



Distribution of water tanks in Tacuarembó - Source: Uruguayan Red Cross.

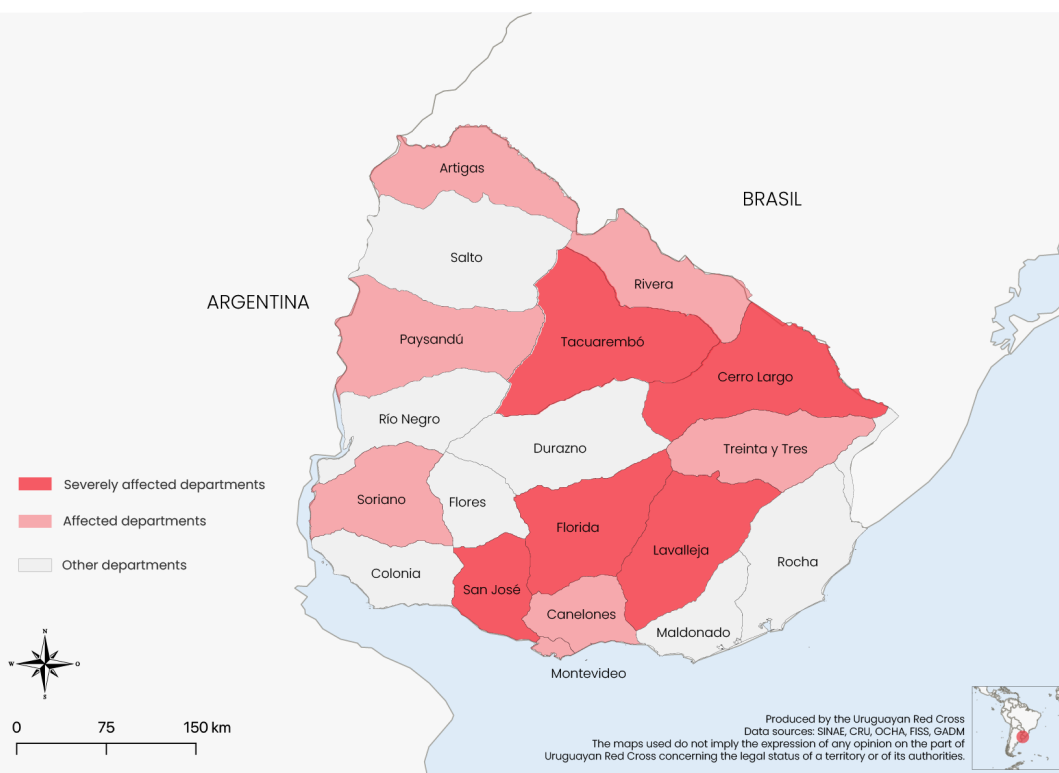
Appeal: MDRUY004	Total DREF Allocation: CHF 381,390	Crisis Category: Yellow	Hazard: Drought
Glide Number: DR-2023-000010-URY	People Affected: 409,115 people	People Targeted: 12,000 people	
Event Onset: Slow	Operation Start Date: 2023-01-29	New Operational End Date: 2023-08-31	Total Operating Timeframe: 7 months

Targeted Areas: **Cerro Largo, Florida, Lavalleja, San Jose, Tacuarembó**

The major donors and partners of the IFRC-DREF include the Red Cross Societies and governments of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Britain, China, Czech, Canada, Denmark, German, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Malta, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, and the Netherlands, as well as DG ECHO, Mondelez Foundation, 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.

Description of the Event

Affected departments Droughts | Uruguay 20-01-2023



Areas affected by droughts in Uruguay. Source: URC.

What happened, where and when?

The lack of rainfall since September 2022 had caused a significant reduction in the availability and access to water in the country. This situation was affected by the presence of the La Niña phenomenon in the region and the increase in temperatures during the summer season.

On 20 January, the Uruguayan government, through the National Emergency System (SINAIE), made a formal request to the Uruguayan Red Cross to assist in the assessment of needs and possible response to the consequences of the drought.

During the summer season (December 2022 to February 2023), the average rainfall was 126.4 mm, 225.4 mm below the average value of the reference period. The summer of 2023 was the driest of the last 42 years on record.

According to data from the Uruguayan Institute of Meteorology (INUMET), the entire country was affected by drought, with 20.51% of the territory, equivalent to 3,623,300 hectares under extreme drought.

The drought affected the entire country, although at the beginning of the operation, the most affected departments were mainly in the interior of the country and cattle-raising areas (Tacuarembó, Cerro Largo, Florida, Lavalleja and San José). As the operation progressed, according to information provided by SINAIE, the most complex situation was related to the lack of access to safe water which limited the consumption and use of water by families. The Paso Severino dam, which supplies water to Montevideo and the metropolitan area (an area where more than 2,000,000 people live), reached a minimum reserve of 1.84% of its capacity. For this reason, Obras Sanitarias del Estado (OSE) had to increase the minimum permitted levels of salinity and chlorine in the water. The new permitted figures were 420 mg/l of sodium and 720 mg/l of chlorine; however, the latest reports stated that the parameters present in the water were above these values, despite the established limits.

Although the Ministry of Public Health (MSP) assured during the emergency that the water was still potable and that its consumption would not have adverse effects on the health of the population, it issued specific recommendations for people with

arterial hypertension, renal problems, pregnant women and nursing mothers. On the other hand, the Faculty of Chemistry of the Universidad de la República (UDELAR) issued the following recommendations:

- Water should be boiled for 3 to 5 minutes before cooking, since trihalomethanes were largely eliminated during boiling.
- Short baths should be taken in ventilated places to reduce the inhalation of these compounds.
- If wells and water filters were available, their quality and maintenance should be periodically analyzed.

