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DREF operation update Ecuador: drought

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF operation n° MDREC007
Glide n° [DR-2013-000069-ECU](#)
22 August 2013

The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (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: 11 June to 11 August 2013

264,319 Swiss francs have been allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Ecuadorian Red Cross (ERC) in delivering immediate assistance for an approximate 1,025 families.

Summary: Ecuador's southern region has gone for months without rain, particularly in the province of Loja. A government estimation made in May indicated that more than 5,000 hectares have been affected by scarce production levels and plants with stunted growth, while 1,370 hectares of corn were completely lost. As a result the Ecuadorian Red Cross coordinated with the governmental authorities to complete a detailed assessment and select areas to support with food parcels and community trainings on alternative measures to alleviate the main effects of lost crops.



RIT member from the Mexican Red Cross carrying out a satisfaction survey in Loja. Source: Ecuadorian Red Cross

During the period covered by the current operation update, the National Society has reached 1,022 families with the first delivery of one-month food parcels, completed a beneficiary satisfaction survey on the distribution, and is now organizing a second delivery. Additionally, the National Society started its work on community health, with over 33 visits completed by community leaders and volunteers, and finalized the organization of educational activities for alternative planting and livestock care techniques.

The IFRC, on behalf of the National Society, would like to extend thanks to all the donors for the generous contributions to the DREF and to the Canadian Red Cross and government in particular for the allocation made to reimburse 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, 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 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-instruments/disaster-relief-emergency-fund-dref/>

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The situation

The winter season extends from the first week of February and continues through April in the Loja province, located in the south of Ecuador's mountain range. However, in some cantons in the south-west of the province rainfall only began in mid-March, with lesser intensity than the one regularly expected, creating a water deficit. The exacerbation of the drought became a major source of concern for the people who live in these cantons, as water in streams and rivers are the main sources for water for human and animal consumption, as well as for the irrigation of crops.

Corn is the main crop in the border cantons. According to MAGAP data from May, more than 5,000 hectares were affected by drought, with scarce production levels and plants with stunted growth of between 1 and 1.5 metres, while 1,370 hectares of corn were completely lost. Soil loss due to erosion has diminished the regulating capacity of the basins and led to an excess of salt that made the plumbing system collapse, thus making access to safe and clean water difficult. In some parishes (the name given to municipalities in Ecuador) the increase of the parasitosis cases in recent months is a concern.

The family economy has been seriously affected. It is estimated that the loss of the current harvest could extend for several more months until the next harvest season.

The following table shows the number of families directly assessed by the National Society and assisted by the DREF operation:

| Canton | No. of parishes | No. of sectors | No. of families affected |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Zapotillo | 7 | 7 | 220 |
| Celica | 1 | 13 | 177 |
| Paltas | 3 | 18 | 408 |
| Macara | 4 | 15 | 200 |
| Sozoranga | 2 | 2 | 50 |
| Total | 17 | 55 | 1,055 |

Coordination and partnerships

In this emergency, the Ecuadorian Red Cross works in coordination with local and national authorities to produce situation reports and plan activities to immediately respond to the emergency.

The provincial decentralized autonomous government and the National Secretariat for Risk Management (SNGR) coordinate the inter-institutional action and have subdivided the areas for attention to avoid duplicating the efforts. The Ecuadorian Red Cross is concentrating its intervention in five high-priority cantons and will support trainings for the communities in the making of organic fertilizer for the next harvest season.

Within the plan to support families affected by drought, the Ecuadorian Red Cross and the MAGAP executed corresponding action plans for immediate response. The MAGAP provided corn and rice seeds in the 11 affected cantons (five of them correspond to the area of intervention of the Ecuadorian Red Cross). Additionally, the following activities have been carried out: the activation of agricultural insurance, deworming campaigns of cattle and sheep, vaccine delivery and vaccine use training, and permanent advice given by

four agronomists on-site. Joint coordination to meet the families' needs will continue throughout the project implementation and after its completion, in order to monitor the evolution of the situation.

