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Final Report

Sierra Leone: Fire Accident

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF operation	MDRSL010
Date of issue: 22 March 2022	Glide number: FR-2021-000029-SLE
Operation start date: 03 April 2021	Operation end date: 31 August 2021
Host National Society: Sierra Leone Red Cross Society	Operation budget: CHF 275,374
Number of people affected: 7,093 people (1,597HH)	Number of people assisted: 5,000 people (1,000HH)
Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners currently actively involved in the operation: International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)	
Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation: WFP, Plan International, CARITAS, GOAL-SL, UNICEF, Catholic Relief Services, Concern Worldwide, National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), Freetown City Council (FCC), and National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA)	

The major donors and partners of the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) include the Red Cross Societies and governments of Belgium, Britain, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland, as well as DG ECHO and Blizzard Entertainment, Mondelez International Foundation, Fortive Corporation and other corporate and private donors. DG ECHO contributed to replenishing the DREF for this operation. On behalf of Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS), the IFRC would like to extend gratitude to all for their generous contributions.

A. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Description of the disaster

On 24 March 2021, fire unexpectedly broke out in Susan's Bay, one of the overcrowded slum communities in Freetown the capital city of Sierra Leone where thousands of deprived families, mostly fisher men and petty traders reside. The fires started by 7:30 pm and was halted around 11:00 pm. Unfortunately, before the fire was controlled, it had engulfed the entire community and burnt down most buildings. According to a joint multi-sectorial assessment, the cause of the fire was wrong electrical connection and irregular power supplies as well as inattentive ways of handling fires for domestic purposes within the community. Susan's Bay is a congested community with limited access to and within. Vehicular access to the community remains impossible, despite a swift response from the National Fire Force, the lack of access roads prevented fire engines from reaching the community to quench the blaze, allowing it to burn for more than three hours. However, with the help of the population, the Fire Force vehicles were able to stretch out their hoses from a distant location to halt the fires.



Fire outbreak at Susan's Bay ©SLRCS

According to the joint in-depth assessment carried out by the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), CARITAS, Freetown City Council (FCC), WFP, and National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), a total of 7,093 people (including 1,208 children) representing 1,597 households were left homeless. A total of 409 people (207 were men, 181 women and 21 children) were injured by the heaps of burnt rubble that used to be their houses. Furthermore, many children were unable to go to school because of the loss of their school materials and other resources in the crisis. Prior to SLRCS' and IFRC's intervention, the affected people lived in desperate condition as they lost everything they had, including their makeshift shelters, their clothes, food they had in stock, money, and other valuable properties. The National Disaster Management Agency, being the lead actor, coordinated response of other

actors to constructively respond to the incident. Several planning and coordination meetings were held with the various state and non-state actors to guide the response purposefully to meet needs of the affected population.

Summary of response

Overview of Operating National Society

The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS) has organizational structures at the national and district levels organized around programmes and support units: finance, logistics and procurement including resource mobilization. Upon receiving news of the fire incident, the SLRCS deployed 160 volunteers and 4 staff instantly to deal with issues that required prompt actions. Some of the actions SLRCS staff and volunteers undertook comprised:

- First-aid services reaching 620 injured persons and collaborated with the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS) to provide ambulance services which supported the referral of people who were seriously injured to the hospital for intensive treatment. Constant follow-up was made to those referral sites to track progress of the health condition of affected people.
- Out of the 160 volunteers mentioned above, 60 volunteers were deployed to provide psychosocial support to some 1,450 affected persons who were experiencing trauma due to the loss of their properties worth millions of Leones and most importantly their means of livelihood and shelter. This helped the affected people to restore their hope and confidence and cope with the situation with which they were confronted.
- SLRCS team also pitched 25 tents which accommodated 375 people (15 people per tent) as a temporary shelter while reaching out to partners for additional support.



SLRCS volunteers providing first aid to injured woman



SLRCS volunteers pitching tent for temporary shelter

To scale up the response intervention, on 3rd April 2021, the SLRCS through the technical support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) launched a [DREF Operation](#) for CHF 275,374 to support immediate needs of 5,000 people (1,000HHs). The funds were to ensure emergency shelter provision through cash for rents and purchase of household items, and to provide food, health care and WASH services as needed. Through this operation, SLRCS conducted refresher training of 35 community-based volunteers in first aid, psychosocial services, and CEA approaches to continue providing support to people who were showing signs of distress, and making views of the community members reflected in the management of operation and provide feedback to them as and when required. As planned, the objectives of the operation were met, and these emergency funds enabled volunteers to assist 5,000 people (1,000 households) with first aid, health care, water, sanitation and hygiene promotion, unconditional cash, and distribution of emergency food and household kits as detailed in this report.

