

DREF n° MDRBG003	GLIDE n° FL-2022-000312-BGR
Final report date of issue: 31 May 2023	DREF Total Budget: CHF 315,906
Operation start date: 21/09/2022	Operation end date: 31/03/2023
Total number of people affected: 10,937	Total number of people assisted: 10,000

Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners currently actively involved in the operation: IFRC is present in Bulgaria with an Operations Manager deployed related to the Ukraine and impacted countries crisis Emergency Appeal.

Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation: mayors of affected settlements, municipal mayors, regional governorate of Plovdiv, regional offices of ministerial structures (health, education, etc.), ambulance services, voluntary formations members arriving from different regions, military units, and spontaneous volunteer/ and central government structures.



Extensive damage was caused by flooding in Plovdiv region, Central Bulgaria on 2 September 2022. Photo: BRC.

A. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Description of the disaster

As a result of intense rainfall on the territory of Plovdiv region, Central Bulgaria on 2 September 2022, consecutive floods caused heavy damages in several settlements in three municipalities along the Stryama river, including the municipalities of Karlovo, Kaloyanovo, and Maritsa, which has resulted in the declaration of a state of emergency by the local governor. While heavy rainfall is usual in the fall season, the quantity of precipitation was unexpectedly high at this occasion. Water levels of the Stryama river rose by three metres in only eight hours, leading to breaking of dams alongside the river and its tributaries. Karlovo was the worst affected municipality, where residential and commercial buildings were flooded, industrial enterprises and road infrastructure were damaged. In parts of the village of Bogdan the power supply was interrupted, street lighting poles fell, bridges and shafts were blocked; access to populated areas was blocked for several days. Other heavily affected areas were the villages of Karavelovo, Bogdan, Slatina, Hristo Danovo ,and Voynyagovo in Karlovo municipality. Public infrastructure, such as bridges, streets, buildings, and residential houses were seriously damaged; over 1,000 people have lost their personal belongings and other household property due to the floods.



Flooded areas of Plovdiv region. Photo: BRC.



In Kaloyanovo municipality, the floods affected six settlements, caused damages on public infrastructure and seriously disrupted water supply. 3,000 people lost access to clean water. In the municipality of Maritsa, the most affected was the village of Trilistnik flooded by the river Stryama on 3 September 2022 due to a broken dam. Using heavy equipment, firefighters and volunteers cleaned access and evacuated more than 500 people from the flooded 120 houses. 360 people have been affected by the floods.



As a result of the flooding in Plovdiv region in September 2022, villages in the municipalities of Kaloyanovo and Maritsa suffered damages to infrastructure and disrupted water supply. Photo: BRC.

SUMMARY OF THE RESPONSE

Overview of response by Host National Society

The Bulgarian Red Cross (BRC) branch in Plovdiv responded within hours from the onset of the disaster on 2 September 2022, and most of the National Society's activities that were part of the operation took place during the first days following the floods.

As part of the emergency response, the regional BRC branch in Plovdiv mobilised 30 disaster response volunteers, including eight psychologists (later increased to 50 to meet needs and operational demands, primarily in psychosocial support (PSS)), 15 youth emergency teams volunteers, and ten staff members. Life-saving interventions by the BRC included rescue activities, evacuation, First Aid (FA), and medical support, PSS, cleaning of debris. Distribution of relief items was also among the important tasks of the BRC emergency response teams.

In the days following the onset of the disaster, the BRC provided evacuees and affected people in operation the most affected municipality of Karlovo, as well as the municipality of Kaloyanovo, Trilistnik village, Maritsa municipality, and in the villages of Dolna Mahala and Chernozemmen with relief goods. In total, until 16 September 2022, the National Society provided 10,300 bottles of mineral and spring water (1.5 l), 1,000 blankets, 1,000 sets of bed linen, 1,600 litres of disinfectants, and 10 dehumidifiers from BRC HQ disaster reserve stock, which had been prepositioned in Plovdiv.

From early on after the floods, BRC staff and volunteers organized teams to clean up the affected areas in coordination with the government.

Already on the first day of the flood, psychologists visited the hospital in Karlovo and other areas to assess the level of distress among the affected population. In response to identified needs, BRC branch deployed psychologists to each of the villages of Karavelovo, Bogdan, Slatina and Trilistnik (municipality of Maritsa). The teams of psychologists carried out consultations (up to 60 minutes) with the affected people in their homes. The National Society activated its National Contact Centre (PSS helpline) located in the city of Plovdiv to respond to the current emergency and placed stickers in all affected villages about this service and how to access it.

Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in country

During the BRC DREF operation in Bulgaria, several movement coordination mechanisms were established to facilitate effective assistance. An IFRC Operations Manager was on-site in Bulgaria to provide support to the BRC operation, specifically focusing on assisting displaced people from Ukraine.

On 7 September 2022, the IFRC Operations Manager, in collaboration with the DM department and BRC branch located in Plovdiv, actively participated in field visits to the flood-affected areas. These visits aimed to assess the extent of the damage and identify the immediate needs of the affected population. By engaging directly with the affected communities, the team gained valuable insights into the situation on the ground, enabling them to plan and allocate resources effectively.

To facilitate effective movement coordination, the IFRC Operations Manager, along with relevant stakeholders, established communication channels and coordination mechanisms. Regular meetings, both at the national and local levels, were organized to share updates, assess progress, and address any challenges encountered during the operation. These meetings supported collaboration between the IFRC, BRC, DM department, and public actors, enabling them to align their efforts and optimize the assistance provided.

Overall, through the presence of the IFRC Operations Manager, field visits, parallel programmes, and various coordination mechanisms, the BRC DREF operation in Bulgaria ensured efficient collaboration between key stakeholders, enhanced information sharing, and facilitated a comprehensive response to flood-related challenges.

