



Reconstructed houses and the engagement of beneficiaries regarding their level of satisfaction

Appeal: MDRGW004	Total DREF Allocation: CHF 116,357	Crisis Category: Yellow	Hazard: Fire
Glide Number: FR-2023-000008-GNB	People Affected: 3,470 people	People Targeted: 2,065 people	
Event Onset: Sudden	Operation Start Date: 29-01-2023	Operational End Date: 31-05-2023	Total Operating Timeframe: 4 months
Targeted Areas: Bolama/Bijagos			

Description of the Event



Map by Guinea Red Cross

Date of event

14-01-2023

What happened, where and when?

On the morning of 14 January 2023, a fire broke out in Menegue Village near Canhabaque in Guinea Bissau, destroying dozens of houses and food storage facilities, along with stocks of food, crops, and seeds. A rapid assessment by the Red Cross Society of Guinea Bissau (RCSGB) on 19 January found that the fire affected 295 households (2,065 people). Specifically, 54 houses were destroyed, directly impacting 413 individuals (59 households) who were left without food, shelter, and livelihoods, highlighting the urgent need for immediate assistance.

The ravage of the incident and distress of people affected called the surrounding families to quickly join hands and support the affected families by providing housing support/shelter, food, and basic amenities to the displaced families before humanitarian aid arrived. In few days 1,652 people (236 households) from host communities were also rendered vulnerable as they provided significant part of their reserve and necessities to the homeless families while facing limited resources and challenges on their own. Furthermore, in local communities like Menegue, food storage facilities are mostly owned by households and community members for preserving food items and other valuables. The fire resulted in many community members losing food reserves, valuables, and livelihoods.

Menegue Village, located on an island in the Bijagós archipelago off the west coast of Africa, covers an area of 111 km² and has a population of approximately 3,470 people. The community primarily relies on subsistence farming, but the village is one of the poorest and marginalized communities in the Canhabaque area. Lacking essential social amenities such as electricity, villagers depend on a substandard solar battery to charge their phones in the morning while they work on their farms. It is believed that a faulty connection of battery terminals caused the battery to overheat, resulting in a fire and subsequent explosion. By the time the alarm was raised, and villagers returned from their farms, the fire had already consumed numerous houses, food storage facilities, and other valuables.



A street completely burnt



Community engagement on nature of support and selection criteria



Reconstructed houses

Scope and Scale

The rapid assessment report shared by the RCSGB on 19 January highlighted that a total of 2,065 people were in need due to various losses, including houses, settlements, livelihoods, income, and assets. The affected individuals were detailed as follows:

- 413 people (59 households) were directly affected, with houses either partially or completely burnt.
- 1,652 people (236 households) were additionally impacted as their income sources were affected by the fire, including those who owned burnt shops or were hosting homeless families. These 1,652 people include owners of 29 burnt stores/barns. These stores, containing harvested products and seeds for the next growing season, were crucial for the livelihoods of their owners and others they supported. The destruction of these stores led to significant livelihood challenges.
- Host families that used their food reserves, shelter, and finance to support affected households.

In the affected communities, the population mainly practiced subsistence farming and polygamy, with men typically heading households that included more than two wives and their children. A household is generally composed of 6 to 12 people. After the incident, host families took in an average of 3 to 4 people from the same burnt houses, splitting up relatives among different host families due to the large number of family members.

Many of the houses and stores that burnt were constructed from local materials rather than cement. All the stores, which held the community's harvested food and reserves, were similarly built with local materials. The fire ravaged reserves of more than three hundred families as the community members usually have a common storage for their reserves. The report also revealed that affected households were rendered homeless, with vulnerable groups facing deteriorated living conditions and increased risk of hunger and health-related issues, underscoring the need for immediate support. Although not quantified, the assessment identified children, lactating women, pregnant women, the elderly, and people with disabilities among the homeless.

Host families, totaling 236 households, used their food reserves, shelter, and money to support the affected households. It was anticipated that by the time the affected households received support and returned to their homes, the host families would have become vulnerable, struggling to feed their own members due to depleted resources.

This incident severely disrupted the community's life balance, which was already strained by significant economic difficulties and rising prices. All small income routines and income-generating activities were destroyed by the fire. Immediate needs for the directly affected population included shelter, food, non-food items, and livelihood support, while host families urgently required food assistance.

By the end of the intervention, significant progress had been made in addressing the needs of the affected population. Over 2,000 people received vital support, including shelter and food, which helped stabilize their living conditions. Reconstruction efforts restored housing for the 413 people directly affected, while the provision of livelihood support enabled many to begin rebuilding their income sources. Host families, who had exhausted their resources to support displaced relatives, were given necessary food assistance to alleviate their vulnerability. This comprehensive response helped the community recover and regain some measure of stability.

National Society Actions

Have the National Society conducted any intervention additionally to those part of this DREF Operation?