Furthermore, based on a prior agreement with the National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology (INAMHI), every three days INAMHI has been issuing weather reports on the affected region, guaranteeing updated and confirmed information to plan the intervention actions.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Ecuadorian Red Cross provincial headquarters, with help from the national technical officer for risk management, has implemented activities in an inter-institutional manner and independently in locations that have not been addressed. The following are the main areas of action:

- ✓ Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis (DANA): On 15 May, four teams were formed with Ecuadorian Red Cross volunteers and members from the SNGR. These teams travelled to the most affected areas of the cantons designated by the Ecuadorian Red Cross.
- ✓ Participation in canton-level meetings of the Ecuadorian Red Cross and coordination meetings with the SNGR and MAGAP.
- ✓ Hiring of a project coordinator and a technical assistant as part of the staff to implement the plan of action.
- ✓ Purchase of materials and supplies: food kits, molasses, water filters, storage tanks and irrigation hoses.
- ✓ Coordination, organization and distributions of food parcels and molasses in the five cantons with a presence of representatives of the Red Cross Cantonal Boards, autonomous governments (GAD), community leaders and key local stakeholders.
- ✓ Completion of a beneficiary satisfaction survey to evaluate the quality of the assistance provided, with the support of the RIT member.
- ✓ Conducting education and awareness-raising lectures to explain the use of molasses during the distribution of food kits.
- ✓ Household visits in the cantons to work on health issues and follow-up actions.
- ✓ Technical assessment in every selected community for the implementation of the 13 micro-projects using water supply hoses.
- ✓ Community-based health and first aid (CBHFA) update workshop with the participation of 24 volunteers and 44 local actors.
- ✓ Socialization workshop on MEGA V distribution system at the Loja Provincial Board with volunteers from the province and with RIT and NIT members from the Ecuadorian Red Cross.



Crop losses due to drought. Source: Ecuadorian Red Cross



Tanks used for water storage. Source: Ecuadorian Red Cross

The proposed operation

| Livelihoods | |
|--|---|
| Outcome: Contribute to the recuperation of the livelihoods by the most vulnerable families in 15 parishes in the five identified cantons. | |
| Output 1: 1,025 families have received food for two months. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and registration of beneficiaries; • Tender and purchase of supplies for the distribution of food kits; • Creation of the distribution plan together with personnel from the canton committees; • Distribution of food kits to 1,025 families. |
| Output 2: 1,025 families have strengthened their capacity to recover their agricultural livestock livelihoods in the affected areas. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring of the local technical team: a local project coordinator and an agronomist; • Creation of an agricultural livestock attention plan; • Creation of a distribution plan with the personnel from the canton committees; • Implementing 13 micro-projects to reactivate the irrigation systems in five cantons; • Facilitate four training sessions in the communities to produce food for animal consumption using the leftovers from the local production; • Establish mutual cooperation agreements with MAGAP and the University of Loja for technical assistance to families; • Facilitate five (one per canton) training sessions in planting, care and sowing techniques. |

Progress

| Output 1: 1,025 families have received food for two months. | | | | |
|--|--|------------------|----|------------|
| Nº | Activity | Activity on time | | % progress |
| | | Yes | No | |
| 1 | Identification and registration of beneficiaries | X | | 100% |
| 2 | Tender and purchase of supplies for the distribution of food kits | X | | 100% |
| 3 | Creation of the distribution plan together with personnel from the canton committees | X | | 100% |
| 4 | Distribution of food kits to 1,025 families | X | | 50% |

1. Identification and registration of beneficiaries

The information at household level in the five cantons --Sozoranga, Celica, Avocado, Macará and Zapotillo-- has been gathered. Fifteen volunteers from Paltas, Macará and Celica cantonal boards contributed to the identification of beneficiaries. Furthermore, students from Sozoranga, Zapotillo, Celica and Paltas provided support for family census activities after receiving adequate training.

2. Tender and purchase of supplies for the distribution of food kits

The purchase of 2,050 food kits has been made taking into consideration time and place of delivery, product quality, validity of the offer and payment method. The delivery was made in two stages and was coordinated with the selected provider; the first delivery started on 20 July and the second will start on 23 August. In this way all the selected families will receive two one-month food parcels.

