE and the necessary items to carry out tasks are ensured during work that involves special actions in the field. Amid the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, PPE and basic hygiene items were distributed during all activities to ensure the exposure reduction of volunteers to the risk of COVID-19 contagion, and there is a safe work protocol against COVID-19. Thirty uniforms were purchased, of which eight were given to staff who participated in activities and the others were stored to be used by the Risk Management Team for future emergencies.

Ensure volunteers' participation in decision-making in all operations

Volunteers constitute a wide segment of the CRCS's operational capacity and thus participate in operational decision-making processes that take place as part of the emerging responses. This participation is not only focused on the operation's human and specialized capital, but also on its coordination and decision-making spaces.

Promotion of the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross among volunteers based on needs during the emergency

The CRC's humanitarian action strongly emphasizes adhering to the Code of Conduct, the Do no Harm principle, to the principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the institutional mission when working with communities and vulnerable populations. The result is that the work of the CRCS is highly accepted and recognized by the affected community, by citizens and by the institutions with which it works.

Challenges:

- Provide WASH training to youth volunteers in times of pandemic and virtually.
- Update volunteer support conditions in financial terms.
- That volunteers have the required documentation and their social security ready and verified, in order to have an adequate number of volunteers available and to be more efficient during operations.

Lessons learned:

- The National Society must plan according to internal capacities and processes in order to respond quickly to emergencies. On the other hand, the IFRC could consider expanding DREF operation timeframes considering the minimum implementation periods for these operations, which for the CRCS can take from 8 to 12 weeks. Both these considerations would ensure more effective emergency response through DREFs in our country.
- Implementation projections should consider greater margins for unforeseen events, taking into account the reality of unforeseen situations and the capacities present in branches and departments in the country. This DREF was implemented while the third peak of COVID-19 cases was underway in Colombia, which made it necessary to postpone some field activities. Once COVID-19 incidence levels decreased, the country experienced a social unrest situation that caused violent confrontations between civilians and authorities, and roadblocks, which overall delayed the implementation of activities on the ground.
- These types of DREFs (prediction- and forecast-based) call for a flexible prioritization of intervention. For example, the impact from the rains was not critical and did not cause major incidents in targeted departments, because no emergency event exceeded these departments' local response capacities, but that was not the case in other non-targeted areas. This was why the response action phase (Trigger 2) was not activated, and why it was not possible to respond in other areas in the country that did suffer major impact but were not considered in the initial prioritization of territories. In this regard, it is important to consider expanding training and readiness actions to a greater number of departments, so that implementation of emergency response can be activated in the event an alert is activated in any department.
- The implementation of a prediction and preparedness methodology is appropriate and reinforces the work of the National Society because it allows it to have financial support that further facilitates the preparedness that is already ongoing, through contingency plans for recurring events in the country.
- The work strategy on livelihoods made it possible to strengthen branch volunteers' knowledge in this regard, as well as on how to conduct a market study and how to identify the key government actors in each municipality involved. This allowed having a clear context regarding needs assessment in the field, and identifying key actors as well as providers of financial services and supplies necessary to activate a Plan of Action that requires a quick response to meet basic needs that may have been affected by emergencies.

Outcome S 2.1: Effective and coordinated international disaster response is ensured

Output S 2.1.1: Sustainability of an effective and recognized capacity building mechanism

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of monitoring visits by IFRC:	3	0
# of lessons learned workshops held	1	1

Narrative description of achievements

Monitoring visits

Trigger 2 activities included monitoring visits to the field by IFRC; however, visits were not carried out because this trigger was not activated. In addition, during Trigger 1 phase IFRC provided permanent support to the

National Society, for an appropriate and timely technical and financial planification an implementation of the operation.

Lessons learned workshop

A lessons learned workshop was held after the operation ended, which was prepared and implemented by the IFRC PMER Officer with support from the CRCS' PMER Officer and Education department. The four-hour workshop was delivered via the Teams platform and attended by 22 people.

As part of the methodology, a virtual survey was carried out prior to the workshop aimed at all the people who participated in the operation, both locally and nationally. A total of 22 people were surveyed - 50 per cent from Colombian Red Cross Society at the national level, 45 per cent from branches and 5 per cent from IFRC. Of these, 68 per cent participated directly in the operation's management and implementation and 23 per cent did so indirectly.

The survey addressed the effectiveness, relevance and pertinence of activities implemented as part of the preparedness strategy through the Trigger 1 mechanism. According to survey results, 90 per cent of respondents consider that preparedness activities conducted were highly relevant.