No



Please provide a brief description of those additional activities

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IFRC Network Actions Related To The Current Event

Secretariat	<p>The IFRC has a country office in Freetown that covers Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea. The Cluster Office provided technical assistance to the RCSGB in carrying out its humanitarian mandate and supporting hard-to-reach areas. It coordinates support from IFRC membership to the National Society (NS), enhances the organization's development, and represents the NS internationally. From the onset of the response, the IFRC Country Delegation engaged with the NS leadership, supported the identification of areas of intervention, and defined roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>The IFRC Country Cluster Delegation organizes operational coordination meetings on a regular basis with the NS to stay updated on their response and support for the GO-Platform and the launch of a DREF, enabling the NS to provide humanitarian aid to the affected population.</p> <p>The IFRC Country Office in Freetown supported the Red Cross Society of Guinea Bissau throughout the implementation of the planned DREF activities, including deploying technical staff to support cash transfers, post-distribution monitoring, and the organization of a lessons-learned workshop.</p>
Participating National Societies	<p>No Partner National Societies (PNS) were present on the ground for this specific operation. Consequently, no direct contributions or roles were played by PNS either on the ground or remotely to support this specific response.</p>

ICRC Actions Related To The Current Event

The International Committee of the Red Cross does not have a presence in the country and did not provide any direct support for this emergency response.

Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

Government has requested international assistance	No
National authorities	<p>The Government, through the National Civil Protection Service and the Ministry of Family, Solidarity, and Social Cohesion, assessed the situation via the local government and supported resource mobilization efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to affected populations. At a national-level coordination meeting, local partners, community-based NGOs, UN-HABITAT, and humanitarian organizations, including the Red Cross, convened to aid the government in delivering humanitarian aid to the affected population. While a few political figures provided food items to some affected households, no additional support was provided by the government. However, the government coordinated closely with the Red Cross to ensure effective response efforts.</p>
UN or other actors	No UN agencies supported the response.

Are there major coordination mechanism in place?

The National Civil Protection Service and the Ministry of Family, Solidarity, and Social Cohesion provided overall leadership for emergency planning and response. This coordination platform facilitated needs assessment, prioritization, and targeting, as well as determining the nature of support for the affected population. Frequent meetings were held to mobilize resources and coordinate response actions effectively.



Needs (Gaps) Identified



Shelter Housing And Settlements

Shelter support was identified as an urgent need for families directly affected by the fire incident, which destroyed everything, leaving no settlements or household items intact. The fire left 59 households homeless, with 54 houses burnt (44 completely and 10 partially). This incident affected 413 people, who were then hosted by various families. On average, each household had 7 members, with some exceeding 10.

In total, 236 host families, amounting to 1,652 people, shared their homes with the displaced families. Altogether, the homeless and host families numbered 295, totaling 2,065 people in need. Besides shelter, basic household items were also necessary for the 59 households that lost their homes to the fire.

The precarious living conditions, homelessness, and overcrowding within host families posed significant risks to the health and well-being of both the homeless individuals and their host families. This underscores the critical necessity for immediate shelter support to mitigate these risks effectively.



Livelihoods And Basic Needs

The village primarily relies on agriculture, with some households, particularly those led by women, depending on petty trading for their livelihoods. The assessment highlighted that the fire had a devastating impact on local businesses, affecting both shop owners who lost their stores and farmers who lost seeds, crops, and essential materials. These losses were felt across the community, including host families who provided support to those displaced by the fire.

The destruction of goods, household items, and basic necessities compounded income challenges for affected households, exacerbating their already difficult conditions. Limited access to materials and crowded living houses further hampered their ability to maintain hygiene standards.

Host families generously provided food, shelter, and basic amenities to displaced households. However, as time passed and support was delayed, these host families themselves became vulnerable. Many were already stretched thin, with small food reserves and difficulty feeding their members.

Given the average household size in the affected community and the strain on host resources, it was clear that livelihood support, particularly in the form of cash assistance, was urgently needed. This support was crucial not only for directly affected households but also for host families who faced increased pressure on their resources. Without intervention, the entire community was at risk of facing nutritional shortages as resources were stretched to accommodate the displaced.

In summary, the need for livelihood support was justified by the severe impact of the fire on local businesses and agricultural activities, the strain on host families providing support, and the urgent need to prevent nutritional crises within the community.



Health

Following the fire incident, health needs identified during assessment included addressing the risk of opportunistic diseases and other health issues in the crowded and challenging conditions where displaced populations found themselves. The National Society responded by deploying 15 volunteers who provided essential rescue, first aid, and mental support to the affected communities.

The Red Cross of Guinea Bissau emphasized the importance of preserving the health and well-being of affected households. To mitigate the risk of water and vector-borne diseases such as malaria, and water-borne diseases like acute watery diarrhea and cholera outbreaks, the National Society implemented enhanced health and hygiene promotion practices.

The significant loss of belongings and sources of income had a profound impact on the mental health of the victims. Thus, there was a critical need for psychosocial support to help the affected communities effectively cope with these challenges.



Community Engagement And Accountability

Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) was mainstreamed throughout the intervention to guarantee meaningful participation from the affected communities. The primary cause of the loss of houses and living materials was identified as poor connection of battery



terminals and improper handling. Given the village's reliance on solar panels and batteries for electricity, engaging inhabitants in fire sensitization was crucial.