Overview of non-RCRC actors in country

- Local authorities declared a state of emergency at the start of the disaster, prompting the response of Civil Protection units, local volunteers, Army forces, and spontaneous volunteers. Their efforts focused on evacuation, debris clearance, and access restoration.
- Regional Health authorities provided guidance on preventing water source contamination and managing related health risks.
- The Agency for Social Assistance's regional structures initiated emergency cash assistance procedures (approximately CHF 201 per household). Coordination with the Bulgarian Red Cross ensured comprehensive coverage without duplication.
- At the national level, the Interdepartmental Commission for Emergencies was activated by the Government to assess damages and plan assistance measures, particularly for damaged public infrastructure. Clean water supply was also arranged to mitigate health risks.
- By 28 October 2022, the Interdepartmental Committee on Recovery and Assistance reported that the emergency had ended. Ongoing clean-up activities were supervised by military personnel and heavy equipment as part of the state action plan.
- Recovery efforts continued for an extended period, with over 200 spontaneous volunteers and 400 military personnel involved in the most affected villages of Karlovo municipality. The government allocated funds for recovery expenses in the affected municipalities, including BGN 208,337 for Maritsa, BGN 20,730 for Tsar Kaloyan, and BGN 9,940,736 for Karlovo. An additional BGN 2,000,000 were dedicated to cleaning and restoration activities.
- The Bulgarian Red Cross coordinates flood-related disaster management and assistance in collaboration with national authorities, particularly the National Protection and Rescue Directorate (NPRD). The NPRD serves as the central governmental body responsible for disaster management. The BRC also works closely with local authorities and engages with affected communities to understand their needs and provide appropriate responses.

NEEDS ANALYSIS AND SCENARIO PLANNING

Needs analysis

- Assessments of damage and needs were successfully implemented at all levels (NS, local authorities, government). The immediate needs in shelter, water, and food in the aftermath of the disaster were covered by local resources on a day-to-day basis. However, the permanent damage caused by the disaster, the cold season, increased inflation health situation of the affected families in months after the floods.
- Continued assessment of PSS needs in the affected communities took place over a period following the initial emergency response through a total of 54 field visits (as of 5 March 2023).
- Additionally, the main livelihood of affected areas is agriculture and many households suffered damages or completely lost their sources of income.
- The main immediate needs of the affected population included measures for hygiene and to prevent diseases, assistance with basic repairs, kitchen, washing equipment and/or furniture to ensure basic and safe living conditions during the coming winter.
- Those who had personally experienced the events of the flooding, especially the most vulnerable groups (children, older people, lonely people with disabilities, lonely mothers, etc.) needed continuous mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). The psychologists' teams of the NS identified many affected people who, after the initial shock, began to experience psychosomatic symptoms, such as unlocking strong feelings of anxiety, grief, anger, hatred.
- Tap water was not suitable for drinking or cooking in the affected villages.

Operation Risk Assessment

During the operation the Bulgarian Red Cross encountered several risks resulting from factors such as having to conduct multiple response operations at the same time, as well as the unstable political situation. These risks were constantly monitored throughout the operation.

- The political situation in Bulgaria is unstable, and to ensure that there would be minimal effects on the operation, the Bulgarian Red Cross monitored the political situation throughout the operation. Bulgaria has had no permanent government for two and a half years. There were elections 5 times, and only now

in 2023 finally a coalition government was formed in the country. The NS maintained close communication and cooperation with the relevant authorities at all levels. The NS is a member of regional and national crisis management bodies and was able to successfully ensure the continuity of the operation.

- During the operation, some recipients considered the support they received to be insufficient and expressed high expectations to NS staff. To reduce the risk, the NS prepared and sent appropriate messages regarding its mandate and capacity, seeking inclusion of local actors and community members in the operation. These were part of the local briefings.
- At the time of the operation, staff and volunteers were already exhausted from the ongoing operation in support of the refugees from Ukraine in the country, and to increase its capacity the NS used best practices gathered in previous large crises (COVID-19, conflict in Ukraine) to mobilize and deploy volunteers and staff from neighbouring regions in support of the operation.

B. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

The overall objective of the operation was to provide timely assistance to 5,000 people affected by the floods in the municipality of Karlovo, Plovdiv regions, through Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA), Psychosocial Support (PSS) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities.

TARGETING STRATEGY

Which groups of people were assisted through this operation?

Following needs assessment by the BRC and considering information collected by the regional BRC branch Plovdiv via interviews in the field, as well data provided by local authorities, the Bulgarian Red Cross targeted the affected villages of Bogdan, Karavelovo, Slatina, Voynyagovo, Hristo Danovo all of which fell within the Karlovo municipality. In total, the operation reached 10,000 people with the following types of support:

- 1,000 affected people were provided with blankets and bedlinen sets from the NS emergency stocks (replenishment).
- 400 households (1,179 people) living in houses damaged by the emergency (who needed to replace damaged household appliances and furniture) benefitted from the CVA programme.
- 350 people benefitted from extended PSS support.
- 4,421 people benefitted from cleaning efforts and distribution of disinfection kits in their efforts to clean houses that had been flooded.
- 10,000 people were provided with risk awareness and DRR information and accessed educational activities for better preparedness to future emergencies.

In total, 10,000 people were reached by the DREF operation.

Selection criteria used for targeting

- The main criteria for the intended people assisted of the Red Cross CVA assistance were based on the scale of damage of the house, loss of property (household equipment and furniture) necessary for the basic daily life, and the level of vulnerability of each affected household, considering the coming winter.
- In the final selection of people, which was done as part of detailed assessment, additional factors were considered, including age, sex, disability, and other vulnerabilities. Socio-economic criteria were included in the assessment, based on the criteria applied by the State Agency for Social Assistance in the provision of emergency support.
- The NS applied its good practice of forming local public councils in all affected settlements, composed of the main stakeholders in the community who participated directly in selection of people assisted and the assistance to be provided.
- The NS has experience in cash and voucher assistance from previous floods response operations (starting from 2012), as well as in direct purchase and distribution of household appliances to affected families. The NS already had an agreement with the Bulgarian Postal Services for distribution of vouchers in emergency.

Community engagement and accountability (considerations in planning and implementation)

For local emergencies, the NS applied the practice to work in close collaboration with the local authorities in the affected areas and other institutions involved in the response (e.g., civil protection, health authorities and others). To ensure close collaboration on the field, the NS, together with local authorities established a public council of most important local stakeholders. This council was informed about the implemented activities, and participated in planning, needs assessment and proposed changes in the implementation when new needs or specific vulnerable groups occur. It was also used as a mechanism for feedback and evaluation, with potential to generate and involve more resources and additional support.