Likewise, during the month of June 2023, the most significant rainfall was recorded in the Northeast and East of the country, especially in the departments of Cerro Largo and Tacuarembó. At the national level, the average precipitation in June 2023 was 35.5 mm, lower than the climatological average expected for this month, which was 91.9 mm. As for the frequency of rainy days, it was also below the climatological average, with only 4 days compared to the average of 6 days (based on the 1981-2010 reference period). As for precipitation anomalies, they were negative throughout the country, with the South and Southwest being the region with the greatest water deficit. The anomalies ranged from -5.2% in Arbolito (Cerro Largo) to -98.8% in Nueva Palmira (Colonia). An evaluation carried out by the National Institute of Meteorology (INUMET), between April and June 2023, showed that the water deficit persisted in the country, especially in the central-south, southwest and east regions.

In view of this situation, on 5 July, the creation of a Water Emergency Fund was approved as a matter of urgency, under the ownership and administration of the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF). Its main objective was to provide support to the health services to attend to the vulnerable population that could be affected, as well as to support those who were experiencing labor difficulties due to the current or future situation of water deficit in the country. It also sought to strengthen the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Social Development, the National Public Education Administration, the Uruguayan Institute for Children and Adolescents and the Social Security Bank, which worked together to protect the population.

During the winter months (July to August) there began to be more precipitation, mainly in the north of the country. However, throughout the winter, accumulated rainfall was below average and average temperatures were above normal throughout the country.

At the close of this operation, the source that feeds the water supply network of Montevideo and the metropolitan area is again at normal values, so that since 30 August the water has had normal sodium and chlorine values.

At the same time, during the last month there have been flooding events, mainly in the departments of Montevideo and Cerro Largo (in the latter there were historical floods) in which the National Society has distributed shelter and cleaning kits.

Sources:

(1) URC Final Assessment Report:

https://prddsgofilestorage.blob.core.windows.net/api/sitreps/6330/Reporte_de_Evaluacion_-_DREF_Uruguay_Sequias.pdf

(2) INUMET Climate trends: <https://www.inumet.gub.uy/clima/tendencias-climaticas>

(3) Severino Pass Reserve: <https://www.elobservador.com.uy/nota/sirvio-la-lluvia-subieron-levemente-las-reservas-de-paso-severino-202377181656>



WASH sensitization in rural school in San Jose - Source: Uruguayan Red Cross.



CVA distribution of preloaded cards, Florida - Source: Uruguayan Red Cross.

Scope and Scale

During the assessment phase, the Uruguayan Red Cross carried out extensive research on the impacts of the drought on livelihoods, health and access to water, with the aim of determining the unmet needs of the affected population (1).

Through the assessment, which included personal interviews and the collection of secondary information provided by the State and the official press, it became clear that around 2.3 million people were affected by the inability to regularly access water. This is because, as a preventive measure, Obras Sanitarias del Estado (OSE) board of directors implemented a ban on the use of drinking water for non-priority purposes due to the continued decrease in the levels of reservoirs and watercourses used as sources of water supply for the population.

In addition, it was estimated that approximately 409,115 people were living in areas heavily affected by drought and water scarcity, of which about 20,000 had unmet needs related to water, sanitation and hygiene and livelihoods, such as: general access to water (32%), animal feed (12%), debt financing (10%), water storage inputs (10%), financing for well construction or procurement of water storage inputs (10%), and other water storage inputs (10%). Unmet needs included water for irrigation and animal feed (27%), water for drinking and cooking (25%), and water for personal hygiene (16%).

As a result of the assessment, it was also evident that households had to take measures to cope with the consequences of the drought. These included requesting help from institutions, relatives or friends (34%) and taking other measures (27%), which included using money earmarked for other needs to buy feed and fodder for animals, purchasing containers and water troughs, suspending irrigation altogether, reducing water consumption and ration, requesting unforeseen loans and using resources planned for the winter. In addition to the sale of animals in larger quantities than usual (21%).

During the course of the operation, the results obtained during the assessment were compounded by the consequences of increased levels of chloride, sodium and the presence of trihalomethanes in the water supplied by OSE in Montevideo and the metropolitan area. This led families to purchase bottled water for human consumption, which generated an initial break in availability and required additional unplanned spending by families.

Sources:

(1) URC Final Assessment Report:

https://prddsgofilestorage.blob.core.windows.net/api/sitreps/6330/Reporte_de_Evaluacion_-_DREF_Uruguay_Sequias.pdf

National Society Actions

Have the National Society conducted any intervention additionally to those part of this DREF Operation?	Yes
Please provide a brief description of those additional activities	While the response proposed in the DREF action plan for droughts in Montevideo and the metropolitan area (an area where approximately 2,000,000 people live) was being implemented, Obras Sanitarias del Estado (OSE) increased the maximum permitted levels of sodium and chloride in the water distributed through the network above the maximum permitted values according to the WHO. As a result, both the State and several organizations had to generate drinking water distribution systems for vulnerable populations (especially infants, pregnant women and people with renal or hypertensive diseases). As a result of this situation and thanks to a donation from the Salus company, the Uruguayan Red Cross distributed 15,000 liters of bottled water in 2.25 liter format in the metropolitan area. These activities were carried out during the months of July and August of this year, in the midst of the implementation of the DREF actions.