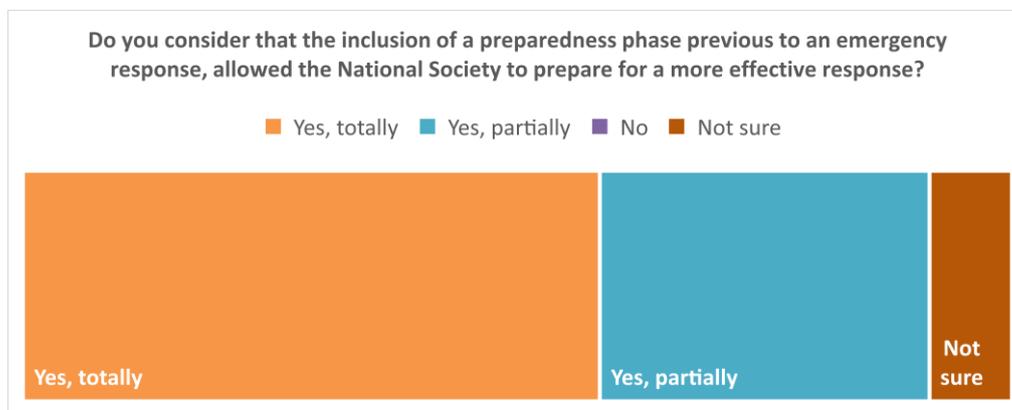


Figure 2. Perception of the relevance achieved by the preparedness activities implemented. Source: Lessons Learned Workshop Report IFRC-CRCS

The overall results of the pre-workshop survey were presented during the first block of the lessons learned workshop, after which three discussion sessions were held in three virtual rooms (one session in each room) created according to the operation's lines of intervention - Room 1: WASH; Room 2: Livelihoods; and Room 3. Management at the national level.

During these spaces (held simultaneously), participants discussed the activities implemented in each area based on assessment criteria - relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and coverage. Once discussions ended, each room's main conclusions were presented during a central panel. The main output of the lessons learned workshop was a report that consolidated the results of the pre-workshop survey and the results of discussions in each room.

Challenges:

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, these workshops were carried out in person and lasted more than one day; therefore, substituting the activities that used to be carried out in person before the pandemic proved to be challenging in terms of connectivity, mastery of virtual tools, reduction of activities, among others.

While virtual tools do facilitate some participatory processes, such as this lessons learned workshop, these do not ensure people's participation in or full and undivided attention to the activity. Given that the workshop is held remotely, people sometimes left the workshop to tend to other activities, which did not happen when the activity was carried out face to face.

Lessons learned:

For this type of virtual workshops, it is important to reinforce mechanisms that keep participants engaged and encourage them to participate in discussions. To the extent possible, and adhering to protection measures against the current pandemic, it is recommended to consider the possibility of conducting the lessons learned workshops in person, seeking to ensure participants' unrestricted participation.

D. Financial Report

See [Annex](#) for the Final financial report.

Contact information

Reference documents

Click here for:

- [DREF Plan of Action](#)
- [Operation Update n° 1](#)

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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief, the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable, to **Principles of Humanitarian Action** and **IFRC policies and procedures**. 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.

DREF Operation

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2021/01-2021/10	Operation	MDRCO018
Budget Timeframe	2021/01-2021/06	Budget	APPROVED

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Prepared on 23/Nov/2021

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRCO018 - Colombia - La Niña Phenomenon

Operating Timeframe: 17 Jan 2021 to 30 Jun 2021

I. Summary

Opening Balance	0
Funds & Other Income	173,715
DREF Allocations	173,715
Expenditure	-16,037
Closing Balance	157,678

II. Expenditure by area of focus / strategies for implementation

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
AOF1 - Disaster risk reduction			0
AOF2 - Shelter			0
AOF3 - Livelihoods and basic needs	106,223	5,403	100,820
AOF4 - Health			0
AOF5 - Water, sanitation and hygiene	14,549	7,599	6,950
AOF6 - Protection, Gender & Inclusion			0
AOF7 - Migration			0
Area of focus Total	120,772	13,002	107,770
SFI1 - Strengthen National Societies	38,034	2,024	36,010
SFI2 - Effective international disaster management	14,910	1,011	13,899
SFI3 - Influence others as leading strategic partners			0
SFI4 - Ensure a strong IFRC			0
Strategy for implementation Total	52,944	3,036	49,908
Grand Total	173,715	16,037	157,678

DREF Operation

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2021/01-2021/10	Operation	MDRCO018
Budget Timeframe	2021/01-2021/06	Budget	APPROVED

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Prepared on 23/Nov/2021

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRCO018 - Colombia - La Niña Phenomenon

Operating Timeframe: 17 Jan 2021 to 30 Jun 2021

III. Expenditure by budget category & group

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
Relief items, Construction, Supplies	103,675	472	103,203
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	6,399	27	6,371
Teaching Materials	1,632	445	1,187
Cash Disbursement	95,645		95,645
Logistics, Transport & Storage	6,501	209	6,292
Distribution & Monitoring	1,280	148	1,131
Transport & Vehicles Costs	5,221	61	5,160
Personnel	32,283	6,486	25,797
National Society Staff	22,404	2,997	19,407
Volunteers	9,879	3,490	6,390
Workshops & Training	11,517	6,587	4,930
Workshops & Training	11,517	6,587	4,930
General Expenditure	9,137	1,304	7,834
Travel	4,223		4,223
Information & Public Relations	1,075	1,145	-70
Office Costs	2,303		2,303
Communications	768	111	657
Financial Charges	768	47	721
Indirect Costs	10,602	979	9,624
Programme & Services Support Recover	10,602	979	9,624
Grand Total	173,715	16,037	157,678