In addition, the NS involved trained volunteers to conduct post-distribution monitoring (PDM) surveys to evaluate the impact and efficiency of the assistance.

Protection, gender, and inclusion (considerations in planning and implementation)

The assistance provided followed the IFRC's Minimum Standards to Protection, Gender and Inclusion in Emergencies. The NS took specific measure for proper information about its mandate, assistance to be provided and assistance provided by the government, with a referral mechanism according to the needs. The NS tried to ensure equal gender participation in the public council established in the affected area. The level of tensions in the affected communities and underlying factors were also monitored.

All data collected was disaggregated by sex and age.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RESPONSE STRATEGY

What has been the overall response strategy for this operation, how has it been implemented, was there a need to change the initially planned approach?

Proposed strategy

The Bulgarian Red Cross implemented the following planned activities through the DREF operation:

1. Needs assessment and lists of people to be assisted were compiled based on the damages and losses suffered and the level of vulnerability, jointly with the local authorities. The NS organized a local public council with the participation of the main stakeholders in each target community to ensure transparency, community engagement and participation in decision-making.
2. Through the CVA programme affected households were provided with unconditional cash to allow them to restore basic living conditions in their homes, purchase necessary equipment: stoves, refrigerators, washing machines, boilers and other household equipment / furniture. The specific financial service provider (FSP) was selected after detailed assessment. The NS already had an agreement with the Bulgarian Postal Services for distribution of vouchers in emergency.
3. Cleaning tools, detergents, and disinfectants were procured and distributed to the affected households.
4. Psychosocial support to the most affected people and those who experienced traumatic events – on the spot and through the NS's National Contact Centre, situated at the regional BRC branch in Plovdiv (phone helpline for psychological support is served by 12 psychologists on shifts and free of charge).
5. The affected population was reached through DRR activities including dissemination of risk awareness information and educational sessions in high schools attended by pupils who live in the affected settlements.
6. Post-distribution monitoring surveys were conducted to measure satisfaction with the assistance among the targeted population.
7. A participatory evaluation workshop was held for staff and volunteers who participated in the implementation of the DREF operation.

Table 1 – Distributed relief items from the NS which has been replenished

No.	Item	Unit	Quantity
1	Blankets	pcs.	1,000
2	Bedlinen	set	1,000

Table 2 – Contents of cleaning and disinfection kits

No	Item	Unit	Quantity
1	Plastic bucket	pcs.	1
2	Disinfectant	litre	2
3	Rubber gloves	pair	1
4	Brush / mop	pcs.	1
5	Protective mask	pair	1
6	Protective glasses	pcs.	1

Based on the available information about the needs and losses, the BRC offered approximately CHF 420 in unconditional cash assistance to beneficiaries. The amount was estimated as sufficient to cover a few basic household items, urgent repairs or other important needs.

C. DETAILED OPERATIONAL PLAN



Shelter

Total number of people reached: 1,000¹

Male over 18: 491

Male under 18: N/A

Female over 18: 509

Female under 18: N/A

Outcome 1: Communities in disaster and crisis affected areas restore and strengthen their safety, well-being and longer-term recovery through shelter and settlement solutions.

Indicators:	Target	Actual
<i>Number of affected people who have received emergency relief for their immediate needs</i>	1,000	1,000

Output 1.1: Shelter and settlements and basic household items assistance is provided to the affected families.

Indicators:	Target	Actual
<i>Number of blankets replenished in the NS disaster stock</i>	1,000	1,000
<i>Number of bedlinen sets replenished in the NS disaster stock</i>	1,000	1,000

Description of actions and achievements

As the BRC had no access to the flooded area in the first few days after the disaster due to the severe disruption to infrastructure, the distribution of blankets and bedlinen was implemented through the Municipality of Karlovo and the army. Part of the Plan of Action (PoA) was the replenishment of distributed blankets and bedlinen. In total, 1,000 blankets and 1,000 bedlinen sets have been replenished.

¹ Ratio male/female in accordance with National Statistical Institute (nsi.bg).



Livelihoods and basic needs

Total number of people reached: 1149² (392 households)

Male over 18: 564

Male under 18: N/A

Female over 18: 585

Female under 18: N/A

Outcome 1: Communities, especially in disaster and crisis affected areas, restore and strengthen their livelihoods

Indicators:	Target	Actual
% of people reporting during PDM that the household (HH) items obtained have helped them to restore their livelihoods to an acceptable degree	70%	95%

Output 1.1: Households are provided with unconditional/multipurpose cash grants to address their basic needs

Indicators:	Target	Actual
Number of households provided with cash assistance for essential household items	400	392

Description of actions and achievements

As part of the response, the Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) system was established and made operational. BG Post was identified and contracted as the Financial Service Provider for the distribution of support, which was delivered without a transfer fee. The network of post offices allowed people to receive money transfers all around the country. Multi-purpose cash was distributed to the owners of 390 affected properties / 392 individual households. The amount of the support was approximately CHF 426 per property.