IFRC Network Actions Related To The Current Event

Secretariat	The IFRC has a delegation in Argentina to support and assist the Southern Cone countries, which has maintained close contact and coordination with the Uruguayan Red Cross and the Health, Disasters, Climate and Crisis Department of the IFRC Americas regional office in Panama. Since the beginning of the emergency, and with the request for support to the National Society by the National Government, constant communication and technical assistance has been maintained through the CCD for the Southern Cone for the development of the DREF request.
Participating National Societies	The Uruguayan Red Cross works closely with the Italian Red Cross (CRI). Although the CRI has no physical representation in the country, they fund a youth project focused on climate change, through which several branches provided information and awareness-raising to local communities during the drought.

ICRC Actions Related To The Current Event

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has a regional office in Brasilia for the Southern Cone countries and, in addition to carrying out actions within its mandate, such as working with the authorities to integrate, implement and disseminate international humanitarian law and rules on the use of force, In addition to carrying out actions to develop the National Society's emergency response capacity in contexts of violence and crisis and to provide Restoring Family Links (RFL) services, the ICRC has been in contact with the CCD for the Southern Cone and the National Society's response area, but has not provided specific support to the operation.

Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

Government has requested international assistance	No
National authorities	<p>The Departmental Emergency Coordination Centers (CECOED) distributed drinking water throughout the duration of the emergency, and the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries provided financial support to livestock farmers and farmers affected by the drought.</p> <p>The municipal governments worked in close coordination with the Uruguayan Red Cross to ensure that efforts were not duplicated and that affected families were better identified with data from both institutions.</p>
UN or other actors	UNICEF requested a meeting with the Uruguayan Red Cross to exchange information on damage and needs assessment, as well as to discuss the actions that the National Society, with the support of IFRC, had carried out during the operation. The results of the lessons learned workshop will be shared with the organization and future actions related to droughts will continue to be coordinated.

Are there major coordination mechanism in place?

Throughout the operation, the Uruguayan Red Cross has coordinated with both the National Emergency System and the various Departmental Emergency Coordination Centers (CECOED) for the planning and execution of actions. Although this has generated delays in the processes, it guaranteed the non-duplication of actions and the maximization of efforts and people reached with the proposed responses. In turn, this allows for permanent coordination with the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, Ministry of Social Development, Departmental Municipalities and Obras Sanitarias del Estado (OSE) since they are all coordinated in the CECOED.

Needs (Gaps) Identified



Protection, Gender And Inclusion

According to the Gender Equity Index 2021 published by the United Nations Organization for Economic and Social Development (UNDESA), Uruguay ranks 36th worldwide in terms of gender equity. In addition, in terms of protecting the rights of the LGBTIQ+ community, Uruguay has been recognized as one of the most progressive countries in Latin America.

However, in the rural communities evaluated, cases of discrimination, gender-based violence, as well as situations of vulnerability for people with disabilities, the elderly and children have been evidenced.

Therefore, it is of vital importance that DREF's intervention strategy adopts an inclusive approach in all work spaces, avoiding any form of discrimination and encouraging the participation of all affected people.

Given that these rural communities are far from large cities, services and activities, it is crucial to have a specific communication channel that ensures proximity to the population and the dissemination of relevant information messages, both in emergency situations and in general. The channels that the community finds most comfortable to receive this information are radio, social networks and television. In addition, to communicate with other community members, family and friends, 58% use cell phones and 24% use social networks.

For this reason, during the assessment stage, a dissemination list was implemented through WhatsApp, aimed at all people who expressed interest in receiving information from the Uruguayan Red Cross. This is due to the fact that 99% of the population said they could read and preferred to receive messages in Spanish.



Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

During the summer assessment stage, it was observed that families used to use a variety of water sources such as wells equipped with pumps, dams, cisterns, tajamares, streams and rainwater collection. However, due to the drought, there were major impacts on access to water and several sources were depleted, which generated dependency of families and local municipalities had to provide drinking water.

Many families lacked adequate and sufficient drinking water storage systems and water wells, even those more than 50 meters deep, dried up and suffered damage to their structure and pumps.

The support provided by government agencies varied by department. For example, in the department of Cerro Largo, many families received water from Cecoed for personal consumption but did not have enough water for their animals or crop irrigation; in Lavalleja, the municipality distributed water to small producers to support livestock maintenance.

Water storage: it was identified that water storage varied according to the economic possibilities and access to government assistance of each family. In many cases, families did not have sufficient storage capacity or inputs for the safe storage of drinking water.

Only 19% of the families used some method or system for water purification before droughts; many of the families recognized that the water was unfit for consumption but lacked the resources or sufficient information to be able to do so correctly.

In the Montevideo metropolitan area, there was an unprecedented increase in the sale of jerry cans and water bottles, with a 467% growth in the case of 5 and 6 liter jerry cans, and 217% growth in the case of water bottles.

At present, natural water sources in the interior of the country and in the capital are recovered or in the process of recovery due to the beginning of rainfall throughout the country. Although levels are still below normal, the situation is not at the same critical level.



Health

In the interior of the country, most of the families evaluated do not perceive an increase in the number of people with illnesses in the last 3 months (87%). Those that do notice an increase relate it mainly to animal diseases. However, a high level of stress and psychoemotional overwhelm is observed in the families due to the drought situation. Especially heads of household experience changes in family routine and a constant worry about future consequences.

In Uruguay, there is a public and private health care system. The public system is free and accessible to all citizens and legal residents of the country. According to the latest report of the Ministry of Health, 64% of the population uses the public health system, even though many families are far from the health centers available in some areas. The rest of the population uses the health system through private providers.