Volunteers were effectively trained to educate community members on where and how to establish innovative fire prevention methods. Additionally, participatory sessions with the community were conducted to plan evacuation routes and raise awareness to reduce the factors contributing to fire incidents.

An effective complaints and feedback mechanism was established to ensure that community feedback was incorporated into the implementation of the DREF. This mechanism will also be beneficial in the event of any changes in the situation, ensuring that the community's input is considered in any strategic adjustments.

Operational Strategy

Overall objective of the operation

The overall objective of this operation was to provide immediate basic assistance to address the urgent needs of 2,065 people (295 households) affected by the fire in Menegue Village. This was accomplished by providing urgent assistance to support shelter, Livelihood, urgent Basic Needs and EHI, and Health. Intervention was implemented for 04 months.

Operation strategy rationale

The response to the fire incident, facilitated through the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF), targeted 295 vulnerable households identified during assessments as homeless or facing severe food insecurity and livelihood challenges.

During the response, 20 volunteers from the RCSGB were trained in Psychological First Aid (PFA), Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), First Aid, and health promotion. These volunteers provided essential first aid and psychosocial support to affected families as needed.

To streamline assistance, the RCSGB partnered with a Financial Service Provider (FSP) to distribute planned cash allowances via mobile money. This approach was complemented by Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) to ensure effective use of cash, supported by community committees, volunteers, and NS staff.

Considering the NS had not implemented DREF in recent months, the IFRC Senior Operations Officer was deployed from the cluster to support the NS in the first month of operations. His mission ensured the NS understood and implemented the response strategy in line with DREF standards, including the development of a comprehensive action plan and monitoring tools.

Cash support was prioritized for its speed and dignity, with amounts determined based on minimum standards set by the National Civil Protection Service and Ministry of Family, Solidarity, and Social Cohesion. The NS distributed two cash installments:

- The first installment provided immediate recovery assistance to 59 homeless households for construction materials, totaling 196,380 XOF (CHF 300) per household, and 65,460 XOF (CHF 100) per household for other urgent needs.
- The second installment addressed basic needs for 259 affected households, providing 128,910 XOF (CHF 150) per household, based on assessed minimum requirements.

IFRC provided technical support throughout the cash interventions, including market monitoring to ensure funds aligned with local prices and needs.

In addition to immediate relief, sustainable actions were integrated into the response to enhance community resilience. This included fire incident management, prevention, and alert systems to empower the community in handling domestic crises. Environmental health practices and risk communication were emphasized, with targeted hygiene and fire prevention messages disseminated through community engagement and interactive discussions.

In essence, the NS response strategy aimed to foster lasting change by bolstering community awareness and readiness, promoting continuous education on health, hygiene, and fire safety. This proactive approach was designed to empower residents with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively mitigate future risks.

Targeting Strategy

Who was targeted by this operation?

Guinea Bissau extended support to 295 of the most vulnerable households affected by the fire incident. Selection and verification of beneficiaries prioritized households that had lost their homes, including those headed by women, families with special needs such as disabilities, elderly individuals, lactating mothers, pregnant women, and children under five years old. Additionally, host families were identified as a secondary group eligible for assistance through the DREF.



These criteria remained flexible and were continually reassessed based on unfolding circumstances, with validation provided by community committees. To ensure transparency and community engagement, stakeholders within the affected areas conducted meetings to discuss the Red Cross' proposed response options. This collaborative approach enabled community members to contribute their perspectives, validate operational strategies, and provide critical updates on evolving needs.

Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population

Guinea Bissau assisted 295 of the most vulnerable households based on clear selection criteria:

- Priority 1: This included 59 households severely affected by the fire, specifically those that lost their homes. They received immediate support such as shelter materials, food provisions, and unconditional cash assistance for essential household items.
- Priority 2: Another 236 households were identified as hosts or families that suffered losses in income, shops, or stores. They received livelihood support and assistance with food supplies.

The selection criteria were established to effectively target the most affected populations. The consultation process involved coordination with the government and the Red Cross, ensuring that the criteria addressed the urgent needs of those impacted by the fire.

While the operation could have accommodated adjustments based on assessments conducted, the initial selection criteria remained largely effective. There was no significant difference between the people reached and the expected people targeted for the defined households.

Total Targeted Population

Women	1,053	Rural	100%
Girls (under 18)	-	Urban	-
Men	1,012	People with disabilities (estimated)	-
Boys (under 18)	-		
Total targeted population	2,065		

Risk and Security Considerations

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

Risk	Mitigation action
The unstable nature of the economy of the country has the potential to cause inflation and frequent changes in prices that would affect planned activities	The RCSGB and IFRC cluster teams facilitated all processes and ensured the approval of this EPoA was issued in time to support rapid response
Inadequate communication with the target population. Not communicating beneficiary selection criteria and the date of transfer to beneficiaries will lead to high levels of community frustration and undermine the operations.	To mitigate this risk, RCSGB worked with the affected community to ensure that the NS reputation and trust with the community was protected from the onset.
The limited capacity of NS to implement DREF may affect effective implementation and possible integrity issues	The Cluster Delegation provided the required support to the NS throughout the response and deployed staff to guide the early implementation of the DREF, thus strengthening the NS's capacity and supporting implementation. Other monitoring and support missions were conducted by the cluster team during the DREF implementation.

Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation

The affected community members were exposed to security risks such as sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), looting, theft of assets, and armed robbery, among other criminal activities, which could have impacted this operation in several ways. Similarly, Red Cross teams were also exposed to these crimes and faced the potential threat of being attacked by the affected community if the support provided was deemed insufficient.

To mitigate such incidents during the operation, all security measures of both the Movement and the Government were strictly adhered to by all volunteers and staff involved in the operation to reduce risks. The security management for this operation was based on the RCRC's Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values. Additionally, the following security-related actions were implemented:

- Respecting visibility rules by wearing jackets and maintaining regular communication on all movements.
- Ensuring community engagement to provide clear explanations of the role of the Red Cross, the support being provided, and the beneficiary selection criteria. This approach followed the learnings from previous operations.
- Organizing regular briefings to remind volunteers about personal security and safety. All engaged staff members and the 20 volunteers involved in the response completed the Stay Safe 2.0 Global Edition-level 2 to be briefed on the framework of safer access.
- Ensuring security assessment and monitoring of security risks were conducted by the operation coordinator with the support of IFRC.

Implementation



Shelter Housing And Settlements

Budget: CHF 26,057

Targeted Persons: 413

Assisted Persons: 413

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
Number of Households confirm receiving the cash for construction	59	59
Percentage of HH reported having used the cash for reconstruction of their home	95	96
Number of community committee meetings held to discuss and support shelter reconstruction	8	7
Number of PDM conducted	1	1

Narrative description of achievements

- **Market Analysis and Monitoring of Construction Material Prices:** Market analysis and monitoring of construction material prices were conducted. During the four months of operations, there were no significant price changes affecting the budgeted amount for shelter support. Consequently, there was no need for further budget revision to align with price changes for reconstruction materials.
- **Financial Service Provider (FSP) Identification and Contract Renewal:** A thorough procurement process was conducted to select a suitable Financial Service Provider (FSP) for cash transfers supporting shelter reconstruction. Contracts were signed with Orange, leveraging the previous MDRGW003 contract as a reference to ensure continuity and efficiency in financial transactions.
- **Development and Signing of Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs):** Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) were developed and signed with the service provider, establishing a clear operational framework. This streamlined activities, ensured adherence to established standards, and significantly enhanced the efficiency of the intervention.
- **Beneficiary Registration and Verification:** A robust registration and verification process was implemented to confirm beneficiary eligibility and ensure transparent, fair distribution of assistance. This maintained the integrity of the intervention and ensured aid effectively reached those most in need.
- **Training of Volunteers in Cash Management:** Volunteers received training in cash management, enhancing their ability to support community engagement and distribute cash assistance effectively. This training was crucial for the successful implementation of the cash assistance program.



- Community Engagement and Sensitization: Community group discussions and meetings facilitated active engagement and sensitization regarding the assistance provided. These interactions addressed community concerns and garnered strong support for the cash approach, ensuring the successful implementation of aid.
- Conditional Cash Transfer for Procurement of Building Materials: Conditional cash transfers amounting to OXF 196,383 per household were provided to 59 households, enabling them to acquire essential building materials. This support was instrumental in the reconstruction of homes damaged by the fire incident, significantly aiding affected families in rebuilding their homes and restoring their lives.
- Monitoring of Cash Use by Volunteers: Volunteers conducted regular monitoring in assisted communities to ensure that the cash provided was utilized as intended. This oversight verified the effective use of funds and upheld accountability within the program.
- Technical Support from IFRC: Three technical support missions were held by the IFRC Country Cluster Delegation in Freetown: initial guidance on operational strategy and activities, support for cash transfer processes, and assistance with post-distribution monitoring and lessons learned. These visits ensured the intervention was aligned with required standards and best practices.
- Post-Distribution Monitoring Survey: A post-distribution monitoring survey assessed the impact of the cash assistance. Key findings included that 91.4% of respondents felt cash provision was the most dignified approach, 96% of supported households used the cash as intended for home reconstruction, and 82.5% expressed satisfaction with the timeliness and availability of the assistance.

Lessons Learnt

- Providing cash to beneficiaries to purchase items and rebuild their damaged homes is a more dignified approach compared to procuring and distributing items directly.
- Establishing community committees and regularly updating them on the types of assistance and selection criteria proved effective in addressing concerns and challenges during the registration process. The active participation of key community members was crucial in clarifying the selection process to others, thereby enhancing trust and confidence in the overall response efforts.