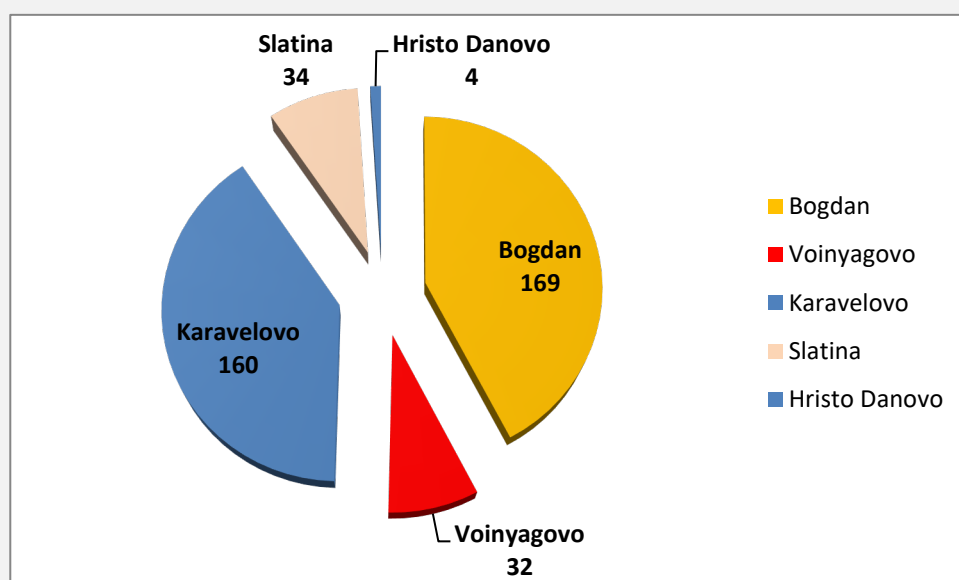


Chart 1: The chart shows the number people targeted with CVA in the communities of Bogdan, Voinyagovo, Karavelovo, Slatina and Hristo Danovo.

The total number of damaged properties was 399. Cash was provided to owners as follows:

² Ibid.

- In nine cases, as the necessary documents were not submitted, owners of the damaged properties did not receive any cash support.
- In nine cases, people who owned half of the property only received half of the cash amount (CHF 213). As in these cases both owners wished to receive cash assistance, BRC decided to split the cash amount 50 - 50% between them.
- One person received only 5/6³ (CHF 355) of the standard cash amount of CHF 426.
- Owners of several of the damaged properties were entitled to receive cash support for each of the property damaged by the floods. Accordingly, 13 people received compensation for two properties and two people have received compensation for three properties.
- In the rest of the cases, the original cash distribution plan applied.
- Cash support was provided to all people/households who have requested it.

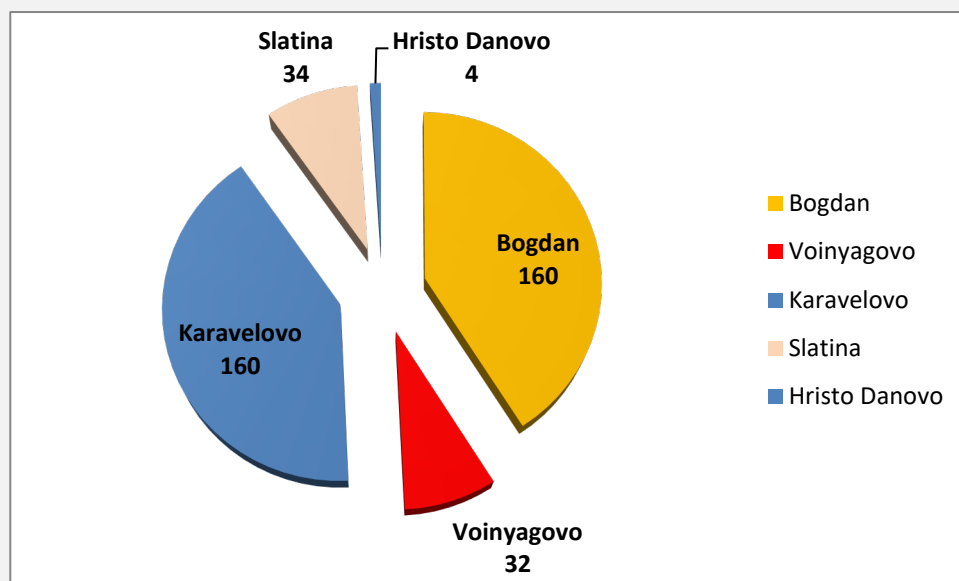


Chart 2: The chart shows the number people who received CVA in the communities of Bogdan, Voinyagovo, Karavelovo, Slatina and Hristo Danovo.

After the amendment of the DREF Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA) on 28 March 2023, a flooded kindergarten in Karavelovo has also received support.

Following the successful completion of the tender procedure, the below listed items have been delivered:

- couch with elevation at the head – 1 pcs.
- bureau - 1pcs.
- operator chair on wheels without backrest – 1 pcs.
- operator chair on wheels with backrest – 1 pcs.
- dining table - 1pcs.
- baby scale – 1pcs.
- Yunga flow boiler – 1pcs.
- refrigerator -1pcs.
- cabinet – metal – 1 pcs.
- children's bed 143x73 – 16 pcs.
- children's chair – 20 pcs.
- children's closets with separate compartments for clothes and shoes – 8 pcs.

³ When there were two owns of the property the cash was divided 50/50 if neither of them empowered the other to receive cash support on its behalf. Therefore, nine people received half of the of the amount. One person who owned parts of several damaged properties was entitled to support for each of them and received 5/6 of the standard cash amount (CHF 355 of CHF 426). A total of 13 people owned two affected properties and two people owned three properties affected by floods. The list of people whose properties were affected was approved by a selected community council. Decisions were taken based on the lists of affected properties prepared after extensive needs and damage assessment by the municipality of Karlovo and approved by the municipal council.

- computer desk – 2; children's table -10 pcs and shelf section – 1pcs.

As a result of a PDM, 95% of the respondents reported that the household items obtained have helped them restore their livelihoods to an acceptable degree.

Challenges faced and solutions

The main challenges faced during the implementation of the DREF operation are listed below:

- Identifying a financial service provider for cash transfer with no charges or fees for money transfer.
- Finding the owners of damaged properties in cases where they were not on the location and inquiries or searches needed to be made to find contact information.
- Identifying the proper way of cash transfer to properties with several owners, often not communicating to each other. When cash could not be transferred to only one owner, the amount was split, and the share of each owner transferred to their accounts.

Lessons Learned

When providing material support, such as CVA, it is a good practice to establish a community council to enhance publicity and visibility of Red Cross activities, in addition to providing support to the RC in making decisions where local communities' point of view is vital. During this DREF operation, the selected community council, established with an act of BRC Director General, approved documentation, and proposed distribution of funds for CVA.

