

DREF operation final report



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Cook Islands: Tropical Cyclones

DREF operation n° MDRCK002
GLIDE n° **TC-2010-00024-COK**
24 September 2010

The International Federation's 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 Red Crescent response to emergencies. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of national societies to respond to disasters.

Summary: CHF 150,000 was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 20th February, 2010 to support the Cook Islands Red Cross Society (CIRCS) in delivering assistance to some 1,671 beneficiaries, or to replenish disaster preparedness stocks.

There is no doubt that timely urgent assistance provided to the people of Aitutaki through DREF support made a huge positive impact to the most vulnerable during the urgent phase which placed people in a much better position to deal with the recovery phase.

The most vulnerable people received the most urgent needs of 800 tarpaulins, and 74 ropes with tents to give them temporary shelter.

In addition, water of over 100,000 litres was provided: Water will continue to be a need while all roofing is not constructed.

Food was provided to people sheltered in community shelters and other families.

Hygiene kits were also supplied. Awareness and educational information, including information on dengue and other water borne disease prevention was also provided.

Psycho-social support was provided to 265 people in partnership with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Internal Affairs, with particular focus on the elderly, disabled people, youth and workforce. A follow up was conducted in March and another will be done in September 2010.

At the time of publishing, total expenditure reflected from the DREF allocation of CHF 150,000 is CHF 149,974 (EUR 113, 910; USD 152, 078) with a variance of CHF 26 (EUR 20; USD 26).

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



Cook Islands Red Cross Society volunteers making certain that people reached received items that helped them go back to a normal life. Photo Credit: Cook Islands Red Cross Society.

The situation

Following two tropical cyclones in the Cook Islands, tropical cyclone Pat, the third one, a 'category 3' tropical cyclone (TC), landed in Aitutaki on 10 February 2010. TC Pat brought strong winds to the north east and hit

with powerful winds up to 200km per hour. The winds caused severe damage to the eastern and north western side of the island. In fact, the north west side estimated 78 per cent destruction to homes.

Under these circumstances, the Cook Islands Government declared a State of Disaster for Aitutaki; and IFRC launched a DREF for CHF 150,000 to support Cook Islands Red Cross Society (CIRCS) with their response operation for Aitutaki. The force of the cyclone was the most powerful ever experienced by residents of Aitutaki. CIRCS deployed the first Emergency Response Team (ERT) from the main land of Rarotonga on 11 February 2010 and the second ERT a day later. The teams engaged with the Aitutaki branch to conduct initial assessments that led to the distribution of relief supplies which answered the needs of the people.

People reached were suffering from shock and it was crucial to get the relief supplies to them at the earliest to prevent depression from setting in. Shock into depression could well be caused by being homeless and being traumatized by losing everything. As the cyclone had hit in the middle of the night, everyone was in their homes and there were no fatalities but two incidents of serious injury were reported. CIRCS focussed on the elderly and disabled, pregnant mothers, women and children.

A highlight of the CIRCS operations was networking with branch volunteers who made the assessments and distribution very affective because of their local knowledge of people, homes, villages.

CIRCS managed to negotiate with government sectors to release staff of Aitutaki origin who are Red Cross volunteers from their normal work to join the operation. There were some challenges with people moving around amongst families for safety but local knowledge definitely was a huge advantage.

Coordination and partnerships

A major factor in the success of the operation was CIRCS's successful engagement with Emergency Management Cook Islands (for national disaster management), Mayor and Island Council; and the government representative of Aitutaki, New Zealand High Commission (NZHC), other relevant partners, the business sector and the beneficiaries themselves.

NZHC worked very closely with CIRCS to have all supplies going to Aitutaki as priority delivery on a cargo plane. Through working in partnership with the local agencies, the supplies reached Aitutaki with legal restrictions lifted by the Government Customs Department.

CIRCS worked closely with Ministry of Health on health needs including psycho-social support with the Ministries of Education, Internal Affairs, and other relevant partners.

Data collection, management and sharing of information with other agencies was a challenge. Since the Lessons Learned workshop and Contingency Planning workshop, CIRCS has taken opportunities to explain its auxiliary position to the authorities and CIRCS has also gained a better understanding of working together.

One of the major lessons learned is to inform the beneficiaries very clearly at the beginning during the initial assessment as what CIRCS will do and what it will not do. This is reinforced by leaving a pamphlet or leaflet of the instructions. An example is that, the beneficiaries thought that CIRCS was going to re-build their homes because CIRCS conducted an assessment which included damage to the homes. However, this has also highlighted a need in the limited approach CIRCS took of this application as it could have requested for shelter building in the recovery phase which has caused a negative atmosphere amongst the people. The Government of Cook Islands and NZAID have given their support and the re-building is about to start soon.