SLRCS maintained active participation in national coordination meetings organized by the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) with other partners. The coordination meeting from the onset of the disaster led planning and response mechanism, and together with partners assessed the situation and took necessary steps to support the Government of Sierra Leone in providing humanitarian support to the affected persons.

Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in country

The IFRC has a Country Cluster Delegation in Sierra Leone supporting Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, and Guinea Bissau National Societies. IFRC provided technical support to the SLRCS through its Country Cluster Delegation based in Freetown and the Africa Region office based in Kenya. These two offices supported the SLRCS request for a DREF grant to meet the needs of most affected people from the fire.

Overview of other actors' actions in country

Other key actors also played crucial role in assessing and responding to the impact of the fire incident including WFP, Plan International, Caritas, GOAL, UNICEF, CRS, Concern Worldwide, WHO, UNICEF, China Centre for Diseases Control (CCDC), World Vision, International Rescue, NaCSA among others. The Office of the National Security played a coordinating role from the onset of the fire; consolidating the different response support actions to the operation and coordinating resource mobilization along with partners. The table below summarises some of their contributions:

Actor	Activity
WFP & Plan – Sierra Leone	Food and served as a technical lead for the assessment
CRITAS	Hot meal (wet feeding) for the survivors
GOAL-SL	Drinking water
UNICEF	WASH facilities and services
CRS	WASH facilities and services
Concern Worldwide	Non-food items
National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA)	Overall coordination of all responses of the fire incidents
Freetown City Council (FCC)	Assisted with the overall coordination
National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA)	Led the logistics shelter pillar

Needs analysis and scenario planning

The findings from the assessment indicated that affected community had their household items damaged ranging from shelter, food, clothing, and other essential livelihood opportunities and had their house structures destroyed. The basic needs of affected people identified during the joint assessment conducted by SLRCS in collaboration with other disaster management actors were WASH, food, health, PSS, emergency shelter and household items (blankets, mattresses, clothing, hygiene, and cooking items). The assessment also indicated that the fire incident displaced some households and destroyed livelihoods, including cash, petty trade items in their houses and limited and impure water sources, consequently increasing the risk of water borne diseases, with the worst affected being mothers, elderly, persons with disabilities and malnourished women and children. Given the extent of the damages which destroyed infrastructure in the area, the affected communities were in dire need of support to clean up the rubbles and provide adequate WASH services to the community to avoid any waterborne and hygiene related diseases outbreaks.

Susan's Bay being a poor community, most families lived on fishing and petty trading. The assessment report indicated that families lost their livelihoods, which exposed them to greater vulnerability. There was a need for these families to access support to restart their livelihoods to avoid slipping into extreme poverty and hunger.

With the country fighting the global Covid-19 pandemic, there was a great risk for the virus to spread, which would be a double disaster for the affected community. In addition, the congested nature of the location, lack of water and sanitation facilities made it a perfect breeding ground for potential epidemics as communities could have been tempted to resort to unsafe water for consumption. There was an urgent need to enhance these families water storage capacity at household level and conduct health and hygiene promotion.

Given that every house (largely makeshift) had been destroyed and the rainy season was fast approaching, the best scenario for 500 eligible beneficiary households was to provide rental solution for a least two months so that they could relocate to a safe location while working with other actors to build back (Susan's community) better which was the long-term plan by the Government of Sierra Leone and other humanitarian actors.

The provision of water storage gallons to enhance storage capacity at household level, and hygiene promotion to address the risk of water borne diseases were among critical immediate needs of the affected population.

Scenario planning

The emergency plan of action was based on the most likely scenario that affected population receive emergency assistance within three months, while waiting for measures which will allow them to return to their homes. Based on this scenario, SLRCS requested for the DREF funds to kick-off emergency activities and plan to request a second allocation if needed as the implementation progressed. It was anticipated that the DREF operation will not be implemented as planned with possibility of a timeframe extension and adjustment of the operational strategy based on the specific situation. However, the NS ensured implementation of the DREF operation within planned timeline, in coordination with authorities and other stakeholders.