The composition of this council was:

- Anton Zanev Minev - Deputy - Mayor Karlovo Municipality – Chairman.
- Tanya Petrova Georgieva - Director of the Secretariat of the Regional Branch of BRC Plovdiv - Deputy Chairman.
- Daniela Nacheva Trifonova – lawyer – Secretary.
- Ilian Velkov - Journalist - Member of the Regional Council of BRC Plovdiv - Member of the Public Council.
- Stefan Stoyanov Tropchev - Disaster Management Specialist, BRC - Member of the Public Council.
- Nadezhda Seizova – Director of the Social Assistance Directorate, Karlovo city – Member of the Public Council.
- Father Raphael (Racho Georgiev Pavlov) – Bulgarian Orthodox Church – Member of the Public Council.
- Slavka Marinova Chervenкова – Mayor of the village of Karavelovo – Member of the Public Council.
- Nenko Tsankov Kovachev – resident of the village of Karavelovo – Member of the Public Council.
- Hristo Ivanov Ivanov - Mayor of the village of Bogdan - Member of the Public Council.
- Petar Angelov Angelov - resident of the village of Bogdan - Member of the Public Council.
- Petar Georgiev Delkov - Mayor of the village of Slatina - Member of the Public Council.
- Nikolina Georgieva Georgieva - resident of the village of Slatina - Member of the Public Council.
- Sevdalin Ivanov Yankov - Mayor of the village of Hristo Danovo - Member of the Public Council.
- Todor Ivanov Tankovski - Mayor of the village of Voynyagovo - Member of the Public Council.

As cash assistance is one of the most preferred humanitarian assistance modalities by people affected, it is essential to ensure that the support is provided to people in need in a timely and efficient manner.



Health

Total number of people reached: 508

Male over 18: 162

Male under 18: 41

Female over 18: 249

Female under 18: 56

Outcome 1: The immediate risks to the health of affected populations are reduced

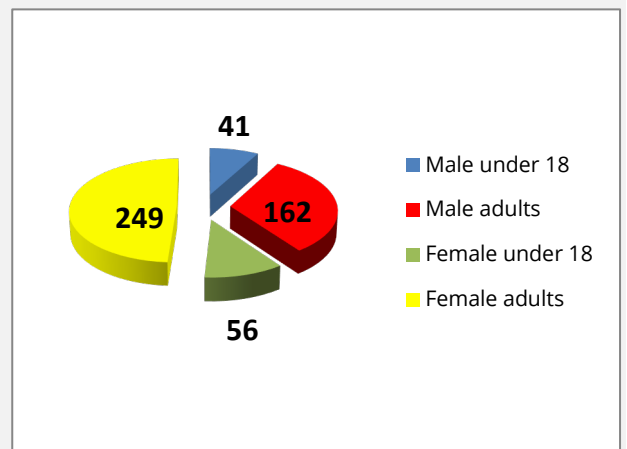
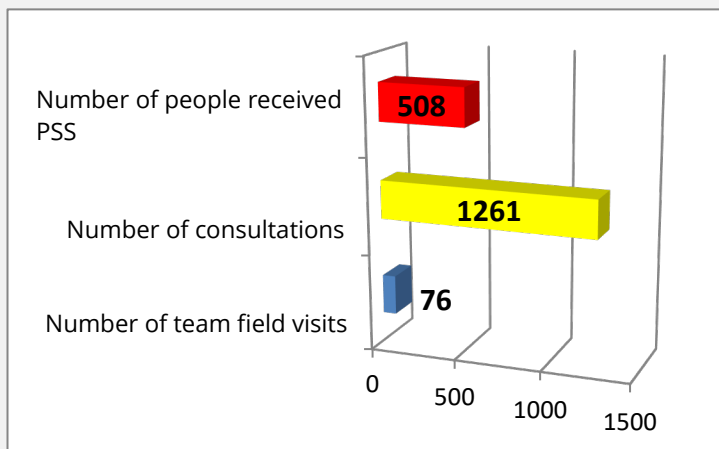
Indicators:	Target	Actual
% of people who report that the assistance of the NS has helped them overcome the traumatic experience	10%	96%

Output 1.1: Psychosocial support provided to the target population as well as to Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) volunteers and staff

Indicators:	Target	Actual
Number of people reached with mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services	350	508

Description of actions and achievements

Assessment of persisting psychosocial needs of the affected community was carried out. Provision of PSS to people affected by the disaster started from the very first moment when access to the affected area was possible. A refresher training was conducted for volunteers in psychosocial support. PSS was provided by professional psychologists (volunteers of BRC).



The majority of the people who received PSS declared that it helped them overcome traumatic experience. 99% of the surveyed reported that the assistance of the NS had helped them overcome the traumatic experience.



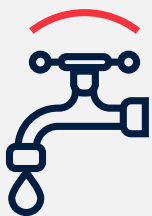
Bulgarian Red Cross supported households in the flood affected areas with multi-purpose cash. Photo: BRC.

Challenges faced and solutions

No significant challenges were faced in the provision of PSS to the people affected by the floods. The BRC was able to mobilize enough staff and volunteers trained in providing psychosocial support in disaster situations. While the affected population experienced different levels of trauma, the BRC had sufficient capacity to cover PSS needs for these groups during the operation.

Lessons Learned

PSS is much appreciated by the affected people. This included the provision of psychosocial support to the many staff and volunteers who worked tirelessly to assist traumatised people in need of care. As the provision of psychosocial care is a psychologically demanding activity, providing PSS to staff and volunteers is an important part of the PSS activities carried out by the BRC.



Water, sanitation and hygiene

Total number of people reached: 1,500⁴

Male over 18: 590

Male under 18: N/A

Female over 18: 910

Female under 18: N/A

Outcome 1: Immediate reduction in risk of waterborne and water related diseases in targeted communities

Indicators:	Target	Actual
% of people who report that the assistance of the NS has helped them for a cleaner and safer environment at home	70%	96%

⁴ These numbers for people reach with water, sanitation, and hygiene activities were collected during distribution and have been verified to be in accordance with distribution lists.