3 and 4. Distribution of food kits to 1,025 families

The first delivery was completed on 2 August, with the last distribution occurring in Macará. The distribution was based on information collected through surveys at the household level in the field. In addition, meetings with staff and community leaders from the autonomous governments were held to coordinate delivery in the communities.

Not all beneficiaries showed up during distributions in Zapotillo, Celica, Macará and Paltas, and therefore food kits and molasses were kept in the custody of corresponding autonomous governments so they could be collected using bar codes by families on a later date.

The final records in the MEGA V tool database confirm the following information related to distribution:

- 1,022 families received food aid;
- 5,110 total beneficiaries;
- 48 families received molasses.

To reach the objectives of the action plans, from 23 August to 28 August, a second distribution of humanitarian aid to beneficiary families will be carried out.

It must be mentioned that the implementation of the MEGA V tool facilitated the delivery process to families, reducing the waiting time for beneficiaries and the time used to create hand-made records. The National Society considers essential to continue the implementation of the MEGA V tool, in order to become more familiar with the methodology, both for deliveries as well as to compile family data and develop the appropriate barcodes. During the distribution, a sample of 215 families was selected to complete a beneficiary satisfaction survey, providing a confidence level of 90%. Some of the results of the survey are:

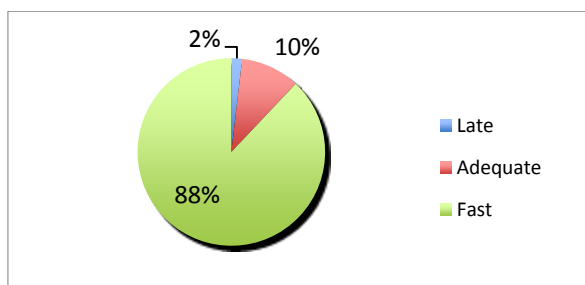


Figure 1 Beneficiaries' opinion on response timeliness

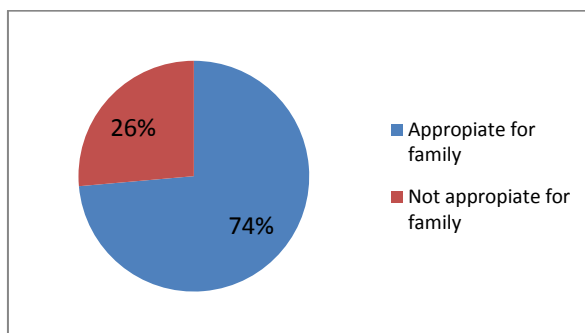


Figure 2 Beneficiaries' opinion on the adequacy of the food kit

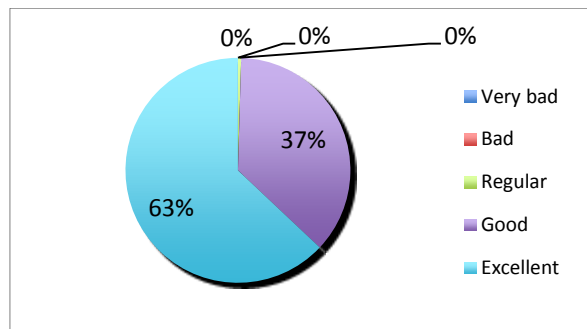


Figure 3 Beneficiaries' opinion on the conduct of staff and volunteers

Output 2: 1,025 families have strengthened their capacity to recover their agricultural livestock livelihoods in the affected areas.

| Nº | Activity | Activity on time | | % progress |
|----|---|------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| | | Yes | No | |
| 1 | Hiring of the local technical team: a local project coordinator and an agronomist | X | | 100% |
| 2 | Creation of an agricultural livestock attention plan | X | | 100% |
| 3 | Creation of a distribution plan together with the personnel from the canton committees | X | | 100% |
| 4 | Implementing 13 micro-projects to reactivate the irrigation systems in five cantons | X | | 30% |
| 5 | Facilitate four training sessions in the communities, in order to produce food for animal consumption using the leftovers from local production | X | | 50% (Planning process) |
| 6 | Establish mutual cooperation agreements with the University of Loja for technical assistance to families | | X | Pending due to academic vacations |
| 7 | Facilitate five (one per canton) training sessions in planting, care and sowing techniques | X | | 60% (Planning process) |

