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Emergency Plan of Action Operations Update

Belize: Floods

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF no. MDRBZ004	GLIDE no. FL-2015-000151-BLZ xyz
EPoA update no. 1; 18 February 2016	Timeframe covered by this update: 18 October to 18 December 2015
Operation start date: 18 October 2015	Operation timeframe: 2 months and end date 18 December 2015; the new operation end date is 1 April 2016
Overall operation budget: 71,925 Swiss francs (CHF)	
No. of people being assisted: 1,750 people (350 families)	
Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners currently actively involved in the operation: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)	
Other partner organisations actively involved in the operation: United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/ Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) Government Agencies: National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO), City Emergency Management Organization (CEMO)	

Summary of major revisions made to emergency plan of action:

*The operation transpired as planned, not only reaching expectations, but exceeding them as the number of families assisted was greater than what was called for in the initial plan. One of the planned activities was the replenishment of hygiene kits that were pre-positioned in the Belize Red Cross Society (BRCS) and used for this operation. There has been a delay in the delivery of these goods on the part of the international provider, which is why a **non-cost extension of three months is hereby being requested for this operation until 1 April 2016**. This will ensure that there is sufficient time for the shipment, delivery and booking of the expenditure related to the purchase of the hygiene kits.*

A. Situation analysis

Description of the disaster

On Sunday 18 October 2015, an area of low pressure moved away from Belize, causing the onset of heavy rainfall that had begun on 15 October and continued across the country, Belize City in particular, where residents were affected by localized flooding. This system continued to produce heavy rainfall across coastal, northern and western Belize throughout the night and into Monday, 19 October, causing severe flooding in the entire Belize City and other various parts of the country. CEMO commenced evacuation of people living in low lying and extremely vulnerable areas to four different collective centres in the city and a few more in the northern district of Corozal while residents along rivers, creeks, water ways and low-lying areas whose homes are likely to flood, were cautioned to move to high ground with family or to community collective centres. Farmers started to make the necessary preparations for their livestock and crops.

During this time, compounded by heavy rains in both Guatemala and Mexico, Belize received a total of 71 cm of rain over the period of five days. Official government assessments were never disclosed or shared with the Belize Red cross, however, in some communities in Belize City access was impossible due to fallen live electrical lines lying in flooded yards. It is estimated, however, that several hundreds of families were badly affected.

After a day and a half of assisting CEMO with their response and not being able to receive any information on assessments being carried out, Belize Red Cross determined it necessary to branch off to carrying out their own assessments in affected areas in Belize City. According the plan of action, the aim was to assist 300 families (approximately 1,500 people), 100 families in Corozal and 200 in Belize City. The distribution of relief items would be

in the form of blankets, tarpaulins, hygiene kits, buckets, drinking water, cleaning kits, jerry cans and clothing from 18 October to 18 December 2015.

Summary of current response

Overview of Host National Society

The BRCS completed all activities planned for this relief operation in December 2015. A total of 449 families or 1,431 persons received relief assistance. This number includes 396 families from Belize City (including Ladyville, the second largest village in the nation, 8 miles north-west of Belize City), 12 families from Corozal and an additional 41 families from Toledo district, which were not anticipated at the time of the development of the plan of action. About two weeks after the main event in Belize City and Corozal district, the Toledo district also suffered the effects of the heavy rains running down from Guatemala, which caused floods in the areas of Bladen and Bella Vista. The Toledo branch of the BRCS activated its Human Resources and, together with NEMO at the District level, conducted assessments and provided relief.

Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in country

In this case, there was no action by Partner National Societies (PNSs). The Belize Red Cross acted alone with the support of DREF from the IFRC of CHF 28,330 for the National Society's operating costs of interventions and community activities.

Overview of non-RCRC actors in country

Belize Red Cross received USD\$5,000 from USAID/OFDA for local procurement of cleaning kits.

Needs analysis and scenario planning

During distribution, assessments of affected areas continued within Belize City based on reports being received on a daily basis regarding affected families in new areas of the city. In the end, 149 additional families were assessed and assisted. This increase was mainly due to an additional 50 families being assessed from the areas of Victoria and Racecourse Streets in Belize City. All families were badly affected by water destruction of personal effects and household items; further assessments of 46 families carried out in the Albert communities upon the request of the Area Representative of the government again in Belize City and in Corozal, the branch set out to work to assist NEMO only in conducting assessments but in so doing, identified the urgent need to activate their teams into distribution of relief. This led to 12 additional families assisted. The other 41 families are attributed to the needs for families affected in the Toledo district.

Risk Analysis

During this operation, BRCS was never able to receive the government's assessments of areas they assisted. The country was only weeks away from general elections and the perception was that the focus on their end was to a great extent on the elections to take place, and not on sharing the information they had gathered. This caused some delays in response as the National Society then needed to commence their assessments from the beginning.

In some areas within Belize City and Toledo, access to the affected communities was hampered by fallen live electrical wires, high water levels, crocodile infested water and distance, which in the case of Toledo, hindered the ability to more effectively mobilize volunteers.