Output 1.1: *Hygiene-related goods (NFIs) are provided to the target population*

Indicators:	Target	Actual
Number of households provided with cleaning and disinfection kits	1,500	1,500

Description of actions and achievements

1,500 cleaning and disinfection kits were procured and distributed as part of the operation. Findings of the PDM survey confirmed that recipients of the cleaning and disinfection kits found them useful. 96% of the surveyed people reported that the assistance from the Bulgarian Red Cross helped them to create a clean and safe environment at home following the floods.



BRC staff and volunteers assisted the affected population with the clean-up of homes and public areas. Photo: BRC.

Challenges faced and solutions

Expectations towards the National Society to ensure the procurement and delivery of material support were in some cases very high among the affected population. There were also misunderstandings as to who was providing the assistance. Staff and volunteers were required to explain that the BRC (and not public authorities) is responsible for its own programmes as well as for the announcement and provision of the assistance. Lack of understanding of the role and status of the Red Cross influenced people's expectations, while explaining the independence and voluntary work of the BRC was helpful in ensuring that the assistance was well perceived by recipients.

Lessons Learned

Many times, even the smallest material support given/delivered in person is very useful for the affected people, who often are in serious need of necessities. This shows that the provided aid is in most cases appropriate and very helpful for the affected population receiving it.



Disaster Risk Reduction

Total number of people reached: 10,000

Male over 18: 4,792

Male under 18: N/A

Female over 18: 5,208

Female under 18: N/A

Outcome 1: Communities in high-risk areas are prepared for and able to respond to disaster

Indicators:	Target	Actual
% of people who during evaluation have reported improved preparedness for future disasters	10%	53%

Output 1.1: *Communities take active steps to strengthen their preparedness for timely and effective response to disasters.*

Indicators:	Target	Actual
Number of people reached with risk awareness and DRR key messages	5,000	10,000

Description of actions and achievements

Due to a lower offer achieved in the tender procedure, the contract for printing information packs with Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) key messages, including family disaster plans, resulted in a significant increase in the number of printing materials. The original target (5,000) was doubled to 10,000.

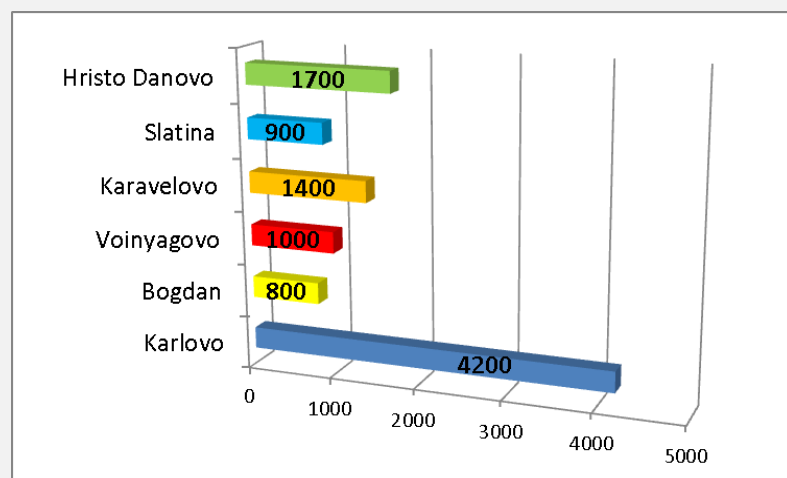


Chart 3: The table shows the number of people reached with information packages from the BRC in the communities of Hristo Danovo, Slatina, Karavelovo, Voinyagovo, Bogdan and Karlovo.

Four risk awareness and preparedness sessions among 220 pupils in four high schools in the affected areas within Karlovo municipality were conducted and completed.

When asked about whether they feel better prepared for a future disaster, most people (518 out of 986 interviewed) responded that they were.

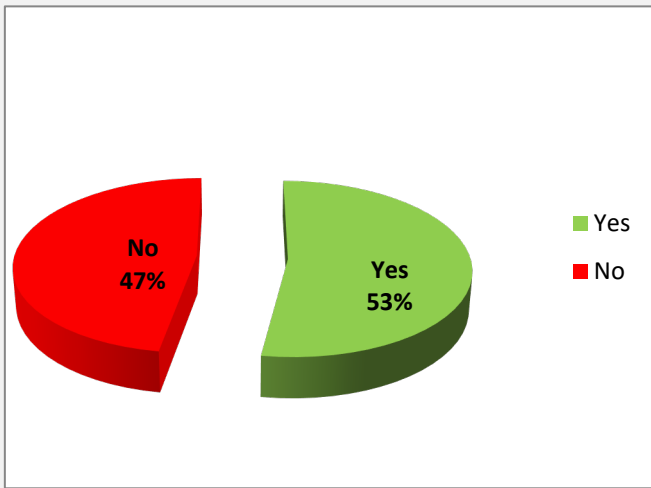


Chart 4: After the operation, 53% of people reported that they felt better prepared than before, while 47% did not feel better prepared.



BRC staff and volunteers collected data on disaster preparedness among the affected population, and the usefulness of disseminated information and education materials. Photo: BRC.

Challenges faced and solutions

No notable challenges were encountered, and the survey showed considerable improvements in the perceived disaster preparedness of the affected population following the operation. The BRC was able to mobilize enough trained staff and volunteers to carry out dissemination activities and collect data on its usefulness.

Lessons Learned

People who were affected by these disastrous floods showed higher interest to DRR. In the PDM they demonstrated higher than usual/habitual knowledge regarding where to find information and how to react to a disastrous event. They also had more familiarity with Early Warning System (EWS) signals.