Risk Analysis

The Susan's Bay fire response operation was exposed to considerable risks. Conflict and physical violence may have been orchestrated by non-beneficiary households due to the limited, but rich package. The response intervention package provided by SLRCS was attractive, and households who did not receive the support felt it was unfair. To mitigate this risk, meetings were held with local authorities including chiefs, ward Councillors, the Police, Military, and the wider community to explain the beneficiary selection criteria, making sure that everyone was clear on who were eligible. SLRCS' staff and volunteers were equally exposed to crime especially as the support included cash and not every affected household benefitted from it. SLRCS ensured that all security measures of both the Movement and the Government were strictly adhered to by all volunteers and staff to reduce risks. The security management as part of this operation was based on the RCRC Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values, taking into consideration; visibility through the wearing of jackets and regular communication on all the movements, regular security updates organized, and information disseminated among staff and volunteers to remind them of their behaviour and Safer Access, and real time monitoring of field activities through the SLRCS information management system ensured. Staff and volunteers were encouraged to undergo the Stay Safe security course and abided by the provisions therein.

The fire incident occurred in April, and Sierra Leone rainy season typically begins in April, intensifies in May/June, there was expectation that it could lead to flooding. Affected community was mainly homeless at the time of implementation, which would have exposed them, leading them to potentially flee completely from the area, making it hard to find them for support. In addition, a potential flood would have worsened the situation for already affected persons or create new needs among those not severely affected by the fire accident. The floods would have also made the targeted areas inaccessible, increasing the risk of the implementation to be delayed. The national campaigns on disaster reduction measures in flood prone communities across the country by NDMA with support from other partners is believed to have saved disaster-prone communities including Susan's Bay from possible flooding throughout the raining season. Also, SLRCS Disaster Management team worked with the community to ensure drainages were cleaned up and raised awareness on Floods Disaster Risk Reduction.

The DREF operation and its operational strategy considered the risks related to the current COVID-19 pandemic and the operation was aligned with and contributed to the current [global strategy](#) and regional [Emergency Plan of Action for COVID-19](#) developed by the IFRC Africa Regional Office, in coordination with global and regional partners. SLRCS integrated COVID-19 prevention and containment measures in all community meetings and engagements in alignment with regional plan of action and its national COVID-19 country plan.

B. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

The overall objective of this EPoA was to provide immediate basic assistance to address the most acute needs of 5,000 people (1,000 households) affected by the fire incident in Susan's Bay area of Freetown. This was done by addressing immediate Shelter and household items, food, health, and WASH needs. Implementation was planned for four months to accommodate procurement of food, updating financial service provider (FSP) contract and in anticipation of any potential delays.

Proposed strategy

SLRCS, through its thematic core areas of focus ensured a collective response to the direst needs of the fire affected population. The strategy included gender-sensitization and protection in all programming, psychosocial support, and community engagement and accountability as a crosscutting approach to all affected people. The DREF operation provided support in the planned areas of focus and achieved the following:

Shelter:

The NS provided shelter related household items to 1,000 most affected households as follows:

- Provided immediate shelter needs to 2,500 people (500HH) through unconditional cash grant to allow them access rental houses for two months.
- 500 households were provided a total of SLL 1,550,000 at same time with the rental solution grant to support purchase of household items such as kitchen sets, mattresses, and blankets.
- Twenty (20) volunteers were allocated to both support cash activities which include cash for rental and cash for household items, and to sensitize targeted families on the use of the cash following IFRC guidelines for rental assistance. Community-based volunteers also supported the affected in accessing their cash by linking them with FSP cashing points.
- Fifteen volunteers were allocated to conduct a combined post distribution monitoring of cash, Hygiene and HHs items provided few weeks after distribution.