B. Operational strategy and plan

1. Development of the Belize Red Cross plan of action – successfully completed. Target was to assist 300 families (100 in Corozal; 200 in Belize City).

Achievement: 449 families or 1,431 people were assessed and assisted: 396 families in Belize City, 12 in Corozal District and 41 in Toledo District.

2. Contribution to reduction of immediate risks for outbreaks of vector-borne diseases amongst the affected population. Some 248 mosquito nets were distributed and beneficiary families were educated on their use and precautions to take.

Three different posters portraying steps to prevent vector borne diseases, treatment for safe drinking water and tips on how to prevent infection by chikungunya were replicated and distributed among the affected families.

Approximately 200 families in Belize City received clean drinking water and educated on how to treat drinking water in catchment areas.

345 families received cleaning kits to restore cleanliness to their homes in the wake of the flood.

449 families received 3 of the following relief items: tarpaulins, hygiene kits, blankets, mosquito nets, jerrycans, buckets, kitchen sets and food (from random donors).

449 families received clothing.

Note: Cash Transfer or Based Programming

N/A

Overall Objective

The Belize Red Cross believes that the overall objective was not only met, but exceeded. The original aim was to assist 300 families. At the end the total number of families countrywide that were assisted was 449. While not every family received the same assistance (dependent on assessment), every family assessed and found to be genuinely affected was assisted in one way or another. During the operation, the BRCS came in contact with several members of the communities assisted that were interested in learning more about the National Society and to become volunteers. In one particular community, Jane Usher, the partnership with that community through the formation, training and certification of Community Disaster Response Teams (CDRTs) proved to be sustainable as that well organized group assisted the response team to conduct very orderly and peaceful distributions to their community members and were commended for that. The Red Cross branches in Corozal and Toledo strengthened their auxiliary role by working side by side with the district NEMO while responders from headquarters did the same with their CEMO partners and members of the different government departments involved in the government response.

Proposed strategy

In the beginning, the BRCS's headquarters activated its staff and volunteers to work along with CEMO in Belize City. Once it was clear that there would not be any access to assessments afforded to them, by CEMO nor by the Ministry of Human Development (relief and supplies) or Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis (DANA) approach to response was changed and Belize Red Cross assessment teams were activated in Belize City. In the Corozal and Toledo districts, it was much simpler and assessments were carried out without any hitches.

- BRCS carried out assessments on an ongoing basis after their initial assessments, at every distribution mission and from the HQ office.
- The need to work with the communities in initiatives involving water and sanitation, vector borne illnesses and First Aid was identified.

Update on proposed strategy:

- The initial needs assessments were carried out only in a few areas of Belize City together with the government entities, CEMO, an Area Representative and the Ministry of Human Development, on the first two days. Thereafter, Belize Red Cross response teams were activated to conduct the National Society's own assessments.
- The information received from beneficiaries was based mainly on how they were affected, what they had lost and what their most urgent needs were.
- In one particular community, Jane Usher, the previously trained and certified CDRT took charge of the response and organized orderly distributions together with the Red Cross team.
- Yes, although there were not many opportunities to detect a great need to focus on this, as the head of households were the primary contacts met and they provided information in this regard which BRCS took into consideration.

Operational support services

The operation was fully supported by small funds available at the National Society prepositioned stocks in containers at headquarters and the affected branches in Corozal and Toledo, as well as the DREF.

One challenge faced was that the auxiliary role of the Red Cross, although evidently recognized by local authorities, was put at risk as highly political aspiring area representatives vying for votes in the upcoming elections were party to the national response, and therefore exposed Belize Red Cross to cases of discrimination reported by the same beneficiaries.

The lesson is that Belize Red Cross staff and volunteers must be vigilant at all times to detect these incidences and to strongly exercise the Fundamental Principles of Neutrality, Impartiality and Independence, while taking this opportunity to educate the community in all Fundamental Principles and the manner in which the National Society operates.

Human resources

The Finance Officer/Deputy Director General managed the DREF and cost of local procurement.

The Logistics Officer managed local in-house procurement (from containers and purchase at local stores).

The Director General together with a team of National Intervention Team (NIT)/Regional Intervention Team (RIT) and other disaster management staff and volunteers managed the relief operations.

Volunteers and staff of BRCS were activated in the affected branches to carry out assessments and distributions throughout this operation.

Logistics and supply chain

Procurement of the following relief items was carried out by IFRC through PADRU: blankets (1,750); buckets (590); jerrycans (700); tarpaulins (350); mosquito nets (700).

The following goods were locally procured by the National Society: 300 sets of cleaning items and buckets. All other items were taken from pre-positioned stocks both at and at the affected branches of Corozal and Toledo.

Communications

There is not much to report under this heading. The National Society took every opportunity to communicate its progress of response through the media, which was mostly focused on the government's activities in the pre-election period of the response.

Security

N/A

Planning, monitoring, evaluation, & reporting (PMER)

There was not any training for the National Society staff or volunteers at this time in monitoring and evaluation; however, daily briefing and debriefing were held every day at which issues of concern, if any, changes if necessary to approaches, or challenges faced were discussed.