In the Montevideo and metropolitan areas, increases in the levels of chlorine, sodium and trihalomethanes have been detected in the water supplied by Obras Sanitarias del Estado (OSE). This may have negative effects on people with hypertension, kidney disease, infants, and pregnant women. The Ministry of Public Health issued specific recommendations, such as avoiding the consumption of OSE water for pregnant women and those with chronic kidney disease, heart failure or cirrhosis. For the rest of the population, it is suggested not to add salt to food and to use mineral water in the preparation of infant formulas. In addition, those taking antihypertensive and diuretic medications are advised not to exceed the consumption of 1 liter of water supplied by OSE.



Livelihoods And Basic Needs

The family economy in the affected areas is based on multiple sources of income, with a majority of households having at least two people who receive some type of remuneration either from work or allowances. Most men (45%) are engaged in economic activities, while women tend to be involved in household and agricultural tasks. Social plans, such as child, retirement or pension benefits, are the main source of income (55%). In addition, more than 48% of people depend on production or the availability of employment to maintain their income.

Droughts had a significant impact on the income sources of more than 53% of households, including reduced access to water for animals, loss of income, damage to crops, and reduced access to drinking water. This led many families to use their winter food reserves, creating additional stress and hardship. In addition, food and labor input prices were increased.

Although the drought situation has improved, it is estimated that it will take approximately one year for the situation to fully recover and for the livestock and agricultural sector to recover, which is why the agricultural emergency of the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries is still active.



Community Engagement And Accountability

During the assessment stage, special importance was given to aspects related to communication among community members, the information received, the identification of possible information gaps perceived by the people and the most appropriate means of communication to establish a direct link with the communities. Eighty-three percent of the families indicate that there are no community meetings or instances, so they tend to emphasize the importance of generating spaces for exchange that are useful, being the rural schools propitious places for these meetings.

Regarding the information they receive, 52% stated that they do not receive information by any means; they only have access to very general information through the mass media. They express the desire to have a reliable and accessible source of information. In some specific cases, they mention the need to improve communication channels, since they learned about government programs or plans related to the countryside after their deadline.



Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation And Recovery

During the needs assessment in rural areas of Uruguay, a significant prevalence of droughts was identified, being the most recurrent event reported by 59% of the families assessed. These droughts were aggravated by historically high temperatures that ranged between 36-37 °C and reached 41.4 °C, which generated greater hydration needs for people and animals and difficulties for the survival of crops and pastures, especially in the north of the country.

The possible negative influence of eucalyptus monoculture on the situation was also noted, as these trees consume large amounts of water and contribute to the loss of organic matter and increased soil acidity. Although they indicated that they have not experienced any other serious emergencies in the last five years, some areas are exposed to strong winds and turbulence that can damage housing structures.

Operational Strategy

Overall objective of the operation

Through this plan, the Uruguayan Red Cross sought to improve the living conditions of 12,000 people (2,400 families) affected by the drought in the departments of Tacuarembó, Cerro Largo, Florida, Lavalleja and San José. Actions focused on the areas of Livelihoods, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion and Cash-Multipurpose.

Operation strategy rationale

ASSESSMENT PHASE:

The Needs Assessment was designed with a participatory approach, in coordination with government authorities and partners from the different selected departments. To ensure good coordination, meetings were held to share the structure of the assessment and adapt it to the information needs of all stakeholders.

In addition, the National Society worked in close collaboration with the Departmental Emergency Operations Centers (CECOED) and the respective Municipalities, which facilitated access to local communities and shared previously collected information, thus enriching the data obtained in the assessment.

A sampling approach was used to ensure adequate representation of community groups in the selected departments. The process included participatory methodologies such as interviews with key stakeholders, including government leaders and community representatives, and direct observation visits and data verification with secondary information. The objective was to include all population groups to achieve a better representation of the community. At the same time, a communication and dissemination strategy of key messages related to the drought was implemented, addressing topics such as prevention and high temperatures, responsible water use, and messages aimed at children and adolescents.

In parallel, the Uruguayan Red Cross implemented a training and skills transfer system that allowed staff and volunteers who participated in training or response experiences to pass on those skills to the rest of the National Society.

The Uruguayan Red Cross also facilitated an internal workshop with staff involved in the assessment to review the assessment operations in order to identify good practices and areas of improvement to implement during the response phase.

RESPONSE PHASE:

During the response phase of this DREF, the Uruguayan Red Cross relied on the Damage and Needs Assessment (DANA) prepared, as well as on impact data provided by government authorities. In this sense, the intervention was based both on official data and reports and on the results obtained during direct visits to the community in the assessment stage.

The damage and needs assessment revealed that the main needs were mainly related to water access and availability, as well as losses of resources related to the livelihoods of families affected by the droughts. Based on this, the intervention carried out by the Uruguayan Red Cross can be summarized as follows:

Livelihoods: Cash transfer program for the recovery and/or protection of the livelihoods of 191 families (527 people) in the

departments of Lavalleja and San José through the delivery of vouchers in the amount of CHF 500 (approximately 21,300 Uruguayan pesos) defined by the feasibility and market study developed during the operation.

The Livelihoods line had also planned to provide technical sensitization to 250 families (1,250 people) working in rural areas of the departments of Cerro Largo, Lavalleja and San José through government personnel. This line could not be carried out because there were delays and difficulties in coordinating with the CECOEDs and SINAE to find technical specialists and coordinate visits to families in rural areas at the same time as the other actions were being developed.

Multipurpose cash: Multipurpose transfer program for 113 families (349 people) in the department of Florida with a basic amount of CHF 500 for a family of 4 people (the amount varies depending on the number of members) based on the findings from the feasibility and market study developed during the operation.