Challenges

None



Livelihoods And Basic Needs

Budget: CHF 44,683

Targeted Persons: 2,065

Assisted Persons: 2,065

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
Number of HHs supported with cash for livelihoods	295	295
Number of PDM conducted	1	1

Narrative description of achievements

- Monitoring of Market Prices: To ensure that the cash assistance provided did not lead to inflation or price gouging in local markets, regular monitoring of market prices was conducted before and after the cash distribution. Data on the prices of essential goods and services were collected and analyzed to track any significant changes. The monitoring revealed that there were no significant price changes during the response, and the minor changes experienced did not impact the planned amount of cash and items to be procured by the targeted households. Continuous market monitoring ensured that the cash assistance was sufficient to meet beneficiaries' needs without adversely affecting the local economy, maintaining economic stability.
- Provision of Cash to 295 Households as Support for Livelihood: In response to the fire incident, a total of 295 households, including both directly impacted and host households, received a one-off cash transfer of OXF 98,191 per household. This support aimed to provide immediate financial assistance to alleviate the loss of items, meet food needs, and improve living conditions. The households benefiting from this support included: 59 households directly affected by the fire and 236 host households. The cash transfer was based on a comprehensive needs assessment designed to address immediate necessities and support recovery efforts. This assistance provided immediate financial relief, enabling the affected households to recover from the impact of the fire incident effectively. Post-distribution

monitoring revealed high levels of satisfaction among beneficiaries, highlighting the positive impact of the intervention and providing valuable feedback for future initiatives.

Lessons Learnt

- Collaboration with local stakeholders and FSPs facilitate better coordination and efficiency in cash distribution.
- Training for volunteers in cash distribution, community engagement, and safeguarding was essential. Refresher courses can maintain high standards of service.
- Providing cash instead of in-kind support empowered beneficiaries to make decisions based on their unique needs, fostering dignity and self-reliance.
- Conducting PDM shortly after cash distribution provided immediate feedback on the intervention's effectiveness and areas for improvement.
- Involving community members in the decision-making process built trust and ensured that interventions were tailored to meet their specific needs.

Challenges

- Despite efforts to involve the community and ensure accountability, some households that did not meet the eligibility criteria felt neglected. This led to feelings of exclusion and dissatisfaction, potentially undermining community trust in the response efforts.
- Instances of unauthorized individuals attempting to impersonate legitimate beneficiaries were reported. These attempts posed a risk to the integrity of the cash distribution process. However, distribution sites were efficiently managed, and a robust verification process, supported by community stakeholders and security personnel, successfully thwarted these fraudulent attempts.
- Managing the logistics of distributing cash to 295 households, including the travel of financial service provider (FSP) agents, was challenging. The logistical complexities caused delays in the distribution process and required additional resources and coordination to ensure all households received their cash assistance.
- Conducting thorough post-distribution monitoring within a limited timeframe presented logistical challenges, including data collection and analysis. Limited monitoring might have prevented a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of cash assistance and the identification of areas requiring further support or intervention.



Multi Purpose Cash

Budget: CHF 6,608

Targeted Persons: 413

Assisted Persons: 413

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
Number of assessments conducted	1	1
Number of volunteers trained and engaged in cash activities	20	20
Number of households receiving unconditional cash assistance	59	59
Number of PDM conducted	1	1

Narrative description of achievements

- Registration and verification of beneficiaries: beneficiary registration and verification processes were systematically conducted to uphold transparency and accountability in beneficiary selection. All eligible households underwent thorough registration, ensuring their information was verified to prevent any duplication of benefits.
- Assessment and selection of Financial Service Providers (FSPs) and signing MoU: a comprehensive assessment was undertaken to identify suitable FSPs for cash disbursement, considering factors like reliability, accessibility, and security. Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) were then signed with selected FSPs, outlining roles, responsibilities, and terms of engagement.
- Unconditional cash transfer: In response to the fire incident, the RCSGB provided unconditional cash grants totaling OXF 65,460 to 59

households. This support was crucial in helping families restore their livelihoods. The grant amount was carefully determined based on a rapid market assessment of the current food basket calculation in Guinea Bissau for one month, ensuring that the assistance met immediate nutritional needs effectively. Additionally, an information session was conducted for 20 volunteers involved in the cash distribution process. This training equipped them with the necessary knowledge to guide and raise awareness among the targeted families on proper cash utilization according to IFRC guidelines. The impact of these efforts was significant, as it not only provided immediate relief but also empowered the affected households with the resources and knowledge to rebuild their lives more sustainably

- Post distribution monitoring of cash: Two weeks post-cash distribution, a survey was conducted targeting 50% of beneficiary households to monitor the impact of the assistance. Volunteers underwent a one-day orientation before data collection. Results analysis revealed high satisfaction levels (94.2%) among beneficiaries, who used the cash to restart businesses. The assistance facilitated improved health conditions for over 86% of recipients and reduced stress levels for 61%. However, 39% of households resorted to negative coping strategies, indicating lingering unmet needs. Despite this, cash assistance was deemed efficient, as it enabled beneficiaries to seek medical attention.