Cook Islands Red Cross Society volunteers making certain that targeted beneficiaries are recipients based on "needs". Photo credit: Cook Islands Red Cross Society.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Cook Islands Red Cross Society (CIRCS), with the help of trained volunteers and supported by IFRC, Australian Red Cross (ARC) and New Zealand Red Cross (NZRC), responded immediately to the disaster by conducting rapid needs assessments and distributing of relief goods through its pre-positioned stock to affected communities.

CIRCS's pre-positioned stocks included blankets, tarpaulins, ropes and cooking sets that were stored in a Red Cross container and these were quickly exhausted. A DREF of CHF 150,000 (EUR 112, 391; USD 144, 062; NZD187,507) was allocated by IFRC to support CIRCS in responding to the immediate needs of the disaster. The storing of goods was well supported by private sector companies who owned shipping containers.

The installation of shelters; clearing of trees using CIRCS's chainsaws; distribution of supplies was well done by 64 youth volunteers who were quickly trained and deployed. Being in the outer islands was a huge challenge in receiving and recording goods arriving from New Zealand and Australia as they were being unloaded, re-loaded while travelling between islands.

CIRCS is grateful for: the DREF assistance; excellent coordination supported by NZRC and ARC; and technical assistance and resources from all partner national societies. NZRC deployed five satellite phones to assist in communication; and the distribution of non-food items, personal equipment and first aid kits for CIRCS volunteers. Work productivity rate was maximized because of ongoing communications between the various teams. This was done by using VHF radios and satellite phones.

CIRCS is considering a review of the assessment forms to be more concise and this will be done at the upcoming Emergency Response Team (ERT) training on the main island in August supported by IFRC and NZRC.

TC Pat brought an opportunity for the remaining outer islands branches to learn from Aitutaki as some were brought as volunteers during the operation.

Progress towards objectives

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

Objective: The distribution of 100 kitchen sets, blankets and sheltering materials to 1,671 people (334 families)

Activities planned:

- Support ongoing needs and capacity assessments
- Train volunteers on IFRC distribution procedures
- Develop beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system to deliver intended assistance
- Distribute relief supplies and control supply movements from point of dispatch to end user
- Replenishment of pre-positioned relief stocks
- Monitor and evaluate the relief activities and provide reporting on relief distributions

Food was distributed to over 1,000 affected people very quickly, targeting the most vulnerable. This event raised the profile of the Aitutaki branch as well as the work of the National Office and the national society as a whole. Beneficiaries gained confidence in CIRCS. The Mayor and Island Councilors appreciated the work done by CIRCS. Hands on experience gained through this operation enhanced the capacity of the branch. This strengthened the collaboration between the local authorities and the beneficiaries.

Relief supplies have been distributed according to the needs identified through an established beneficiary registration system according to the information of the assessments. To date, the operation has seen the distribution of 74 tents, 886 tarpaulins and 135 blankets.

65 Volunteers have been trained by two CIRCS staff members who had completed the Regional Disaster Response Training (RDRT) training. They also used the experience they had gained from previous disasters, on IFRC relief distribution procedures.

(Additional training of IFRC relief distribution procedures for volunteers and Governing Board Members from other islands in the southern Cook Islands was conducted on 29 to 31 March during a lessons learned and

capacity building workshop. Staff members and volunteers worked to logistics systems with a focus on tracking incoming and outgoing stock to maintain accuracy and keep track of supplies).

Stock has been prepositioned in Aitutaki and stored in a Red Cross container that is stored on land provided by the government. The container is being managed by the branch executive members.

Water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion

Objective: Reduce the risk of waterborne and water related diseases through the provision of safe water, adequate sanitation as well as hygiene promotion to 1,671 beneficiaries (334 families).

Activities planned:

- Assess the existing coverage with a view of ensuring availability of an adequate water supply
- Provide potable water, appropriate sanitation and hygiene promotion for 334 families
- Conduct training/information programmes for Red Cross volunteers and beneficiaries, in particular hygiene promotion

Progress:

The Ministry of Health requested that water purification tablets be placed with CIRCS teams. This is so as the community can be instructed on what water purification tablets are and how to use them. Thereby, ensuring water purification tablets are used properly.

An ARC delegate was deployed to support CIRCS to conduct an assessment of the water supply on the island with the Ministry of Health. In conjunction with several private water businesses, CIRCS sent 600 bottles of water (1.5l) to Aitutaki on 16 February.