Water, sanitation and hygiene: Awareness talks on water care, potabilization and correct storage of water to 5,514 people, distribution of 400 family water purification kits in the departments of Cerro Largo, Lavalleja, San José, Florida and Tacuarembó, distribution of 50 pumps for semi-surgent wells in the department of Cerro Largo, distribution to 50 families of supplies for the storage of drinking water in Tacuarembó.

Community Participation and Accountability: based on the results of the evaluation survey, in which most people expressed their interest in receiving information through various media, useful information was disseminated to the communities through a WhatsApp distribution list. In addition, printed materials were generated for those who do not use digital media. Throughout the operation, a specific WhatsApp number was activated to receive complaints and suggestions, which was reviewed daily by the volunteers and staff of the operation. In collaboration with the communications area, a dissemination strategy was implemented to keep the community and partners informed about the operation's actions. The objective was to maximize the reach of key messages related to the drought and strengthen the National Society's presence in the Uruguayan population.

Targeting Strategy

Who will be targeted through this operation?

Through this plan, the Uruguayan Red Cross aimed to improve the living conditions of 12,000 people (2,400 families) affected by the drought in the departments of Tacuarembó, Cerro Largo, Florida, Lavalleja and San José. Actions focused on the areas of Livelihoods, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion, and Cash-Multipurpose. This operation focused on the five most affected departments in the country and the response was diversified according to the needs of each department.

Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population

Since this response targeted families and communities with different characteristics in five different departments, the target populations varied within each department and each intervention sector. However, priority was always given to the following groups:

- Families in a context of vulnerability.
- Single-parent or female-headed families.
- Families with elderly people, children or people with disabilities.
- Families that did not receive any type of benefit or assistance from any other organization.

The criteria for selecting the groups reached in each intervention sector included:

WASH:

- Households with no or almost no water availability.
- Households without safe and sufficient methods of water purification and storage.

Livelihoods:

- Households whose livelihoods depend on livestock or agriculture and whose incomes have been affected as a result of the drought.
- Households that have lost part or all of their livestock ration plantations.

- Households whose marketing plantations have been partially or totally affected.

The amount to be allocated to each household was derived from the number of heads of livestock and their source of income was determined in the feasibility and market study conducted in the early days of the intervention.

Multipurpose cash:

- Families whose source of income has been affected and cannot fully recover in the short term.
- Families who have had to go into debt as a result of the drought.
- Families with various unmet basic needs that cannot be met through livelihood support.

The needs of all population groups were considered, taking into account age, sex, gender and people with disabilities or special requirements; therefore, within the prioritization process, special attention was paid to the situations of single-parent families with dependent children, people with disabilities or elderly people.

Total Targeted Population

Women	3,720	Rural	90%
Girls (under 18)	1,320	Urban	10%
Men	5,280	People with disabilities (estimated)	4%
Boys (under 18)	1,680		
Total targeted population	12,000		

Risk and Security Considerations

Please indicate about potential operation risk for this operations and mitigation actions

Risk	Mitigation action
Lack of scarce integration of the communities in the execution of possible future actions.	Community engagement and accountability were ensured through feedback mechanisms.
A low number of volunteers due to holidays.	A volunteer survey was carried out in the subsidiaries close to the affected areas to help the operation with personnel or volunteers from other subsidiaries who could travel to support the activities of this operation.
The difficulty of access to remote areas.	There is a vehicle prepared to enter this type of terrain and, if necessary, the use of vehicles or trucks prepared for this type of soil is coordinated with SINAIE.
Increase or permanence of heat waves during the operation	Recommendations were made and shared with all personnel involved in the operation. These recommendations served to prevent any incident such as heat stroke. Hydration and protective equipment (sunscreen or hats) were also provided to all personnel.

Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation

The main safety issues that were contemplated in this operation included: Difficulties related to the health of personnel and volunteers due to heat waves. Risks related to driving on the routes between the different destinations to be evaluated. To mitigate these types of risks, the National Society provided the necessary protective equipment to each person participating in

the operation and included in the activities personnel trained in first aid to respond to any inconvenience that might arise. The National Society also had a vehicle and driving safety plan and used only authorized and trained drivers to drive the institutional vehicles. During the implementation of the activities, Uruguay had autochthonous cases of dengue fever for the first time, so the use of repellent and related prevention recommendations were added to the personal protection equipment.

Implementation



Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

Budget: CHF 66,592

Targeted Persons: 12,000

Assisted Persons: 5,514

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
Number of people reached with WASH sensibilization	12,000	5,514
Distribution of pumps for semi-emergent wells.	50	50
Distribution of family purification supplies	400	400
Number of families reached through the delivery of water storage supplies.	50	50

Narrative description of achievements

The Uruguayan Red Cross developed informative and educational materials for both adults and schools (educational cards, brochures and posters, games and activities with experiments). It also developed a workshop for 25 volunteers to provide basic knowledge for the facilitation of workshops at the community level. As part of this workshop, sensitization sessions were held in all of the operation's distribution centers and also in rural and urban schools in the most affected areas. These awareness-raising activities included the sharing of theoretical information on the care and proper storage of water and also on water purification mechanisms and were supported by practical and participatory teaching strategies, where adults and children could put into practice what they had learned. Activities were also left for the home in order to reach a larger number of people and included the educational community such as administrative and teaching staff of the schools. The number of people to be reached was estimated through a calculation made at the time of the emergency assessment, then during the operation it became evident that through rural and even urban schools it would not be possible to reach the number of people targeted, for these reasons the number is lower than estimated, but all the affected areas were visited and all the people targeted in the rest of the activities and in all the affected departments were included in the sensitizations.