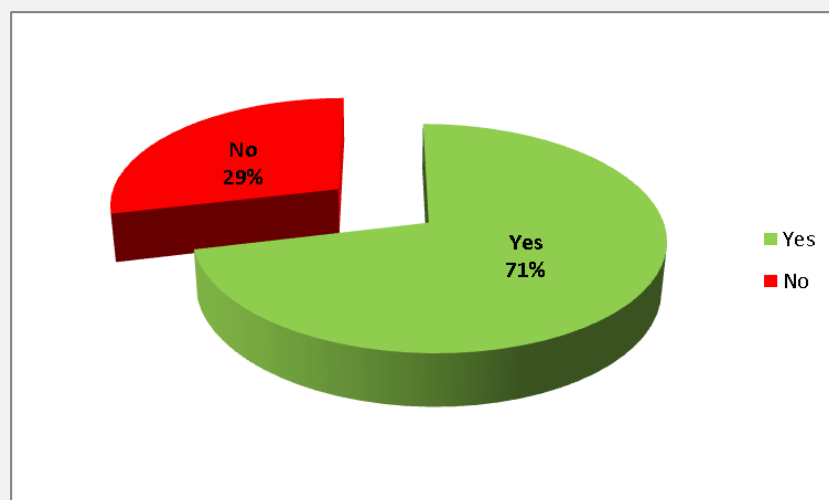


Chart 5: According to the survey carried out by the BRC, 71% of people who had experienced disastrous floods knew how to find information on how to react.

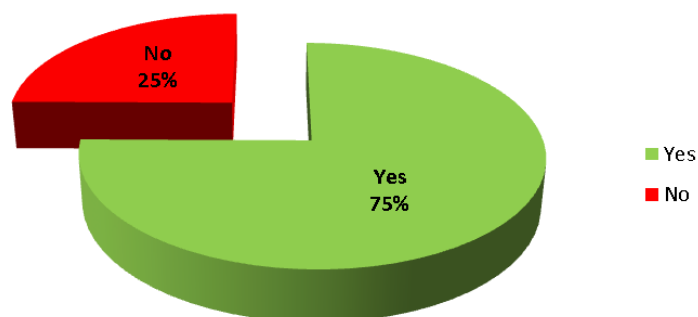


Chart 6: 75% of people who had experienced disastrous floods were familiar with early warning signals.

National Society Strengthening

Outcome 1: National Society capacity building and organizational development objectives are facilitated to ensure that National Societies have the necessary legal, ethical and financial foundations, systems and structures, competences and capacities to plan and perform

Indicators:	Target	Actual
<i>The NS produces timely, comprehensive, and quality reports</i>	Yes	Yes

Output 1.1: National Societies have effective and motivated volunteers who are protected

Indicators:	Target	Actual
<i>Number of trained volunteers who have passed security briefings and have participated in the operation, supported by NS staff</i>	50	50

Output 1.2: National Societies have the necessary corporate infrastructure and systems in place

Output 1.3: Supply chain and fleet services meet recognized quality and accountability standards

Indicators:	Target	Actual
<i>Timely and quality management of procurement and delivery according to the logistics standards</i>	Yes	Yes

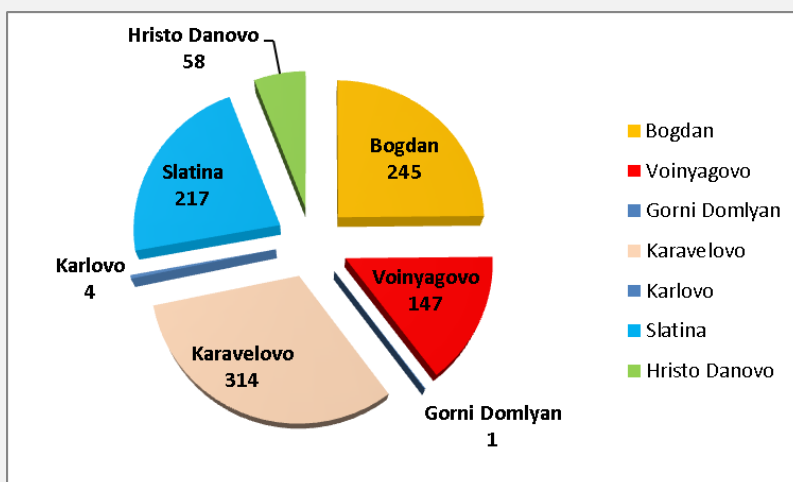
Description of actions and achievements

- All 50 volunteers engaged in the activities within the DREF operation of the NS were insured.
- Briefings were held with volunteers: one general briefing in the beginning of the operation and more than 90 field briefings upon deployment.
- PSS was provided to all volunteers daily, which were implemented by the NS branch in Plovdiv.
- The evaluation seminar with the key experts and volunteers was carried out on 27 and 28 March in Plovdiv.
- Coordination and management team of the DREF operation at national and regional level was appointed and settled.

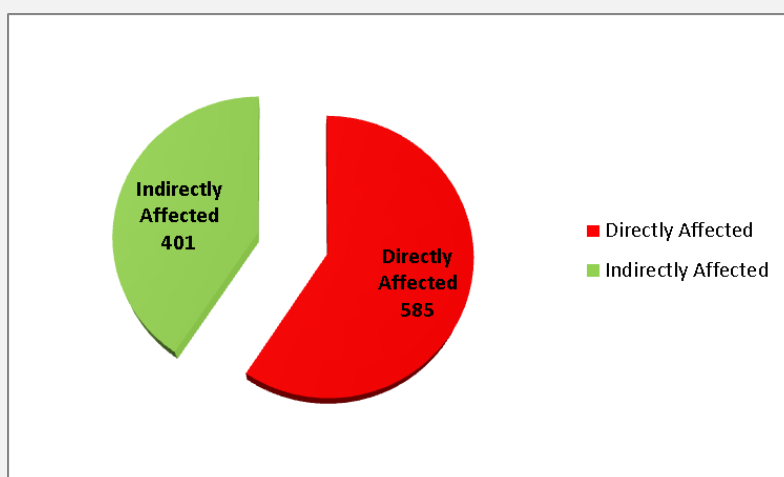
A contract for purchase of IT equipment was signed and six tablets delivered and given to field teams to carry out a PDM and collection of information and data as part of the operation.