ARC deployed a NOMAD water purifier to Rarotonga and supported CIRCS on making this operational in Aitutaki. The NOMAD unit is still supplying fresh drinking water to some affected families on the island. 2,050 collapsible water containers and 200 hygiene kits were distributed to affected communities and supported by hygiene promotion activities.



Maintenance of the NOMAD is important to ensure a sustainable supply of drinking water for the people in Rarotonga. Photo credit: Cook Islands Red Cross Society.

Training and information programmes were conducted for Red Cross volunteers and beneficiaries in hygiene promotion. This was supported by the distribution of hygiene kits to the community members in need.

CIRCS has purchased a new water purification machine so the NOMAD can be brought back to Rarotonga for servicing as it is only running on a half capacity. People still need water as the damaged houses have not yet been re-built; and therefore, cannot collect enough water yet.

The NOMAD water machine was one of the highlights of this operation as it gave the people the confidence of having one of the most important commodity's for survival. It ensured that people in shelters; students at schools and the island peoples who had no means of collecting water have safe drinking water. This had played a significant role in the prevention of diarrhoea, infections and other water related diseases and keeping people generally healthy throughout the time.

Challenges:

The NOMAD had to come from Australia and its many parts arrived at different times from Australia to NZ to Rarotonga and finally to Aitutaki. The different arrival times of different parts for the NOMAD made the complete arrival and assembly of the NOMAD a challenge.

Identifying the most suitable local people to look after the machine was difficult because people had other commitments and other tasks. Keeping the machine operational is a challenge and CIRCS is working with ARC to provide the appropriate technical support for the maintenance of this highly specialized piece of equipment.

The risk of waterborne and water related diseases was reduced through the provision of 500 mosquito nets to 334 families (1,671 beneficiaries).

A training session was conducted for 18 volunteers who disseminated information to the beneficiaries on the prevention of waterborne and water related diseases. Mosquito nets and information leaflets have been distributed during the training and awareness raising with the communities for dengue prevention. There is ongoing follow up on this in partnership with the Ministry of Health; the environmental sector and the community of Aitutaki on hygiene promotion and dengue prevention activities.

There have not been any reports of dengue fever and any other water related diseases in the aftermath of the cyclone. The vigorous prevention programme that was executed by the Ministry of Health, CIRCS and the community has prevented this occurring. A contributing factor is the availability of chainsaws provided by CIRCS and the partnership with a local technician who was able to service them as they ceased up. People were able to start cleaning and got rid of mosquito breeding sites immediately. Mosquito nets were distributed to most households for prevention measures and the community understood the message well. The public awareness Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials were translated into the local language and laminated.

Psycho-social support (PSP) training was also provided to CIRCS's Aitutaki branch volunteers and Youth Peer Educators (YPE). Psycho-social support has been provided to 265 beneficiaries in partnership with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. PSP has been well accepted as this is a new approach on a wider scale by CIRCS. In the past it has been minimum due to the lack of capacity of the organization to provide. Since employing a counselor, CIRCS has the capacity to provide ongoing training sessions in basic counseling skills, the benefit is accepted. CIRCS is able to take the lead in this area and is working in partnership with other relevant agencies as it is a component in the national society's Disaster Response Management Plan.

The working relationship of CIRCS and the Ministry of Health in the community was well accepted by the people as the two agencies delivered their services in close coordination and collaboration. The fact that there are no known cases of any complications resulting from the cyclones is evidence of a successful response and prevention programme. There are no major psychological issues identified apart from allowing people: to talk; air their feelings; cry to relieve their tension and sharing these feelings with the experts in the field. This also opened an opportunity for the newly formed Cook Islands Counselor Committee to actively play a part. This is a committee in which CIRCS is a major player. This kind of participation allowed CIRCS and the Cook Islands Counselor Committee to upscale their activities to emergencies and disasters, and to give CIRCS volunteers practical experience. The excellent work that was done by CIRCS gained the confidence of the authorities. CIRCS's advise and opinions were asked in the activities to benefit the affected people.

PSP is not an area that can be hurried. It took a long time to talk to and identify people who needed the service. It is also not the kind of service that can be delivered in one visit. There has to be several visits before there can be any results.

Keeping people happy with relief supplies and making their lives easier was necessary to keep people from migrating to Rarotonga, New Zealand, Australia and other countries. The Cook Islands population has been declining over the years and anything to keep people on their island is a must.