1. Hiring of the local technical team:

The members of the technical local team were hired immediately after the project approval, on 11 June 2013. The team is composed of:

Project coordinator: In charge of technical implementation of the project, with the following duties:

- Compilation of data at field level;
- Coordination with autonomous governments and community leaders;
- Planning of activities at community level;
- Coordination, implementation and evaluation of the humanitarian aid distribution according to the plan of action;
- Implementation of community work to identify farmers and the need for irrigation hoses;
- Provision of technical reports to the administrative area for the purchase of kits and materials.

Technical assistant: Responsible of providing logistic support to the coordinator to implement local activities:

- Provide data collecting forms;
- Liaise with the autonomous governments for community organization;
- Coordination with programs for the implementation of community first aid and health activities;
- Elaboration of workshop reports and systematization of data;
- Procurement process of kits and materials needed for the project;

2. Creation of an agricultural livestock attention plan

To date, bins of molasses (of five gallons) have been delivered to 48 beneficiary families with the same delivery schedule as the one for the food kits. On the other hand, the plan for agricultural training is under development in coordination with the canton boards of the Red Cross and the local authorities (autonomous governments and community leaders). The aim is to organize communities and provide agricultural advice to those who have been affected by drought. This will be carried out during the second distribution, from 23 to 28 August.

3. Implement 13 micro-projects to reactivate irrigation systems in five cantons

Based on the technical needs assessments at field level, irrigation hoses of different diameters are being purchased to optimize resources and reach as many farmers as possible. This activity will be completed on the third week of August.

4. Establish mutual cooperation agreements with MAGAP and the University of Loja for technical assistance to families

The first phase of the plan coordinated with the MAGAP has been implemented, with the distribution of corn and rice seeds in 11 cantons by the governmental authorities. The affected families in five of these cantons are being supported by the Ecuadorian Red Cross with training sessions. However, the coordination of the technical assistance with MAGAP has been halted despite having approached the ministry several times. At the moment the National Society has started the activities without their support.

In the case of the National University of Loja, coordination will start in early September once the academic activities restart. The university will contribute by advising and monitoring drought-affected families after the completion of the project; coordination includes the Faculty of Agriculture.

5. Facilitate five (one per canton) training sessions in planting, care and sowing techniques and four training sessions for food production for animal consumption.

These trainings are being organized on the same dates of the second and third distributions. Some of the topics planned for the trainings are:

- organic fertilizer production;
- planting;
- cultural practices and harvesting;
- use of the leftovers from the local production for animal consumption.

One of the goals is for families to be able to use the leftovers of lost crops to create animal feed, using the molasses distributed as an energetic supplement.

Challenges: During the monitoring field visits additional families that could be assisted with molasses for animal feed were detected. The Ecuadorian Red Cross decided to include them as beneficiaries on the basis of the following criteria:

- i. Families which have land and know techniques for fertilizing the soil by means of composting;
- ii. Families with small animals like pigs, goats and donkeys.

In addition, coordination amongst the teams of the Red Cross and community leaders has been hampered by the lack of services in the area (cell phone, land lines, internet or radio systems).

| Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion | |
|--|---|
| Outcome: Guarantee access to safe and clean water to the families which do not have an installed water distribution system. | |
| Output: 1,025 families have access to sufficient safe and clean water with water storage tanks and domestic filters | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase of supplies for the storage of safe and clean water (water tanks and accessories); • Distribution of 270-litre water storage tanks to 300 families; • Distribution of domestic water filters to 765 families; • One workshop on the community-based health and first aid methodology for the Ecuadorian Red Cross volunteers; • Five workshops (one per canton) in on the community-based health and first aid methodology for community leaders; • One hundred home visits (20 per canton) by the provincial committee's health promoters; |