Lessons Learnt

- Implementing effective community engagement and accountability enhances community understanding of relief assistance and selection criteria, increasing their participation. For sustainability, future response should also ensure communities must lead disaster response efforts to ensure effectiveness and relevance.
- Providing cash transfers to affected households facilitates their recovery based on their unique needs, restoring their dignity. This approach empowers them to determine essential priorities for their families and contributes to market recovery, this should also be considered in future response to fire incident
- Maintaining clear and timely communication with all stakeholders, including beneficiaries, volunteers, and partner organizations, is crucial for successful response activities. It was learned that accessible information prevents misunderstandings and promotes collaboration.
- Engaging the affected community throughout the response process builds trust, enhances participation, and ensures interventions meet their specific needs. It was also learned that, involving community members in decision-making processes promotes ownership and sustainability of response efforts.
- Coordinating and collaborating among all response partners streamline efforts, prevent duplication, and maximize resources. Clear roles, responsibilities, and communication channels facilitate smooth collaboration and ensure a cohesive response. This approach should be replicated in future response to fire incident.
- Regular monitoring and evaluation of response activities identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. Collecting feedback from beneficiaries and stakeholders informs decision-making for future response efforts and ensures impact assessment.
- Building resilience and ensuring sustainable recovery requires long-term planning and investment beyond the immediate response phase. Integrating recovery and preparedness activities into response efforts addresses vulnerabilities and builds community resilience to future disasters.

Challenges

Despite efforts by the Red Cross to involve the community and ensure accountability, some households that did not meet the eligibility criteria felt neglected. Additionally, there were instances of unauthorized individuals attempting to impersonate legitimate beneficiaries. However, the distribution sites were efficiently managed, and a robust verification process, supported by community stakeholders and security personnel, successfully thwarted these fraudulent attempts.



Budget: CHF 5,163

Targeted Persons: 2,065

Assisted Persons: 2,065

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of volunteers trained in first Aid, PSS, CEA and safeguarding	20	20
# of PSS sessions conducted	8	8

# of affected HHs provided with PSS	59	59
# of people in affected community reached through health promotion	2,065	2,065

Narrative description of achievements

- Training of volunteers: a total of 20 volunteers underwent comprehensive training in various critical areas to enhance their capacity to respond to the fire incident. The training encompassed Psychosocial Support (PSS), First Aid, Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), and Safeguarding. Volunteers were equipped with essential skills to provide psychosocial support to those affected, offer first-aid assistance, engage effectively with the community, and ensure the safety of vulnerable individuals.
- Provision of psychosocial support: the trained volunteers played a pivotal role in providing psychosocial support to affected families. Recognizing the trauma and stress caused by the fire, volunteers extended emotional assistance during the first month of the operation. The provision of PSS support was preceded by a one-day training session dedicated to preparing volunteers for this crucial activity.
- Hygiene and sanitation campaigns: to address the cleanliness and safety concerns of the community, a series of hygiene and sanitation campaigns were organized. Over three months, 20 trained volunteers conducted six campaigns, focusing on removing debris from public spaces and water sources, as well as promoting hygiene practices. These efforts aimed to mitigate disease outbreaks and ensure the overall well-being of the community.
- Health prevention awareness: Health prevention awareness campaigns were led by trained volunteers, targeting the prevention of water-borne diseases and malaria. Educational sessions were conducted to impart knowledge on disease prevention measures, accompanied by the distribution of informative materials to community members. Additionally, volunteers actively engaged with the community to address concerns and provide practical advice on maintaining health.

Lessons Learnt

- The comprehensive training in Psychosocial Support (PSS), First Aid, Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), and safeguarding ensured that volunteers were well-prepared and capable of effectively supporting the affected community. Future training programs should maintain a similar breadth and depth to equip volunteers with diverse skills. Regular refresher courses are essential to keep volunteers' skills up to date and enhance their readiness for future response efforts.
- Providing immediate psychosocial support significantly alleviated stress and improved mental well-being among affected individuals. Incorporating PSS as a core component of disaster response plans is crucial. Future response to fire incident to ensure volunteers are trained not only in providing support but also in recognizing signs of severe distress that may require professional intervention.
- Regular hygiene and sanitation campaigns effectively maintained a clean environment and prevented disease outbreaks. Increasing the frequency and scope of campaigns in the initial weeks following a disaster is advisable. It was learned that, collaborating with local authorities and community members can enhance efficiency and coverage of such campaigns.
- Health prevention awareness campaigns successfully educated the community on preventing water-borne diseases and malaria. In future response, deploying additional volunteers for health prevention awareness can ensure comprehensive coverage. Utilizing diverse communication channels, such as local radio and social media, can extend the reach of these campaigns to a wider audience.
- Engaging the community and establishing feedback systems were critical in building trust and ensuring the response met their needs. Future response should also prioritize community engagement and feedback mechanisms in all response activities. Regular updates to the community based on their feedback can enhance transparency and responsiveness.
- Strengthening coordination mechanisms and communication plans ensured all stakeholders were aligned. In future response, maintaining regular coordination meetings and updates can help in addressing challenges and making timely decisions. Clear communication channels are vital for effective collaboration among stakeholders.

Challenges

There were no significant challenges encountered during the execution of the intended tasks.