Livelihood and basic needs:

- Some 500 HHs were provided with food (rice, oil, salt and sugar) to ensure they have immediate access to food based on the food basket in the Country.
- 15 volunteers were mobilized to support food distribution to targeted beneficiaries. Following the distribution of food items, 15 volunteers were trained to support a three day post distribution monitoring (PDM) in Susan's Bay community

Health and Care:

SLRC provided Psychosocial Support (PSS) to families affected by the disaster. This was done to ease stress experienced from the tragedy. Volunteers held PSS sessions in affected communities and conducted health talks on key health messages relating to COVID-19 and Ebola virus disease. Awareness raising of community members on the use of facemasks was done by volunteers during their community engagement activities to both promote adherence to COVID-19 regulations and protect them from contracting the virus. Activities implemented included:

- Psychosocial support provided to affected families: some 20 volunteers focused on providing PSS support to affected persons within their communities. A one-day refresher training was organized for volunteers involved in the operation.
- Health promotion activities, including awareness on Covid-19 and Ebola virus disease: Some 40 SLRCS volunteers were deployed 3 days a week for 12 weeks to ensure community awareness on health issues resulting from the fire.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene – WASH:

Following the fire incident, the entire affected area was filled with rubbles. There was a need to support sanitation of this area. Similarly, as the people had lost most of their assets, they did not have access to proper drinking water, which could have resulted in an outbreak of waterborne diseases. The following activities were carried out:

- A total of 500 HHs were provided buckets (14L) and jerricans (10L) for water collection (1 bucket and 2 jerricans)
- Procurement and distribution of 18,750 Aqua tabs to 1,000HH for water purification
- Volunteers monitored treatment and storage of water in the community
- Distributed soap for household use to 1,000 families (5 pieces of 500g per HH per month)
- Procured and distributed hygiene kits to 1,000 families containing bathing soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, etc. for household personal hygiene.
- Provided dignity kits to 780 women and girls of childbearing age, containing sanitary pads, panties and bathing soap for women and girls to serve for three months.
- Conducted hygiene and sanitation campaigns twice a month for three months. The campaign was coupled with health promotion, with emphasized awareness against Covid-19 and EVD. Volunteers also conducted home visits as part of their rounds, to enforce hygiene promotion.

Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI):

Women and children were more vulnerable especially owing to the fact of their homeless condition with the affected community. As such, PGI was streamlined throughout the intervention, ensuring that volunteers received adequate briefing during the various refreshers. SLRCS ensured that protection issues were considered and that everyone felt protected despite age, gender, and disability status. Awareness-raising and orientation session on protection were held. For inclusion of everyone, engagement with community members was done to ensure that all the assistance were distributed equitably and impartially. As part of the needs assessment and analysis, a gender and diversity analysis was included in all sector responses including Shelter, Livelihoods, Health and WASH, which showed how different groups were affected in line with IFRC minimum standards for protection, gender and inclusion in emergencies.

Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA):

Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) was mainstreamed throughout the intervention to guarantee meaningful participation of the affected communities. An effective complaints and feedback mechanism was set up to ensure community feedback was considered in the implementation of the operation. Hygiene and health promotion sessions were instrumental in collecting feedback and responding to community concerns. SLRCS informed community members that they can use the 300 Hotline service to ask questions, make complaints or provide feedback.

C. DETAILED OPERATIONAL PLAN



Shelter

People reached: 2,500 ¹

Male: 241 heads of households

Female: 259 heads of households

Indicators:	Target	Actual
% of targeted households reached with emergency shelter support (50% or 500HH)	500	500
# of people reached cash for rental support	2,500	2,500
# of cash interventions under shelter component	2	2
# volunteers supporting cash for shelter activities	20	20
# of PDM conducted	2	1

Narrative description of achievements

- Shelter and basic household items assistance to the affected families:** Orange Mobile company (the designated financial service provider) distributed unconditional cash to 500 beneficiary households to address their shelter and household item needs. Cash transfer for procurement of the household items by the beneficiaries was a one-off support, while the shelter support was done twice. This was meant to restore the human dignity of the affected population as well as guarantee their physical security. The amount of the first cash transfer was SLL 2,800,000 for each of the 500 HHs with a breakdown of SLL 1,250,000 for rental solution and SLL 1,550,000 for purchasing of household items. The household items included kitchen sets, mattresses, blankets. The second cash transfer was meant for house rental solution, the total sum of SLL 1,250,000 to each of the 500 households, distributed one month after the first transfer. A total of 20 volunteers were deployed to support the process.



The team distributing sim cards to heads of eligible households ©SLRCS

- Post Distribution Monitoring:** Post-distribution monitoring was conducted involving 15 volunteers for three days, geared towards determining the level of satisfaction of communities regarding the targeting and the distribution process. The satisfaction survey revealed that 97% of the households surveyed were satisfied with the targeting process as they were well informed about the whole process. About 81% of the targeted households also showed satisfaction with the distribution process; distribution sites were well organized, and volunteers were available and welcoming.

