



URUGUAY: FLOODS

**Final Report for
DREF MDRUY001
GLIDE no:
FL-2007-000057-URY
27 February, 2008**

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in 185 countries.

In Brief

Period covered by this Final Report: 16 May to 10 September, 2007.

[Click here to go directly to the attached interim financial report](#)

History of this Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF)-funded operation:

- CHF 15,000 (USD 12,397 or EUR 9,146) was allocated on 10 May 2007 from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to respond to the needs of this operation.
- An additional CHF 125,000 (USD 103,306 or EUR 76,220) was allocated on 14 May 2007 to expand the operation.

This operation was implemented in four months and was completed by 10 September 2007. In line with Federation reporting standards, the DREF Bulletin Final Report (narrative and financial) is due 90 days after the end of the operation (by 10 December 2007).

The International Federation undertakes activities that 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.

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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.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Background and Summary

Uruguay, as many other countries in the region, has experienced major climatic shifts during the past years. In March 2007, intense and unusually prolonged rains caused severe flooding and the overflow of the Rio Negro and Rio Yi rivers. Water levels reached approximately 12 meters in just two days in May. Many Departments around the country were seriously affected; Durazno, Soriano and Treinta y Tres being the hardest hit Departments.

On 9 May, the Parliament declared a national State of Disaster, calling for measures to respond to the floods such as the potential use of one percent of the national budget (up to USD \$45 million), the use of the International Development Bank funds for cooperation with departmental governments (USD \$15 million) and international assistance.

These floods were the worst recorded in the last 50 years and it is estimated that over 110,000 people have been affected, mostly low income households located near the rivers that overflowed. Early assessments showed that over 12,500 people from impoverished and populated districts needed to be evacuated during the peak of the floods to temporary shelters, such as those set up in municipal stadiums, sports clubs, schools, and private residences as their homes had been seriously affected or destroyed. Almost all the affected families have since returned to their homes.



The floods also caused severe damage to public infrastructure including rural roads, bridges, water supplies, sewerage, drainage, power and telephone lines, housing and municipal buildings in addition to producing sectors such as agriculture and livestock. More than 30,000 people had no access to safe drinking water and electricity during the first 48 hours of the emergency and forty schools were affected, causing the disruption of educational activities for a few weeks.

Flood waters seriously damaged homes and infrastructure.

Source: Uruguayan Red Cross

At the onset of the emergency, needs and damage assessments carried out by the Uruguayan Red Cross (URC) indicated an urgent need for winter clothes as well as food parcels, furniture, mattresses, beds, blankets, hygiene kits and children kits. Of particular concern was the water and sanitation situation in the affected areas, as many people had no access to drinking water. In all of the flooded communities, waste and dead animals – particularly rats – represented a high health risk.

In order to respond to the most urgent needs of affected communities, the URC developed a Plan of Action to respond to the needs of 750 families affected by the floods with relief items and psychosocial support, as the overall effects of the disaster caused numerous cases of post traumatic stress, depression, phobia and anxiety. The URC

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together with Channel 4 (Uruguay) organized a Telethon, which encouraged the donation of emergency relief goods, principally clothing, hygiene items and food.

The authorities were able to quickly re-establish basic public services in all of the affected areas including water supplies, electricity, telecommunications, and in most cases the sewage systems. In the Department of Treinta y Tres, rural and secondary roads and bridges were repaired. The Ministry of Health carried out epidemiological control and a vaccination campaign against Hepatitis A and influenza. Hygiene and medicine supplies were provided accordingly to the affected population to clean and disinfect homes and provide vector control.

Immediate emergency needs were addressed through the national and departmental emergency structures and also from the large amount of national and international solidarity.

Local authorities have started looking at risk reduction and management programmes in order to enhance emergency preparedness and response in the event of future floods. Recovery planning included efforts to address risks, reducing vulnerabilities and increasing capacities. Actions needed include the establishment (or completion) of Departmental Coordination Centres, creation of a greater national coordination capacity, the mapping of risks, overall strengthening of coordination, contingency planning and building of response capacity within departmental and national structures.