In coordination with the CECOED of the department of Cerro Largo, 50 water pumps for semi-surgent wells were distributed. This distribution was complementary to a project already initiated by this governmental entity, which dealt with vulnerable families that were primarily affected by the droughts and did not have access to drinking water in their homes, who requested the construction of a subsidized water well. CECOED managed the creation of the wells with its own resources and the Uruguayan Red Cross provided the water pumps. 50 1,000-liter tanks were also delivered (28 in Tacuarembó, 12 in San José and 10 in Florida).

Water filters were delivered to promote the consumption of drinking water in the midst of the shortages caused by droughts in all the intervention departments. 399 filters were distributed (84 in Florida, 152 in San José, 63 in Lavalleja, 50 in Tacuarembó and 50 in Cerro Largo). In addition, informative talks were given on the proper use of the filter, its useful life and tips on how to optimize its operation, among other relevant topics.

As part of its communication strategy, the National Society generated videos and publications with key messages on water care, safe water storage and drinking water treatment in order to complement the actions in the field with information campaigns.

Lessons Learnt

Although the WASH sector was one of the strongest for the implementation of this DREF, the National Society did not have sufficient previous experience in the development of materials and sensitization on the subject, which generated a dependence on the technical lines of IFRC that caused some delays in the implementation of the activities. This meant that it was not possible to reach 100% of the families that were intended to be reached with awareness-raising activities, but it also meant that the National Society had to acquire skills that it will be able to continue developing in the future.

Working with CECOEDs generates several positive aspects, but it also generates delays in the implementation process as it must be adapted to the schedules and time availability of the agencies.

Challenges

As the drought period continued, new unmet basic needs were found in new departments as actions were implemented by the DREF, which meant that the teams were able to attend to other response activities in other departments in addition to the DREF.



Budget: CHF 511

Targeted Persons: 0

Assisted Persons: 0

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
Number of first aid kits completed	4	4

Narrative description of achievements

During the ninth week of the operation, the purchase process for the acquisition of first aid supplies for the first aid kits used during the evaluations in the different vehicles has been carried out. The supplies purchased include dry first aid kit supplies, splints and tourniquet. No first aid attention was provided during the operation, as no one required it.

Lessons Learnt

In field activities involving travel to remote areas, it is essential to have complete kits.



Budget: CHF 59,315

Targeted Persons: 500

Assisted Persons: 500

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
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Feasibility and market study	1	1
Number of families that received cash for their basic needs for 2 months	100	113

Narrative description of achievements

A workshop was held for volunteers on basic issues related to the CVA program. The workshop also addressed the methodology used in the actual distribution of the operation and, to this end, simulations of the process were carried out to ensure that all the people involved handle the same information and that there is better coordination.

At the same time, a feasibility and market study was carried out for the implementation of the multipurpose cash transfer program, in which it was determined that, for this distribution, taking into account the needs of the people and the particular characteristics of the context, the mechanism to be used would be through cards with an amount of money to be used in different stores. The Uruguayan Red Cross already had a supplier (PREX), with whom it coordinated the making and delivery of cards.

The value assigned to each family depended on the number of members and was selected according to the amount of the basic food basket. In the case of a family of four, the amount was CHF 500 (approximately 21,000 Uruguayan pesos). The total distributed in San José is CHF 25,972.74 (61 families) and in Florida CHF 23,350 (52 families).

A total of 113 families were reached in both departments. The difference with the original plan is due to the fact that small beekeepers who needed to purchase inputs that were not available from the suppliers with whom they were working with the vouchers were affected, so it was decided to change the strategy and include them in the multipurpose Cash.

During all the activities, awareness-raising was provided on the use of the cards, the use of ATMs, security aspects and how to use the card.

It should be noted that the prepaid cards are made out in the name of the individuals and, if they wish, they may continue to use them once the transfer program has ended.

As part of its transparency processes, the Uruguayan Red Cross made available a specific WhatsApp line for families to make complaints, claims or evacuate doubts related to the program. This phone number was provided in written form in the information sheets distributed during distributions.

Lessons Learnt

Having a local financial provider maximizes processes and generates better and faster processes. At the same time, being cards that people can continue to use makes it easier for families to continue using financial services at no cost, if they wish to do so. The identification of families with CECEOED is a great opportunity to ensure non-duplication, but it generates delays in the process of contacting and organizing the distribution, but it is nevertheless highly positive.

Challenges

The National Society did not have the expertise to conduct the feasibility study; however, the SURGE deployment was able to meet the objective and leave a base model for future instances.



Livelihoods And Basic Needs

Budget: CHF 119,003

Targeted Persons: 1,250

Assisted Persons: 1,200

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
Number of people reached through technical awareness of rural work.	1,250	1,200
Feasibility and market study	1	1
Number of families that received cash to recover their livelihoods	200	191

Narrative description of achievements

A feasibility and market study was carried out in the departments of San José and Lavalleja to assess the feasibility of implementing a cash transfer program, where it was identified that the modality selected by the population and appropriate to the contextual characteristics, is through vouchers for the exchange of food for livestock. Although a total of 4 suppliers were selected (3 in Lavalleja and 1 in San José) that met the quality and transparency requirements, when the time came to sign the relevant contracts, 2 suppliers from San José chose not to participate, so the NS worked with 3 suppliers from Lavalleja and 1 supplier from San José.