Challenges

- Support provided to a limited number (500 HHs) of the affected people slowed down commencement of operation. With timely intervention of volunteers in providing first aid, PSS, and referral, affected population were all expecting support from Red Cross in the area of shelter and household items. This was addressed by the beneficiary selection criteria that was developed and aided by the active involvement and participation of community leadership in the entire DREF operation.
- Difficulty in cashing out money from few sim cards was another challenge. A total of 19 sim cards contained no money. Households which owned those sim cards got angry and complained to the Red Cross. Engagement with the FSP (Orange Mobile Company) saw the sim cards verified and the money transferred, which resulted into great family fulfilment.

¹ These people were represented by 500 heads of households, who received the cash grant and food provisions on their behalf.
MDRSL010 – Sierra Leone Fire Accident – DREF Final Report

- The imposition of COVID-19 prevention and containment regulations also affected part of the operation. Indeed, restrictions on gathering crowd beyond 100 people was a big challenge to the smooth implementation of the operation. To deal with this challenge, volunteers and staff had to work more hours than expected, and ensured that services were provided in batches, while ensuring adherence to COVID-19 containment measures including handwashing, physical distancing and the use of facemasks at distribution points.

Lessons Learned

- The involvement of community members in every phase of the intervention was crucial in dealing with potential problems. The resentment that was manifested by some youth who did not meet the criteria was proactively addressed by key community stakeholders as they engaged them on the beneficiary selection criteria. This is a worthwhile model of engagement which could be taken forward when managing future operations of similar nature.
- Agreements in place with service provider prior to emergency enhances swift response interventions, and supported implementation within agreed timeframe without requesting for extension.



Livelihoods and basic needs

People reached: 2,500

Male: 241 heads of households

Female: 259 heads of households

Indicators:	Target	Actual
% of households having received livelihood support	500	500
# of people provided with food items	2,500	2,500
# of volunteers engaged in food distribution activities	15	15
# of PDM conducted	1	1

Narrative description of achievements


- **Basic needs assistance for livelihoods security:** SLRCS through this operation was able to support 500 households that received rental support with food items (Rice, cooking oil, fine salt and sugar), targeting an average of five people per HH to ensure they have immediate access to food based on the food basket in Sierra Leone. The food support boosted energy and nutrition among the eligible family members especially among children and the elderly. The support provided to each HH has been summarized in the table below:


Item description	Quantity per day (kg)	Quantity/month/individual (kg)	Unit of measure	Quantity for HH of 5 persons (kg)
Rice	0.3	10	Kgs	50
Cooking oil	0.025	0.75	liters	3.75
Fine salt	0.006	0.2	Kgs	1
Sugar	0.02	0.6	Kgs	3



Food and non-food items being distributed by SLRCS staff and volunteers ©SLRCS

Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was no storage facility at Susan's Bay to store the food and non-food items, thus displaying items in the open which was a safety risk as the rich package was enviable for a chosen few. To prevent any unforeseen circumstances, the services of the police and the military were requested, and it was generously granted. This helped to salvage the situation and provided adequate security throughout the distribution. The distribution processes were also sporadically interrupted by sudden rainfalls. To keep the items safe, they were distributed directly from the trucks which saved time and energy.
Lessons Learned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited support provided to affected persons is likely to put response team under undue pressure. Members of non-eligible households kept complaining that the intervention was unfair, indicating they were equally affected by the fires, yet they were not selected. Involvement of all relevant authorities in all response will enable better coordinated response.