Conclusion

Lessons learned:

- The needs of the beneficiaries were of utmost importance. These were met at the emergency phase by way of: rapid assessment; immediate distribution of humanitarian relief supplies; and psycho-social needs also attended to. Beneficiaries expressed their relief with the Red Cross presence as it gave them confidence in being cared for. There was particular focus on children with school breakfasts; babies and small children with purchase of clothes and nappies; single mothers; the elderly and people with disabilities. People were happy to save some of their belongings through the tarps. People did not leave the island as they had the confidence to stay and deal with the disaster as the support systems were there with the multiple CIRCS activities.
- CIRCS is confident that the operation was implemented to the best of its ability considering the severity of the event, difficulties of being on a remote island, small branch and the challenges of transportation and delivery of supplies. This was also the first response event for many of the staff members and volunteers. So, there were some problems expected but there were no major issues. In fact people fell in

place as they recalled preparedness training courses and common sense kicked in. Having prior good relationships with the: government, business sector, and community gave the branch on the island with pre-positioned stock a good foundation for immediate response. The feedback from the beneficiaries and partners in the delivery as well as authorities put the work of CIRCS as “tops” as expressed by the Mayor of Aitutaki at the Contingency Planning workshop.

- CIRCS as a national society took some major steps in its development and confidence building in the event of this disaster. Personnel including the Governing Board and volunteers all worked beyond expectation in this demanding event. Everyone worked as a team with some hiccoughs here and there but as expected in a highly tense situation which eventually settled down and the situation became clear and beneficiary needs were met. Being the first of this kind of devastation on the island, the authorities also had to learn to deal with the event and CIRCS played a major role in the briefing and de-briefing sessions that were held daily to keep everyone informed of all concerns and remedies of problems. CIRCS had new experiences with the tent programme, chainsaw service and ladder service which all enhanced the work to get people back on their feet. CIRCS responded to three events within a matter of days when the warning of strong winds came while in the response phase to Pat. This was followed by a tsunami warning that saw the vulnerable population evacuated to high grounds. CIRCS was able to carry out Restoring Family Links (RFL) activities as families were separated during evacuation. This prompted an addition of multiple response to CIRCS's Disaster Risk Management Plan.
- CIRCS was very happy to have the ongoing dialogue with the IFRC prior to the cyclone and throughout the entire operation. The IFRC's: Regional Office in the Pacific in Suva; Asia Pacific Zone Office in Kuala Lumpur and Secretariat in Geneva provided excellent assistance in accessing the DREF. The support gave us the confidence to execute our Disaster Risk Management Plan knowing that there was backup right there. IFRC's role in facilitating the assistance from NZRC and ARC was excellent as all these arrangements are major factors in the success of the whole operation. Knowing that someone was at the end of the line was most uplifting and encouraging. This gave CIRCS the incentive to drive harder to get optimum results for our beneficiaries. There were some challenging times with logistics as the staff who remained in the office did not have the experience before but at the initial stage a volunteer from NZRC was able to conduct a brief orientation on the recording and management of supplies and worked through with the staff to get a better understanding of the importance of the role. In Aitutaki, a volunteer who had spent six weeks in Pukapuka in 2005 was responsible for logistics. The volunteer has played this role before and things very quickly fell in place as they followed the initial assessment results.
- CIRCS was fortunate at the beginning of the response operation to acquire a delegate from NZRC who was able to carry out an orientation in logistics with the new administration staff in the office and the remaining staff who were not deployed. The delegate was able to start a stock management tracking record for the goods that were in stock on Rarotonga that were deployed to Aitutaki as well as the stock that arrived from NZRC and ARC. The staff had become quite familiar with the role by the time the delegate returned to New Zealand. This definitely has built the capacity of the staff in the National Office as well as the staff and volunteers on Aitutaki. CIRCS was fortunate to engage a previous staff who was responsible for the logistics during a previous disaster in Pukapuka in 2005. The volunteer took control of the logistics in Aitutaki. This was a fast and steep learning curve for many volunteers as they were trained on the job during the response operations in logistics.
- Ongoing contact by phone and e-mail to offer support was very much appreciated during the operation as well as support with the reporting at the various stage of the DREF.
- CIRCS had NZD13,000 (CHF 9,542; USD 9, 166), (in the disaster account for response in the event of an emergency. So, the team was able to be deployed with basic needs before the DREF arrived. CIRCS is very grateful for the availability of the DREF as it places the national society in a proactive situation that allows for immediate disaster response and recovery activities.