Support was provided to the following groups:

- Small producers: families dedicated mainly to raising and caring for farm animals, such as cows, pigs, sheep, goats and poultry. Their main activity is focused on the production and marketing of livestock products, such as meat, milk, eggs or dairy products.
- Livestock specialization: Families that specialize in livestock as their main source of income and economic activity. Their activity is focused on raising, feeding and caring for animals, as well as selling livestock products.
- Families at particular risk due to drought: Livestock-raising families faced significant risks due to drought, as the lack of pasture and fodder directly affected the availability of feed for livestock. Water scarcity also posed a challenge, as sufficient water is needed for animal consumption.
- Families in need of ration: Livestock families in great need of access to specific livestock rations that met the nutritional requirements of their animals. These rations included concentrates, vitamin supplements, hay silage or other balanced feeds.
- Family sustenance: Families whose income came from the sale of livestock products, which contributed significantly to income and economic sustenance to cover the family's basic needs.
- Need for external support: Families that required external support due to the lack of resources and the emergency situation they were facing.

For these families a voucher was issued for a value of CHF 500 (approximately 21,300 Uruguayan pesos) for the purchase of inputs (the amount is derived from the feasibility study) and allowed the purchase of the following products: concentrate for cattle, alfalfa hay, corn silage, grain mix for poultry and balanced feed for poultry. All families were selected in coordination with the Departmental Emergency Coordinating Center (CECOED) and the Ministries of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries.

As previously mentioned, the change in strategy to reach fewer families in livelihoods was agreed to provide multipurpose cash for affected small beekeepers who needed to buy more diverse inputs than they could acquire from the suppliers the National Society worked with through the vouchers.

In total, 128 families were reached in San José, with a total amount of CHF 64,299.71 and 63 families in Lavalleja with a total amount of CHF 32,378.92.

Lessons Learnt

The coordinated work with CECOED allowed for a better identification of affected families and guarantees the non-duplication of efforts in relation to state support programs. However, it can also generate difficulties in implementation times. In the organization of activities, the availability of providers and the time they need to receive the families should be taken into account. The direct work with local suppliers with whom the families are already familiar is very positive and does not affect the local economy.

Challenges

The drafting and signing of contracts are a process that can become tedious and requires support from areas outside the response area; however, the technical support provided by IFRC allowed us to move forward and have the contracts signed in a timely manner.



National Society Strengthening

Budget: CHF 48,479

Targeted Persons: 0

Assisted Persons: 0

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
Purchase of equipment to conduct assessment (3x tablets)	3	3
Data collection and analysis workshop	1	1
Lessons learned workshop	1	1

Narrative description of achievements

During the assessment stage the National Society acquired items that were used for data collection during the surveys and will be used to develop future assessments and strengthen the IM area. An IM kit has been created for data collection in the field and to ensure connectivity for proper uploading in cases of assessments and deployments. The kit is composed of the following items: suitcase for safe storage of supplies, tablets, portable chargers, cables and a 5G wireless modem for use with cell phone chips.

Personal protective equipment was also purchased for the volunteers and staff involved in the response. The items purchased were: hats with visors and mosquito repellent (bracelet and spray), which were complemented with sunscreen donated to the National Society by a private company.

An 8-hour workshop on data collection with mobile devices (KoBo) was also held. The content of the workshop consisted of: What is a DREF, description of the drought DREF, actions to be implemented, what tools would be used for data collection, introduction to Kobo and how data collection with tablets works, description of the interview with families and practical exercises.

During the response stage, visibility and office supplies were purchased to be used during the distribution stages with the HSP (which was used as a distribution point in all stages) and the branches.

During the operation, an operational assistant with driver and logistical assistant functions was hired to support the operation and an accounting assistant was hired to provide accounting support within the DREF.

As part of the operation's dissemination strategy, an audiovisual company was hired to generate audiovisual material for the entire operation, generating institutional videos in horizontal format and reels for dissemination through social networks.

Lessons Learnt

Having a professional driver who can also provide support in logistical and administrative tasks speeds up the distribution preparation processes.

At the same time, it is extremely positive to have a person who is specifically in charge of logistical support during distribution, especially in the case of preloaded card distributions, which involve many steps and procedures.

During the lessons learned workshop, the need to have clear procedures and guidelines for the implementation of emergency responses that allow the roles of each area and role and the changes or adaptations that must be made during emergencies to be established.

At the same time, there is a need to generate campaigns to recruit volunteers so that the branches can better develop their response activities.

Challenges

As it was a long emergency and a 7-month operation, the teams of volunteers and staff became tired, since rotation was limited due to the small size of the National Society.

At the same time, the lack of people trained in specific technical areas was seen as a great challenge, so the various workshops and training sessions were key to achieving the objectives.



Secretariat Services

Budget: CHF 85,360

Targeted Persons: 0

Assisted Persons: 0

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
Deployment of Surge WASH Coordinator	1	1
Deployment of Surge CVA Coordinator	1	1
Deployment of Surge Humanitarian Information Analysis Officer	1	1

Narrative description of achievements

Four monitoring visits were made by the Coordination of Programs and Operations and Finance of the Southern Cone cluster to follow up on the actions carried out. During the first visit, different meetings were coordinated through the VIII UNDRR risk management platform with the Regional Director and the Head of Delegation of the Southern Cone countries, SINAE and various national and international stakeholders.

A total of three people were mobilized through IFRC's Surge system, the profiles were as follows:

- CVA Coordinator.
- WASH Coordinator.
- Livelihoods Coordinator.

The CVA ARO department also mobilized one person from its team to support the closing of the cash transfer programs. On the other hand, the DREF Senior Officer and PMER ARO Senior Officer were mobilized to conduct the lessons learned workshop in Montevideo.