Coordination

The URC, through its National Disaster Relief department, organized meetings with the representatives of the affected local branches in order to monitor the situation, identify needs and prepare and implement the Plan of Action. In addition, local branches held regular meetings with the local and departmental authorities and community associations.

The Uruguayan Red Cross (URC) has ensured close contact with the National Emergency System (Sistema Nacional de Emergencia – SNE) to exchange information on the emergency situation and in the coordination of relief activities to avoid the duplication of efforts. Coordination meetings were held between the Red Cross Movement and other actors involved such as United Nations agencies (OCHA, UNDAC and others), SNE and NGOs. In addition, the URC carried out fieldtrips and assessment missions together with the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team (UNDAC) to the affected areas.

Since the onset of the emergency the URC was in close contact with the Federation's Regional Representation in Lima and the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU). Two Disaster Management delegates and two Regional Intervention Team (RIT) members from Argentinean Red Cross and Salvadorean Red Cross were deployed at different intervals to support the URC in the development of the emergency operation. In addition, the Federation's Regional Representation Risk Reduction team supervised and coordinated the mobilization of two expert volunteers from the Ecuadorian Red Cross to Uruguay to support the National Society in the National Intervention Team (NIT) training.

The Netherlands Red Cross (NRC) kindly contributed €40,000 (CHF 65,600) to reimburse DREF funds for the emergency operation in Uruguay from the NRC Silent Emergency Fund.

Analysis of the operation – achievements and impact

The URC with support from the Federation worked to support the people affected by the floods and prepared a Plan of Action to assist 750 families from two of the most affected departments, Durazno and Mercedes. The main actions to be carried out in the Plan of Action were to provide affected families with relief items and psychosocial support during a period of four months.

Relief

Objective 1: 750 of the most affected families (approximately 3,750 persons) benefited from the distribution of non food items to assist their recovery from the effects of the floods.

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In order to respond to the immediate needs of 750 families, the following relief items were distributed:

- Kitchen kits (1 per family)
- Kerosene stoves (1 per family)
- 10 litres of Kerosene (1 voucher per family)
- Jerry cans for kerosene transportation (1 per family)

In Durazno, 400 families received relief items. Distributions took place on 16 June and on 21 July at the Municipal Stadium “Silvestre Octavio Landoni”.

In Mercedes, 350 families received the above mentioned relief items and an additional 30 families received beds as they were sleeping on the floor. Relief items were distributed on 17 June and on 22 July at the municipal warehouse as both places were strategically located and security was granted.

Two distributions were held in each department as initially the kitchen set items were not available and local providers had to import them.

14 volunteers from the URC, a Regional Intervention Team member and a Disaster Management delegate from PADRU supported the distributions.

The families who received the relief items were organized in four different alphabetical groups according to the first letter of their family name (A-C; D-H; I-M; N-Z) which ensured effective and rapid distributions and promoted the dignity of families as they did not have to spend a long time waiting for the relief items.

Pregnant women, woman accompanied by children, elderly people and people with disabilities were prioritized during the distributions and were supported in carrying their relief items by URC volunteers.



Left: At distributions, people who had previously been identified signed to receive the relief items.

Right: A woman receiving a kitchen set, a stove, a jerry can and a voucher for kerosene.

Source: Uruguayan Red Cross

Impact:

The most immediate impact of this action is that 750 families (approximately 3,750 people) saw their basic needs met through the distribution of relief items in order to recover from the effects of the floods and to resume their daily lives. Families showed their appreciation when the trucks with relief items arrived in both locations and they commented that humanitarian aid was of great help.

Based on the questions and interest people showed in the Red Cross Movement, it also helped increase awareness on the mission of the URC and the activities undertaken by the Red Cross in general.

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The URC has strengthened its public image among society and national and international cooperation agencies during this activity.

Constraints:

In the department of Durazno, the URC faced a shortage of volunteers for the distribution activities, which caused the distribution to take longer than expected.