Progress:

| Output: 1,025 families have access to sufficient safe and clean water with water storage tanks and domestic filters | | | | |
|--|--|------------------|----|------------|
| Nº | Activity | Activity on time | | % progress |
| | | Yes | No | |
| 1 | Purchase of supplies for the storage of safe and clean water | X | | 100% |

| | (water tanks and accessories) | | | (purchased locally) |
|---|--|---|--|--------------------------|
| 2 | Distribution of 270-litre water storage tanks to 300 families | X | | 0% In progress |
| 3 | Distribution of domestic water filters to 765 families | X | | 40% In progress |
| 4 | One workshop on the community-based health and first aid methodology for the Ecuadorian Red Cross volunteers | X | | 100% |
| 5 | Five workshops (one per canton) in on the community-based health and first aid methodology for community leaders | X | | 60% (three workshops) |
| 6 | 100 home visits (20 per canton) by the provincial committee health promoters | X | | 40% In progress |

1. Purchase of supplies for the storage of safe and clean water (water tanks and accessories)

The procurement process has been completed. The water tanks were purchased at the local level, with the provider delivering them at the storage points identified in each canton: Zapotillo Sozoranga, Celica, Macará and Paltas. On the other hand, the water filters for the Sozoranga, Celica, Avocado and Paltas cantons, as well as the chlorine bomb for Celica canton were procured at the national level.

2. Distribution of 270-litre water storage tanks to 300 families and domestic water filters to 765 families

The delivery of water tanks, home filters and chlorine bomb will be completed during the second and third distributions in late August.

3. One workshop on the community-based health and first aid methodology for the Ecuadorian Red Cross volunteers

In the Loja provincial branch, a community-based health and first aid workshop was directed to the Red Cross volunteers, who are now responsible for instructing beneficiaries and community leaders in the five cantons. Twenty-four volunteers of Health and Community Development program of the provincial capital and canton boards (Paltas, Celica, Macará, Catamayo, Loja, Sozoranga and Zapotillo) participated in the workshop.

5. Five community-based health and first aid workshops (one per canton) for community leaders

Under the responsibility of the Health Program and Community Development staff, these workshops were conducted in order to disseminate methodologies related to health issues and water and sanitation, according to the community-based health and first aid volunteers' manual.

So far three out of the five cantons have been covered by the training for community leaders, who will replicate the training to their community peers during the household visits. At least 12 people attending the workshop are expected per canton, totaling 60 community leaders trained on health issues and water and sanitation. So far, 44 leaders have been trained.

6. 100 home visits (20 per canton) by the provincial committee's health promoters

This activity began on 5 August with 33 visits in the communities of Paltas, Macará and Celica and will continue once the community-based health and first aid workshops for community leaders are completed with the support of Health and Community Development staff at the Ecuadorian Red Cross and volunteers from the provincial and cantonal boards.

Challenges:

- During the purchasing process, difficulties were identified to deliver items first from suppliers to the Provincial Board, and then to the final destination due to the distance and the conditions of the access roads to the beneficiary communities. To overcome it, an agreement was reached to purchase and receive products at the point of distribution.
- The final exams and school holidays season limited the volunteer participation in local distributions, particularly taking into account both distance and time to reach the beneficiary towns. However, in the last days of the distribution approximately 16 volunteers from Loja, Paltas, Celica and Macará Cantonal Boards participated.

Logistics

The logistics of the operation is being implemented by the Ecuadorian Red Cross provincial committees and canton branches with the support, supervision and monitoring by the National Society's central headquarters. The distributions were conducted by volunteers from all the operative programmes and in coordination with the community leaders and the National Secretariat for Risk Management. All of the actions are based on the joint procedures for the Delivery of Humanitarian Aid, as well as on the regulations from the Manual of Operational Safety and Safe Access.

Challenges:

During the monitoring of the activities carried out to identify weaknesses and strengths in the implementation, the distance and types of roads caused additional and unexpected expenses regarding vehicles maintenance.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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 2. Enable healthy and safe living.
 3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.
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