Lessons Learnt

The delegation's financial and operational follow-up of the operation was very important, as was the support provided to the people deployed in the country.

Challenges

Finding the profiles for the deployments was very difficult, there are not many people to apply for them and the profiles were not suitable for the type of work to be done in the operation.



Community Engagement And Accountability

Budget: CHF 2,130

Targeted Persons: 5,000

Assisted Persons: 5,000

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
Number of people receiving relevant information related to droughts	5,000	5,000
Percentage of people satisfied with receiving distributions in good quality and with dignity	90	100

Narrative description of achievements

The Uruguayan Red Cross has distributed information material on the cash transfer program, emphasizing what it is, how it works and how to resolve doubts and share suggestions about it. At the same time, sensitizations and conversations were held with families on the day they obtain the card to clear up any doubts and clarify the process.

At the same time, informative material was produced for the people who participated in the livelihood voucher program and key messages were disseminated about the operation and the response lines.

As part of the communication strategy, a WhatsApp line was activated for community members to raise concerns, claims or complaints related to the program. In turn, once the card was loaded, people were called to resolve any doubts that may have arisen and to explain again how to withdraw or use the money. These mechanisms have made it possible to provide answers and solutions.

In awareness-raising sessions with key messages related to the emergency and the different lines of intervention, a total of 559 people were reached in Florida, 752 in San José, 166 in Lavalleja, 98 in Tacuarembó and 192 in Cerro Largo. These key messages were complemented with publications and key messages transmitted through the social networks of the Uruguayan Red Cross, reaching a total of 3,233 people.

In the satisfaction surveys on the activities, 100% of the families surveyed said that the money was useful to alleviate the situation and that they felt comfortable during the distribution process; the most frequent uses of the money were the purchase of inputs for water installation (pipes, tanks, pumps), the purchase of rations and the payment of debts or extra expenses due to the drought.

Among the responses of the people who participated in the voucher program, many families stated that they only received support from the Uruguayan Red Cross during the entire drought and 100% said they were satisfied with the distribution and support received.

At the same time, it is worth noting that all families now have a better image of the organization, even those who already had a positive image of the Movement, but there is a percentage of the community that is not entirely clear about how the selection of people was carried out, so that in future instances the selection method and criteria should be further emphasized.

Lessons Learnt

Limiting the hours when the telephone would be available allowed the National Society to organize themselves in a better way. At the same time, it was pointed out that for future instances the National Society should improve and put more emphasis on the selection criteria, prioritization and how they reached the people to be reached, since this was one of the points on which the families responded that they did not have enough information or did not know how it was done.

Challenges

To be able to better disseminate the selection and prioritization criteria when we work with such remote communities that do not use traditional media or social networks but are too far away to be able to make extended visits to each of the families.

At the same time, not having specific people in charge of these tasks and having to divide the time and tasks among the rest of the team, following up becomes a difficult and time-consuming task.

Financial Report

DREF Operation

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

MDRUY004 - Uruguay - Drought

Operating Timeframe: 29 Jan 2023 to 31 Aug 2023

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2023/01-2023/09	Operation	MDRUY004
Budget Timeframe	2023/1-2023/08	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 20/Oct/2023

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

I. Summary

Opening Balance	0
Funds & Other Income	381,390
DREF Response Pillar	381,390
Expenditure	-357,914
Closing Balance	23,476

II. Expenditure by planned operations / enabling approaches

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
PO01 - Shelter and Basic Household Items			0
PO02 - Livelihoods	119,003	108,913	10,090
PO03 - Multi-purpose Cash	59,315	55,216	4,100
PO04 - Health	511	13,893	-13,382
PO05 - Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	66,592	64,322	2,270
PO06 - Protection, Gender and Inclusion			0
PO07 - Education			0
PO08 - Migration			0
PO09 - Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery			0
PO10 - Community Engagement and Accountability	2,130	1,235	895
PO11 - Environmental Sustainability			0
Planned Operations Total	247,552	243,579	3,973
EA01 - Coordination and Partnerships			0
EA02 - Secretariat Services	85,360	64,828	20,532
EA03 - National Society Strengthening	48,479	49,507	-1,028
Enabling Approaches Total	133,839	114,335	19,504
Grand Total	381,390	357,914	23,476

[Click here for the complete financial report](#)

Please explain variances (if any)

The Uruguayan Red Cross spent a total of CHF 357,914. The remaining balance of CHF 23,476 will be returned to the Disaster Response Emergency Fund.

The balance is mainly part of the budget earmarked for Surge deployments. During budget planning, the budget estimated for the deployments was higher than the actual expenditure. It is worth highlighting that all rapid response personnel deployments were carried out as planned and within the established period, but at lower costs than anticipated. This difference between the estimate and actual costs for deployments will be considered when preparing future budgets.

Contact Information

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

National Society contact:

Paula Vairoletti, National Director for Risk Management and Disaster Response, paula.vairoletti@cruzroja.org.uy, +598 98 463 972

IFRC Appeal Manager: Daniel Bolaños, Head of Country Cluster Delegation, daniel.bolanos@ifrc.org, +54 9 11 3396 2819

IFRC Project Manager: Melina Miele, Programs and Operations Coordinator, melina.miele@ifrc.org, +54 9 11 5471 2155

IFRC focal point for the emergency:

Melina Miele, Programs and Operations Coordinator, melina.miele@ifrc.org, +54 9 11 5471 2155

Media Contact: Clara Estevez, National Communication Coordinator, comunicacion@cruzroja.org.uy

[Click here for reference](#)