The following charts show the results of the PDM that was conducted in the affected area amongst a total of 986 responders:

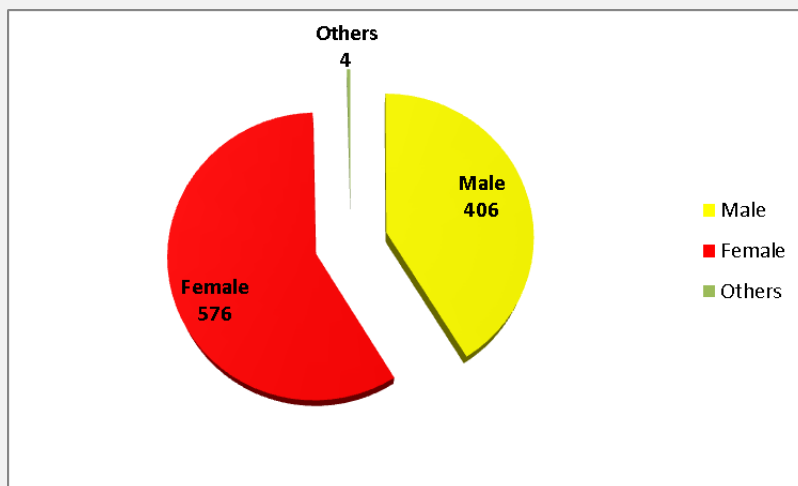
People interviewed from the following settlements:



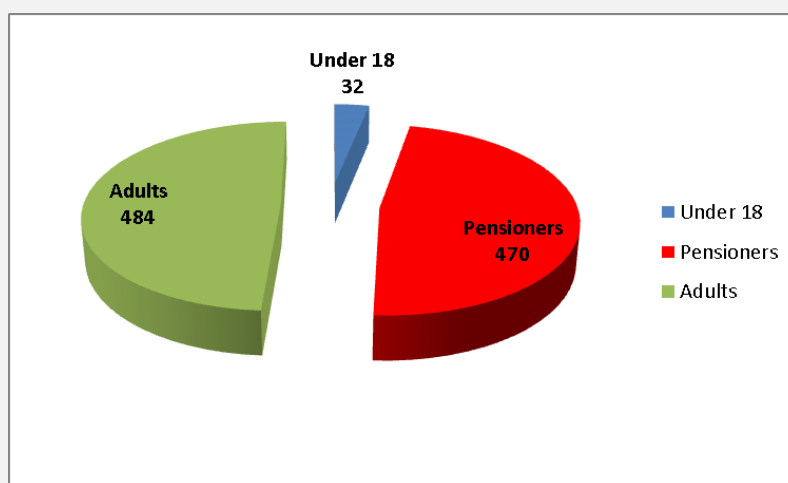
The number of interviewed people directly or indirectly affected by the disaster:



The number of interviewees categorized by sex:



Number of interviewees categorized by age:



Challenges faced and solutions

One of the challenges faced during the operation included risk of burnout among the staff and volunteers involved in the operation. Besides the provision of mental health and psychosocial support by trained psychologists, the National Society was closely monitoring changes in behaviour to ensure that staff and volunteers involved in the operation were working in rotations whenever possible.

Lessons Learned

Findings of the lessons learned workshop are as outlined below:

In major disasters, valid rapid assessment is difficult to implement in the first few days when the accessing the affected area is impossible or highly restricted. This has deemed to be challenging in terms of preparing the DREF Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA) in a timely manner. Based on these learnings, it is essential to have access to initial assessments of local and civil protection authorities to be able to prepare the EPoA on time.

In early stages of the relief operation, it is important to prioritise responding to the primary needs of the affected population. In addition, ensuring rotations within teams is essential in order to prevent burnout. This approach supports Red Cross teams who are taking part in the operation for a longer period.

Furthermore, it was highlighted during the workshop that lessons learned seminars and debriefings are essential as they are the most suitable ways of analysing the implementation of the activities of the operation and the challenges met by the Red Cross teams. Such venues have the potential to create an atmosphere where all staff and volunteers can share their personal and professional/practical experiences from the operation.

D. Financial Report

The budget for the DREF operation was CHF **315,906**, of which CHF 287,165 was spent. The remaining balance of CHF 28,741 is returned to the DREF account as per standard IFRC regulations.

For details, please refer to the final financial report annexed to this document.

The major donors and partners of the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) include the Red Cross Societies and governments of Belgium, Britain, Canada, Denmark, German, 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, and Fortive Corporation and other corporate and private donors. The IFRC, on behalf of the National Society, would like to extend thanks to all for their generous contributions.

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Reference

Click here for:

- [Previous Plans and Updates](#)

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.

DREF Operation

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

MDRBG003 - Bulgaria - Floods

Operating Timeframe: 21 Sep 2022 to 31 Mar 2023

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2022/9-2023/6	Operation	MDRBG003
Budget Timeframe	2022/9-2023/3	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 04/Aug/2023

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

I. Summary

Opening Balance	0
Funds & Other Income	315,906
DREF Response Pillar	315,906
Expenditure	-287,165
Closing Balance	28,741

II. Expenditure by planned operations / enabling approaches

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
PO01 - Shelter and Basic Household Items	32,799	24,630	8,169
PO02 - Livelihoods			0
PO03 - Multi-purpose Cash	180,839	179,080	1,760
PO04 - Health	13,781	11,600	2,181
PO05 - Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	25,558	23,897	1,661
PO06 - Protection, Gender and Inclusion			0
PO07 - Education			0
PO08 - Migration			0
PO09 - Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	6,040	5,202	837
PO10 - Community Engagement and Accountability			0
PO11 - Environmental Sustainability			0
Planned Operations Total	259,018	244,410	14,608
EA01 - Coordination and Partnerships			0
EA02 - Secretariat Services	1,853	1,669	184
EA03 - National Society Strengthening	55,035	41,086	13,949
Enabling Approaches Total	56,888	42,755	14,133
Grand Total	315,906	287,165	28,741

DREF Operation

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

MDRBG003 - Bulgaria - Floods

Operating Timeframe: 21 Sep 2022 to 31 Mar 2023

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2022/9-2023/6	Operation	MDRBG003
Budget Timeframe	2022/9-2023/3	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 04/Aug/2023

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

III. Expenditure by budget category & group

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
General Expenditure		6	-6
Financial Charges		6	-6
Contributions & Transfers	296,625	269,632	26,993
Cash Transfers National Societies	296,625	269,632	26,993
Indirect Costs	19,281	17,526	1,754
Programme & Services Support Recover	19,281	17,526	1,754
Grand Total	315,906	287,165	28,741