 Health People reached: 5,038 Male: 1,771 Female: 3,267		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
% of people provided with PSS services	100%	100%
# of volunteers who have received PSS orientation	20	20
Narrative description of achievements		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training of volunteers on PSS: A one day refresher training on psycho-social support was provided to 20 volunteers who were engaged in the operation. The activity supported the strengthening of volunteers in skills and knowledge of PSS to provide psychological first aid to individuals, and communities affected by the fire. Provide PSS support to targeted households: A total number of 20 PSS volunteers were deployed and provided psychological first aid, through one-to-one and household PSS talks with distressed persons in the Susan's Bay community. During the PSS sessions, affected population was given the chance to express their emotions on how they feel since they lost their source of livelihood and household assets as a result of the disaster, and were provided with PSS to continue their normal mode of living and interact with other people to let go of the stress. Through the household PSS sessions held, the psychosocial well-being and resilience of individuals, families, and community affected by fire were improved. The PSS activities also helped change the affected into active survivors rather than passive victims. During the PSS support, key health messages relating to COVID-19 and Ebola virus disease were shared especially with the EVD resurgence in neighbouring Guinea. In addition, the use of facemasks and need to be vaccinated were emphasized during PSS sessions, meant to adhere to COVID-19 regulations. 		
Challenges		
Nothing to report.		
Lessons Learned		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failing to explain limitation of one's work at the initial stage of intervention might attract other unrelated issues. The team was not quite detailed in explaining the scope of their counselling efforts as such, they were confronted with domestic issues. It is therefore necessary to be exact with the community members on the extent of one's role at the initial stage of any intervention. 		

 Water, sanitation and hygiene People reached: 5,000 Male: 1,750 Female: 3,250		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
% of target population which has access to clean water	500	500
# of water conservation items procured and distributed	500	500

# of PDM conducted	1	1
# of HH reached with soap	1,000	1,000
# of families which received personal hygiene kits	1,000	1,000
# of women and girls who received dignity kits for 3 months	780	780
# of Hygiene Promotion sessions conducted	6	8
# of people reached with hygiene promotion activities	5,000	5,000
# of volunteers supporting HP	15	15

Narrative description of achievements

- **Distribution of Aqua tabs, jerry cans, and buckets:** SLRCS with support from volunteers distributed aqua tabs, buckets, and jerry cans to the fire affected households. In total, 500HHs were each provided with 1 bucket (14L) and 2 jerricans (10L) for water collection and 18,750 Aqua tablets to ensure water purification at household level. The Aqua tabs procured were 67 mg, each tablet was enough to treat up-to 10L of water. SLRCS volunteers were trained on how to use aqua tabs, and during their hygiene promotion activities, they trained community members on how to use the tablets, while also monitoring use of these water purification tablets. The provision of Aqua tabs contributed towards improving the daily access to safe water and ensured adequate water of good quality for the target population.
- **Provision of hygiene kits, soap, and Dignity kits:** The DREF operation provided households affected by the fire with hygiene kits, soap, and dignity kits. Indeed, 1,000HHs were provided with soap (5 pieces of 500g per HH per month) for household use to serve for two months, and the same 1,000 HHs were provided hygiene kits, comprising bathing soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes for household personal hygiene. Also, 780 women and girls of childbearing age were provided dignity kits for a period of three months with each kit containing sanitary pads, panties, and bathing soap.
- **Conduct hygiene and sanitation campaigns:** A total of 15 volunteers were deployed for hygiene promotion in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Sanitation. The volunteers conducted eight (8) hygiene promotion sessions, educating the community on good hygiene practice and the use of the distributed hygiene materials. The use of volunteers was key as they communicated in local languages and were able to reach out to more people easily through community meetings and FGDs within their localities. This activity was coupled with health promotion, with emphasis on awareness against Covid-19 and EVD. To further enhance the general community sanitation practices in Susan's Bay, the volunteers undertook community cleaning campaigns for the period of four months, twice every month.

Challenges

- The DREF operation did not include tools for community cleaning, which made it a bit difficult to intensify sanitation in the Susan's Bay community. However, the volunteers liaised with Freetown City Council (FCC) and other relevant actors to mobilise the entire community to keep their location clean.

Lessons Learned

- Constructive coordination especially at the operational level is an effective problem-solving tool. The SLRCS' staff and volunteers bank on the trustworthy relationships with other actors and thus approached them to galvanise efforts to intensify community sanitation through cleaning the community jointly.

Strategies for Implementation

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of volunteers involved in the response	35	35
# of volunteers insured	35	35
# volunteers provided with visibility material and protective clothing for their safety	35	35
# of monitoring visits conducted by the Country Cluster delegation	2	2
# of CEA orientations conducted	1	1
# of feedback mechanisms setup	1	1
# of Lessons learned workshops held	1	1

Narrative description of achievements

- **Orientation of volunteers:** A total of 35 volunteers were deployed to support the overall operation. For this, the volunteers were orientated on their roles and responsibilities and the types of risks they were likely to face throughout the operation. Additionally, the volunteers were provided refresher training in psychosocial support to subsequently deal with any psychological related cases that might ensue and got detailed orientation on how to facilitate community complaints and feedback mechanisms using the Community Engagement & Accountability (CEA) approach. Strong emphasis was placed on protecting the dignity of the beneficiaries, making sure that women and men were treated equally. Efforts were made to ensure that volunteers actively included men and women in decision-making processes. Additionally, volunteers were refreshed in cash transfer processes for shelter, household items, food distribution, health, and WASH.