Community Engagement And Accountability

Budget: CHF 2,177

Targeted Persons: 2,065

Assisted Persons: 2,065

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
Number of feedback mechanism set-up in affected communities	1	1
Number of people confirming they understand factor risk of fire incident in their communities and way to prevent	1,500	1,618
Percentage of households sensitised on fire prevention practice	100	100
Number of volunteer trained on CEA-RCCE	20	20
Percentage of feedback collected during the awareness, PDM and other activities which are treated	100	100

Narrative description of achievements

- Training of volunteers in RCCE Messaging: Volunteers were trained in Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) messaging on fire prevention and health risks. This training aimed to equip volunteers with the knowledge and skills to effectively communicate important safety and health information to the community.
- Community Stakeholder Meetings: meetings were held with affected community stakeholders and the target population to engage them on health prevention practices against waterborne diseases and other good practices. These meetings served as a platform for discussing health risks and prevention strategies.
- Community conversations on fire education: community conversations were conducted to emphasize the importance of fire education in preventing future incidents. Discussions included topics on fire prevention and appropriate reactions to fire incidents within the community. These conversations aimed to build a collective understanding and proactive approach towards fire safety.
- Door-to-Door fire prevention awareness: volunteers conducted door-to-door visits in the affected community to raise awareness about fire prevention. These visits ensured that all community members had a uniform understanding of fire risk factors and prevention methods.
- Complaints and feedback mechanism: an effective complaints and feedback mechanism was established to ensure community feedback was considered in the intervention's implementation. This mechanism was designed to collect, analyze, and respond to community concerns and suggestions.
- Community preferences on feedback system: during initial meetings with community leaders and affected households, preferences for the feedback and complaint mechanism were collected. This step was crucial to understanding the best communication channels and the community's preferences. Based on these discussions, a suitable feedback mechanism was chosen, aligning with the community's needs and agreements.
- Engagement in community meetings: volunteers engaged with community and household heads during meetings to provide clear explanations of the Red Cross' role, the support being provided, and the beneficiary selection criteria. Clear communication channels and information about the National Society's interventions were communicated effectively.
- Face-to-Face communication: given that the communities are primarily reachable through face-to-face interactions, most exchanges and communications were conducted through volunteers. Initial feedback was collected by volunteers, who ensured that the information and complaints were relayed to the operation's focal point and team for appropriate action.
- Feedback collection and analysis: Feedback collected from Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) surveys and other interactions was analyzed proactively. This analysis informed actions and operational adjustments, ensuring that the intervention remained responsive to the community's needs and feedback.

Lessons Learnt

- Engaging community members and leaders from the beginning was crucial. Their active participation in decision-making processes, especially regarding the selection criteria for beneficiaries and the type of assistance provided, enhanced transparency and trust.
- Understanding and adapting to the preferred communication channels of the community improved the effectiveness of information dissemination and feedback collection.
- Providing cash to beneficiaries for purchasing items and rebuilding their homes was found to be more dignified and empowering compared to distributing procured items. Beneficiaries appreciated the flexibility and autonomy this approach offered.
- The economic crisis and rising inflation posed challenges, as the cash provided was insufficient to cover all reconstruction needs. Future interventions may need to consider these factors more carefully to ensure adequacy.
- Training volunteers in Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) was effective in ensuring consistent and accurate



messaging on fire prevention and health risks. Future responses should also utilize community-based volunteers who are trusted sources of information within their communities.

- Clear explanations of the role of the Red Cross and the support being provided helped reduce confusion and ensured that the community understood the purpose and limitations of the assistance.
- Setting up an effective complaints and feedback mechanism was essential for addressing community concerns and improving the intervention. Collecting feedback during initial meetings helped tailor the mechanism to community preferences. Future interventions should also utilize a feedback system.
- Community conversations about fire education played a key role in raising awareness about prevention and appropriate reactions to fire incidents. These discussions were critical in fostering a proactive approach to fire safety. Future responses should also integrate community awareness-raising on fire prevention measures.
- Door-to-door visits by volunteers ensured that fire prevention messages reached all community members. Future responses should also adopt this personalized approach, which was effective in building a uniform understanding of fire risks and prevention methods.
- Implementing digital registration and verification systems streamlined the process, reduced errors, and sped up the verification process. Engaging community committees in the registration process leveraged local knowledge and enhanced the accuracy and acceptance of the beneficiary list. Future responses should also utilize digital systems for effectiveness.

Challenges

- Rising inflation and economic crisis impacted the sufficiency of cash assistance provided to beneficiaries, as the amount was not enough to cover all reconstruction needs. Future interventions should consider economic conditions more thoroughly to ensure the adequacy of financial assistance.
- Due to the magnitude and consequences of the fire incident, the number of volunteers involved in promoting health and raising awareness about fire prevention was limited. While the planned sessions were successfully conducted, having more volunteers could have helped disseminate fire prevention messages more effectively across the entire community, rather than just the areas directly affected by the incident and nearby neighborhoods.