C. Detailed Operational Plan

Quality Programming / Areas Common to all Sectors

Needs analysis: At the time of the floods of 2015, the Belize Red Cross was engaged in its 4th year of implementation of a programme entitled "Resilience in the Americas". The programme team ceased all program activities and concentrated on the initial response, bringing their expertise in assessments and community approach into the affected communities, assisting in the response operation of the National Society. Additionally, using the M&E experience gained through this programme, indicators were monitored and measured.

<p>Outcome 1: The Belize Red Cross has an integrated emergency plan of action that complements actions of key stakeholders.</p> <p>Output 1.1: Detailed assessments are carried out in the affected districts of Belize City and Corozal with adequate monitoring and evaluation of activities linked to the findings of the assessments.</p>
<p>Achievements</p> <p>Original target was for 300 families. A total of 449 families were assessed and assisted. 4 external stakeholder meetings were held (NEMO, CEMO, Area Representatives and the Ministry of Human Development). Plan of Action developed and submitted to IFRC. Detailed assessments carried out in Belize City, Corozal, and Toledo.</p>
<p>Challenges</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Not being able to receive full cooperation from government where sharing of assessments is concerned. The Belize Red Cross Society proceeded to conduct its own assessments. Inaccessible communities (Toledo, Belize City). – shared transportation with NEMO in the case of Toledo; faced the challenge in Belize City and arranged group meetings with the communities.
<p>Lessons Learned</p> <p>The communities are open to work with the Belize Red Cross and are interested in learning more about the Belize Red Cross</p>

Health and Care

Needs analysis: Disease prevention and health promotion needs to be undertaken immediately in order to protect overall health and prevent the occurrence of outbreaks of diseases, including water and vector-borne diseases. As there is the likelihood of more rain, affected families will receive information to build awareness on the importance of proper water, health and hygiene practices to avoid water and vector-borne diseases.

Population to be assisted: Up to 300 families from the affected districts of Belize City and Corozal.

<p>Health and Care</p> <p>Outcome 1: The Belize Red Cross Society has contributed to the reduction of immediate risks for outbreaks of vector-borne diseases amongst the affected population. <i>300 families have received treated mosquito nets and education on their use in Belize City and Corozal District –</i></p>

Output 1.1 Target population participates in activities that increase their knowledge on the prevention of vector and water-borne diseases.
Activities: Awareness activities on the prevention of vector and water-borne diseases are conducted with different groups in the affected areas Cleaning campaigns are developed in the target communities Production and distribution of vector-borne disease prevention materials – ongoing Distribute 1500 mosquito nets are delivered to target population – Communication mass campaign is delivered through social media to prevent water and vector borne disease (Not achieved)
Achievements
While mosquito nets were distributed the team took the opportunity to educate the communities about their use and about vector borne diseases and how to prevent them. 437 families received treated mosquito nets (an average of 3 per family), participated in brief education sessions during distributions and benefited from cleaning campaigns in their communities.
Challenges
Communication was done house-to-house and face-to-face and social media was not used towards that goal. Social media was used to disseminate the work and the areas of assistance.
Lessons learned
There is a need for health and hygiene programme with these communities.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion

Needs analysis: Areas in pockets of the affected districts remain flooded thereby increasing the risk of sanitation and hygiene issues amongst the population. This section of the POA seeks to contribute to the immediate reduction in water-borne diseases through the distribution of purified water and water containers by Belize Red Cross. Sensitization on safe water and hygiene practices will be conducted as necessary.

Population to be assisted: 300 families from the affected districts of Belize City and Corozal

Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion
Outcome 1: Affected communities in Belize City and Corozal districts have been provided with purified water Output 1.1: Immediate reduction of water-borne diseases in targeted districts
Achievements
396 families (approx. 1,200 persons) received purified water. 449 families (approx. 1,350 persons) received hygiene kits. 396 families (approx. 1,200) received hygiene promotion.
Challenges
N/A
Lessons learned
N/A

Shelter and Settlements

Assistance to these persons is included in the general population assisted.

Needs analysis: Preliminary assessments indicate that several houses have been severely affected as a result of flooding and leading to the temporary displacement of families. With people in emergency collective centres, there will be a need to meet immediate needs through the provision of essential items including tarpaulins, cleaning kits and blankets. Cleaning kits will be purchased and distributed to the affected families with separate funding provided by USAID.

Population to be assisted: 300 affected families from the districts of Corozal and Belize City.

Shelter and settlements
Outcome 1: 300 affected families in Corozal and Belize City are reached with essential items. Output 1.1: Provide Non-Food Items to affected persons as an immediate response.
Achievements
In the preliminary response together with CEMO, between 2 collective centres, some 125 persons were assisted with blankets and hygiene kits in the collective centres. Other assistance followed at their homes. These numbers are included in the general population assisted.
Challenges

The people in collective centres were transient and hard to keep track of as they moved back to their homes.

Lessons learned

There is need for a more efficient system of recording and tracking down persons who utilize the collective centres.

Contact Information

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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.

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:



Save lives,
protect livelihoods,
and strengthen recovery
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**
and **safe** living.



Promote social inclusion
and a culture of
non-violence and peace.