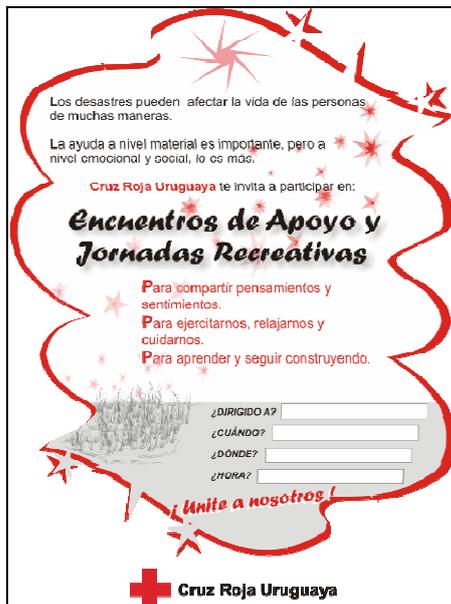
Some families, who were not on the list of identified families, asked why they had not been selected. However, URC staff and local authorities managed to explain that the selection criteria were previously established and no major inconveniences were reported.

Psychosocial Support

Objective 1: Affected communities benefit from psychosocial support.

As a first step, several coordination meetings took place between the psychosocial team of the URC and mental health workers from other organizations involved such as UNICEF, Uruguayan Child and Adolescent Institute (Instituto del Niño y Adolescente del Uruguay – INAU), Secondary Education Council (Consejo de Educación Secundaria - CES), National Administration for Public Education (Administración Nacional de Educación Pública – ANEP), Christian Association of Young people (Asociación Cristiana de Jóvenes) and the Ministry of Public Health. During these meetings, working methodologies, target population and concepts for the workshops were defined in order to avoid duplication of efforts and increase the overall quality of the activities.

A preliminary meeting was held in some of the affected communities and evaluations were also carried out. Based on the evaluations, the need was identified to carry out psychosocial activities for adults and children in Durazno, while in Mercedes activities would focus on recreational activities for children.



Left: Posters were put up in communities to raise awareness on the psychosocial support activities.

Right: Psychosocial activities such as games were carried out with children.

The URC organized eight psychosocial support workshops, carried out by an average of 45 specialized volunteers from different URC branches, who were supported by psychologists from polyclinics to attend the affected people with post traumatic stress, depression, anxiety and phobia. In addition, a group of young people from the “Colegio y

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Liceo Maristas” actively supported recreational activities for children. These workshops were carried out in educational centres in the cities of Durazno and Mercedes.

Psychosocial workshops were held in Durazno for a total of 240 adults. The workshops were held over a period of four weekends; two different sessions were held in different locations in the community, and the psychosocial team split into subgroups to be able to attend more people. Adults shared their fears, frustrations, anger and reflections on the negative impact of the flooding, but positive elements like support, solidarity and gratitude were also addressed.

Psychosocial support for adults was a new experience for most of the participants and filled a gap within the humanitarian assistance to the affected communities and community leaders, who felt that the response from the authorities to respond to the needs of their communities was insufficient.

In order to carry out psychosocial support activities with children, the following objectives were defined by the psychosocial team:

- Organize recreational activities to dispel the stress and anguish experienced during the floods.
- Explore the necessities and expectations of youth and adapt the planned activities accordingly.
- Strengthen relations and communications amongst the affected population

In both departments, the psychosocial support activities for children were organized around three types of activities such as sports, expression (drawing, collage) and board games. The sport activities allowed for the development of cooperation, teamwork, respect, acceptance of differences and integration, while the expression activities had a more emotional focus. The board games addressed mental skills, reasoning and thinking. A total of 1,200 children benefited from these recreational activities in both departments.

Impact:

Adults and children affected by this disaster received appropriate psychosocial attention and support which has helped them to emotionally recover from the effects of the floods. These activities also brought communities together, and strengthened relations between the URC and their communities.

Constraints:

While the URC made efforts to announce the psychosocial support activities in both departments, in Durazno many people still seemed to be unaware of the planned activities and on the day of the workshops not less people than expected were present. The URC volunteers went to the communities and personally invited people to join the activities; therefore many people were eventually reached.

National Society Capacity Building

Objective: The capacity of the URC in damage and needs assessments, humanitarian response and disaster preparedness is increased.

Capacity building was carried out through a training course for National Intervention Team (NIT) members, which was implemented by URC relief personnel with support from the Community Risk Reduction programme in the Lima Regional Representation and two delegates from the Ecuadorian Red Cross. In total, 15 volunteers from the National Society attended the training course, which was focused on damage and needs assessments, coordination and disaster response.