Orientation of volunteers before deployment ©SLRCS

- **Monitoring of the operation:** SLRCS HQ PMER team monitored the day-to-day operation to ensure accountability, transparency, and financial management of the operation. Regular monitoring of the activities was carried out by the operation team while two scheduled monitoring visits were made jointly by IFRC/SLRCS teams.
- **Organize a Lesson Learned workshop:** A one (1) day Lessons Learnt Workshop was held following the implementation of the operation attended by 45 participants including SLRCS staff, volunteers, IFRC, National Disaster Management Agency, beneficiaries and Freetown City Council. The Lessons Learnt Workshop (LLW) was used as a methodology for the NS and its partners to analyse the relevance, effectiveness, impact, and timeliness of the response operation. The purpose of the LLW was to allow the SLRCS to reflect on its disaster readiness status and its intervention especially as the country and specifically this region, is prone to fire disaster.
- The outcome of the workshop will inform future operations planning and implementation by the NS. From the LLW, participants through group discussions identified the availability of trained staff and volunteers to support rapid response, community engagement and distribution process was crucial in enhancing timely implementation of the DREF, number volunteers involved in the DREF operation were however small to support robust community engagement on WASH, health promotion, PSS and support distribution of relief items. Also, implementation of the DREF was done within agreed timeframe due to timely disbursement of funds to support response, and effective coordination between NS, IFRC and external partners. Mobile money transfer was identified as a safe and effective means of supporting beneficiaries, while the combination of cash assistance, food and non-food items played key role in restoring dignity of affected beneficiaries. The DREF did not take into account cost of transportation of the HHs items to affected communities, which to some extent delayed transportation of items for distribution. The central coordination of response by the National Disaster Management Agency was key in guiding overall response efforts and avoiding duplication.
- **Complaint and feedback mechanism:** A feedback mechanism was set up in the affected community to allow beneficiaries to express their concerns or displeasure with the relief items and hygiene promotion kits that were supplied. Also, a complaint mechanism which allows beneficiaries to confidentially report corruption or abuse of power, and to seek redress was setup. Examples of complaint mechanisms include SLRCS 300 hotline service and direct complaints to staff members trained to act as “focal points,” receiving sensitive complaints without judgment, and ensuring the complainant’s safety. The trained volunteers supported CEA team in collecting feedback and complaints from the community members and advertised the SLRCS 300 hotline system. Both feedback and complaint mechanisms helped build a culture of transparency and accountability and improved operations quality. Volunteers were also refreshed on the Red Cross and its Fundamental Principles, increased knowledge in rumour tracking, increased knowledge in Disaster Preparedness messages.

Challenges

- The affected population demanded additional support, even when the full package of the DREF operation was disclosed during community meetings. The team kept reminding them about the scope of the Red Cross support and the possibility of them getting support from other partners.

Lessons Learned

- Capacity building of volunteers is essential, particularly refresher training on use of aqua tabs before engaging the communities.
- Having existing community-based volunteers trained on hygiene promotion is essential for disease prevention during emergencies as they could be activated immediately to do community awareness and work on improving sanitation in affected communities.
- Ensure that volunteers are trained before community engagement activities and volunteers are appreciated for the good work they deliver.

D. Financial Report

The overall amount allocated for implementation of this DREF operation was CHF 275,374 of which CHF 273,505 were expensed (99.32%). A balance of CHF 1,869 will be returned to the DREF pot.