How we work

All International Federation 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 is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

MDRCK002 - Cook Islands - Tropical Cyclone Pat

Final Financial Report

| Selected Parameters | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| Reporting Timeframe | 2010/2-2010/8 |
| Budget Timeframe | 2010/2-2010/5 |
| Appeal | MDRCK002 |
| Budget | APPEAL |

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

I. Consolidated Response to Appeal

| | Disaster Management | Health and Social Services | National Society Development | Principles and Values | Coordination | TOTAL |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|---------|
| A. Budget | 150,000 | | | | | 150,000 |
| B. Opening Balance | 0 | | | | | 0 |
| Income | | | | | | |
| <u>Other Income</u> | | | | | | |
| <i>Voluntary Income</i> | 150,000 | | | | | 150,000 |
| C6. Other Income | 150,000 | | | | | 150,000 |
| C. Total Income = SUM(C1..C6) | 150,000 | | | | | 150,000 |
| D. Total Funding = B + C | 150,000 | | | | | 150,000 |
| Appeal Coverage | 100% | | | | | 100% |

II. Balance of Funds

| | Disaster Management | Health and Social Services | National Society Development | Principles and Values | Coordination | TOTAL |
|---|---------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|----------|
| B. Opening Balance | 0 | | | | | 0 |
| C. Income | 150,000 | | | | | 150,000 |
| E. Expenditure | -149,974 | | | | | -149,974 |
| F. Closing Balance = (B + C + E) | 26 | | | | | 26 |

| Selected Parameters | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| Reporting Timeframe | 2010/2-2010/8 |
| Budget Timeframe | 2010/2-2010/5 |
| Appeal | MDRCK002 |
| Budget | APPEAL |

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

III. Budget Analysis / Breakdown of Expenditure

| Account Groups | Budget | Expenditure | | | | | TOTAL | Variance |
|---|----------------|---------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------|
| | | Disaster Management | Health and Social Services | National Society Development | Principles and Values | Coordination | | |
| A | | B | | | | | A - B | |
| BUDGET (C) | | 150,000 | | | | | 150,000 | |
| Supplies | | | | | | | | |
| Shelter - Relief | 24,845 | 57,831 | | | | 57,831 | -32,986 | |
| Construction Materials | | 5,543 | | | | 5,543 | -5,543 | |
| Clothing & textiles | | 566 | | | | 566 | -566 | |
| Water & Sanitation | | 6,599 | | | | 6,599 | -6,599 | |
| Other Supplies & Services | | 15,085 | | | | 15,085 | -15,085 | |
| Total Supplies | 24,845 | 85,624 | | | | 85,624 | -60,779 | |
| Land, vehicles & equipment | | | | | | | | |
| Computers & Telecom | 20,000 | | | | | | 20,000 | |
| Total Land, vehicles & equipment | 20,000 | | | | | | 20,000 | |
| Transport & Storage | | | | | | | | |
| Storage | 5,000 | | | | | | 5,000 | |
| Distribution & Monitoring | | 3,570 | | | | 3,570 | -3,570 | |
| Transport & Vehicle Costs | 28,000 | 12,410 | | | | 12,410 | 15,590 | |
| Total Transport & Storage | 33,000 | 15,980 | | | | 15,980 | 17,020 | |
| Personnel | | | | | | | | |
| National Society Staff | | 4,523 | | | | 4,523 | -4,523 | |
| Total Personnel | | 4,523 | | | | 4,523 | -4,523 | |
| Workshops & Training | | | | | | | | |
| Workshops & Training | 30,000 | 6,243 | | | | 6,243 | 23,757 | |
| Total Workshops & Training | 30,000 | 6,243 | | | | 6,243 | 23,757 | |
| General Expenditure | | | | | | | | |
| Travel | 18,000 | 20,984 | | | | 20,984 | -2,984 | |
| Information & Public Relation | 3,000 | 905 | | | | 905 | 2,095 | |
| Office Costs | 6,405 | 961 | | | | 961 | 5,444 | |
| Communications | 5,000 | 5,262 | | | | 5,262 | -262 | |
| Other General Expenses | | 338 | | | | 338 | -338 | |
| Total General Expenditure | 32,405 | 28,450 | | | | 28,450 | 3,955 | |
| Programme Support | | | | | | | | |
| Program Support | 9,750 | 9,153 | | | | 9,153 | 597 | |
| Total Programme Support | 9,750 | 9,153 | | | | 9,153 | 597 | |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE (D) | 150,000 | 149,974 | | | | 149,974 | 26 | |
| VARIANCE (C - D) | | 26 | | | | 26 | | |