In addition, basic field and office material and equipment have been purchased to reinforce the URC relief department, which proved to be useful for responding to this emergency and will also be useful for future emergencies.

Impact:

The capacity of the URC to carry out timely needs assessments and provide accurate humanitarian relief has improved and volunteers of the URC were trained to respond to future emergency operations. The operation

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allowed the URC to strengthen the role and capacity of their National Relief and Disaster Department. Furthermore, the operation also joined together a group of volunteers and opened up communication and contact with branches.

Due to the volunteers' positive response with the NIT training course given, the URC president will organize another NIT course for all department branches by the end of the year.

Constraints:

There were no constraints identified within this objective.

Communication

Communication and dissemination activities were carried out since the onset of the emergency with support from the Lima Regional Representation communication team. An initial DMIS report was posted on 9 May 2007. The National Society presented its Plan of Action to the media in order to inform them accordingly about the needs of the population affected by the floods and the URC activities planned. Press conferences were held regularly to inform donors and the general public how their donations were being used, including in kind (clothes, accessories and food) and cash donations. Press releases were also issued and distributed to national and local media. Furthermore, a Disaster Management delegate from PADRU was interviewed by the Al Jazeera channel and by local channels 4 and 5, which helped increased awareness on the mission of the URC and the activities undertaken by the Red Cross in general.

Lessons learned

- The emergency revealed the need to strengthen the URC capacity in disaster response at National and branch level.
- The URC needs to support all department committees since they require experienced personnel.
- The URC needs to establish coordinating meetings between all areas so their activities can be integrated.
- Despite the constraints, the operation allowed for increased knowledge and improved work methodologies which have left the National Society in a better position than before.

[Final financial report below; click here to return to the title page or contact information](#)

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

MDRUY001 - Uruguay - Floods

Interim Financial Report

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2007/1-2008/01
Budget Timeframe	2007/1-2008/12
Appeal	MDRUY001
Budget	APPEAL

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

III. Budget Analysis / Breakdown of Expenditure

Account Groups	Budget	Expenditure					TOTAL	Variance
		Health & Care	Disaster Management	Humanitarian Values	Organisational Development	Coordination & Implementation		
	A					B	A - B	
BUDGET (C)						140,000	140,000	
Supplies								
Medical & First Aid	4,840		498			498		4,342
Teaching Materials			135			135		-135
Utensils & Tools	58,724		59,452			59,452		-728
Other Supplies & Services	15,428		8,957			8,957		6,471
Total Supplies	78,991		69,042			69,042		9,949
Land, vehicles & equipment								
Computers & Telecom	3,146		4,218			4,218		-1,072
Total Land, vehicles & equipment	3,146		4,218			4,218		-1,072
Transport & Storage								
Storage			123			123		-123
Distribution & Monitoring	1,210		1,578			1,578		-368
Transport & Vehicle Costs			946			946		-946
Total Transport & Storage	1,210		2,647			2,647		-1,437
Personnel								
International Staff Payroll Benefits			1,650			1,650		-1,650
Regionally Deployed Staff	28,282		4,609			4,609		23,673
National Staff			5,836			5,836		-5,836
National Society Staff			4,850			4,850		-4,850
Total Personnel	28,282		16,945			16,945		11,337
Workshops & Training								
Workshops & Training	12,100		3,589			3,589		8,511
Total Workshops & Training	12,100		3,589			3,589		8,511
General Expenditure								
Travel	1,000		14,804			14,804		-13,804
Information & Public Relation	3,630		1,159			1,159		2,471
Office Costs	2,239		6,762			6,762		-4,523
Communications	303		3,140			3,140		-2,838
Professional Fees			366			366		-366
Financial Charges			6,498			6,498		-6,498
Total General Expenditure	7,171		32,729			32,729		-25,558
Programme Support								
Program Support	9,100		9,067			9,067		33
Total Programme Support	9,100		9,067			9,067		33
Operational Provisions								
Operational Provisions			1,251			1,251		-1,251
Total Operational Provisions			1,251			1,251		-1,251
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (D)	140,000		139,489			139,489		512
VARIANCE (C - D)			512			512		