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Explanation of variances

The implementation of the DREF operation was to a larger extent in accordance with the budget lines, however some variances were experienced due to various reasons varying from high operational costs for specific areas, and underbudgeting. The analysis below gives the highlights of the major variances:

Activity line	Budget (CHF)	Expenditure (CHF)	Variance (CHF)	Comment
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	23,054	19,114	3,940	Approved budget for WASH was underspent due to overbudgeting.
Cash Disbursement	184,073	186,818	-2,745	The NS experienced exchange rate loss at time of funds transfer. While reducing the amount of cash per HH was not seen as an ideal option, the amount of cash per HH was maintained, and the loss due to exchange was covered by savings on other budget lines due to over budgeting.
National Staff	270	0	270	The cost for National Staff was covered by the budget line for Other General Expenses/Admin cost
Volunteers	3,696	3,227	469	Budget line to cover cost for volunteers' engagement was underspent due to overbudgeting
Workshops & Training	3,150	2,287	863	Cost allocated for workshops and capacity building was overbudgeted
Financial charges	1,350	-49	1,399	NS experienced exchange rate loss, been that the same account used for EVD operations was used for DREF, bank charges was covered by the EVD Operations and funds repurpose and cover exchange rate loss
Other General Expenses	15,772	17,798	-2,026	This budget line was overspent due to a withholding task of 5.5% on relief items which was not included in the approved DREF budget. Also, there was an increase in the pump price of fuel from Le8,500 to Le10,000 during the course of implementation, resulting to using more cost on fuel than budgeted

Contact information

Reference documents



Click here for:

- [Emergency Plan of Action \(EPoA\)](#)

For further information, specifically related to this operation please contact:

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For IFRC Resource Mobilization and Pledges support:

- IFRC Africa Regional Office for Resource Mobilization and Pledge: Louise Daintrey, Head of Unit, Partnership and Resource Development, Nairobi, email: louise.daintrey@ifrc.org;

For In-Kind donations and Mobilization table support:

- **IFRC Africa Regional Office for Logistics Unit:** Rishi Ramrakha, Head of Africa Regional Logistics Unit, Email: rishi.ramrakha@ifrc.org; phone: +254 733 888 022

For Performance and Accountability support (planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting enquiries)

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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 Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, **encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities** by National Societies, with a view to **preventing and alleviating human suffering**, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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DREF Operation

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2021/4-2022/02	Operation	MDRSL010
Budget Timeframe	2021/4-12	Budget	APPROVED

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Prepared on 16/Mar/2022

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRSL010 - Sierra Leone - Fire Accident

Operating Timeframe: 02 Apr 2021 to 31 Aug 2021

I. Summary

Opening Balance	0
Funds & Other Income	275,374
DREF Allocations	275,374
Expenditure	-273,505
Closing Balance	1,869

II. Expenditure by area of focus / strategies for implementation

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
AOF1 - Disaster risk reduction			0
AOF2 - Shelter	196,804	198,961	-2,157
AOF3 - Livelihoods and basic needs	28,453	28,879	-425
AOF4 - Health	1,265	1,577	-312
AOF5 - Water, sanitation and hygiene	24,955	20,356	4,598
AOF6 - Protection, Gender & Inclusion			0
AOF7 - Migration			0
Area of focus Total	251,477	249,773	1,704
SFI1 - Strengthen National Societies	19,775	22,373	-2,598
SFI2 - Effective international disaster management	2,684	1,360	1,324
SFI3 - Influence others as leading strategic partners			0
SFI4 - Ensure a strong IFRC	1,438		1,438
Strategy for implementation Total	23,897	23,733	164
Grand Total	275,374	273,505	1,868

DREF Operation

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2021/4-2022/02	Operation	MDRSL010
Budget Timeframe	2021/4-12	Budget	APPROVED

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Prepared on 16/Mar/2022

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRSL010 - Sierra Leone - Fire Accident

Operating Timeframe: 02 Apr 2021 to 31 Aug 2021

III. Expenditure by budget category & group

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
Relief items, Construction, Supplies	233,789	233,048	741
Food	26,663	27,116	-454
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	23,054	19,114	3,940
Cash Disbursement	184,073	186,818	-2,745
Personnel	4,506	3,729	777
National Staff	270		270
National Society Staff	540	502	38
Volunteers	3,696	3,227	469
Workshops & Training	3,150	2,287	863
Workshops & Training	3,150	2,287	863
General Expenditure	17,122	17,749	-627
Financial Charges	1,350	-49	1,399
Other General Expenses	15,772	17,798	-2,026
Indirect Costs	16,807	16,693	114
Programme & Services Support Recover	16,807	16,693	114
Grand Total	275,374	273,505	1,868