Secretariat Services

Budget: CHF 22,791

Targeted Persons: 3

Assisted Persons: 3

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
Number of lesson learnt supported	1	1
Number of IFRC support mission conducted	3	3

Narrative description of achievements

- IFRC Monitoring Visit for Technical Support: The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) conducted a monitoring visit to provide technical support to the NS. This visit aimed to ensure the NS had the necessary guidance and resources to manage the response operations effectively.
- Regular security briefings for IFRC staff: regular security briefings were conducted for IFRC staff to ensure their safety and preparedness during the operation. These briefings included updates on potential risks and safety protocols to mitigate any threats.
- Briefing on Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) and protection: staff received briefings on Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) and protection. These briefings aimed to equip the team with the knowledge and skills to engage with the community effectively, ensuring that their needs and concerns were addressed throughout the response.
- Community engagement methods: methods were implemented to engage the community throughout the response, from targeting to implementation. This approach ensured that the community was involved in decision-making processes, enhancing transparency and trust in the operation.
- Establishment of community feedback systems: community feedback systems, including mechanisms for tracking rumors and perceptions, were established. These systems allowed for the collection and analysis of community feedback, which was then used to make improvements to the operation. Acting upon this feedback helped to address community concerns and adjust strategies as needed.
- DREF lessons learned workshop: DREF lessons learned workshop was held to review the response activities and identify areas for



improvement. Participants included staff and volunteers who were involved in the response, and the workshop provided an opportunity to discuss challenges, successes, and best practices. Key Lessons from the workshop have been summarized under each thematic area.

Lessons Learnt

- Key Lessons from the workshop have been summarized under each thematic area

Challenges

There were no significant challenges encountered during the execution of the intended tasks.



Budget: CHF 8,876

Targeted Persons: 20

Assisted Persons: 20

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
Number of staff engaged to support as DM	1	1
Number of volunteers provided briefing on intervention critical skills, safety and code of conduct	20	20
Number of volunteers deployed	20	20
Number of volunteers insured	20	20

Narrative description of achievements

- Briefings for volunteers: volunteers received complete briefings on their roles and the risks they might face during their duties. Later on, regular reminders were made through phone calls and meetings, ensuring that volunteers were well-informed and prepared for their weekly tasks.
- Insurance coverage: all volunteers involved in the operation were insured. This step was taken to provide financial protection and support in case of any accidents or injuries during the execution of their duties.
- Awareness of rights and responsibilities: efforts were made to ensure that all volunteers were fully aware of their rights and responsibilities. This information was communicated during initial briefings and reinforced through regular updates, ensuring volunteers understood their entitlements and obligations.
- Ensuring volunteer safety and wellbeing: volunteer safety and wellbeing were prioritized throughout the operation. Measures included regular security briefings, provision of necessary equipment, and ensuring a safe working environment. Volunteers were encouraged to voice any concerns about their safety and wellbeing.
- Proper training for volunteers: volunteers received proper training relevant to their roles in the operation. Training sessions covered various aspects, including fire prevention, health risk communication, and community engagement, equipping volunteers with the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their duties effectively.
- Provision of Personal protective equipment: personal protective equipment and visibility gear were provided to all volunteers and staff. This included items such as reflective vests, gloves, masks, and other necessary protective gear to ensure their safety while performing their tasks.

Lessons Learnt

- It is imperative to adhere to the DREF action plan to ensure efficient service delivery.
- Comprehensive briefings are essential for ensuring volunteers understand their roles, risks, and responsibilities. Regular updates through meetings and phone calls kept volunteers informed and prepared.
- Prioritize the training of volunteers before engaging them in community activities and acknowledge their valuable contributions.



- Proper training tailored to the specific roles of volunteers is essential for effective performance. Training on fire prevention, health risk communication, and community engagement proved beneficial.
- Prioritizing volunteer safety and well-being is critical. Regular security briefings and a focus on creating a safe working environment were effective in addressing volunteers' concerns.
- Insurance coverage is crucial for the protection and peace of mind of volunteers. It provides financial support in case of accidents or injuries, ensuring that volunteers feel secure in their roles.

Challenges

There were no significant challenges encountered during the execution of the planned tasks.



Contact Information

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DREF Operation

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2023/1-24/4	Operation	MDRGW004
Budget Timeframe	2023/1-5	Budget	APPROVED

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Prepared on 28/May/2024

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRGW004 - Guinea Bissau - Fire incident Menegue

Operating Timeframe: 29 Jan 2023 to 31 May 2023

I. Summary

Opening Balance	0
Funds & Other Income	116,357
DREF Response Pillar	116,357
Expenditure	-103,582
Closing Balance	12,775

II. Expenditure by planned operations / enabling approaches

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
PO01 - Shelter and Basic Household Items	116,357	31,679	84,677
PO02 - Livelihoods		47,630	-47,630
PO03 - Multi-purpose Cash		7,291	-7,291
PO04 - Health		5,090	-5,090
PO05 - Water, Sanitation & Hygiene			0
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		1,981	-1,981
PO11 - Environmental Sustainability			0
Planned Operations Total	116,357	93,671	22,685
EA01 - Coordination and Partnerships		6,752	-6,752
EA02 - Secretariat Services		1,905	-1,905
EA03 - National Society Strengthening		1,254	-1,254
Enabling Approaches Total		9,911	-9,911
Grand Total	116,357	103,582	12,774

DREF Operation

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2023/1-24/4	Operation	MDRGW004
Budget Timeframe	2023/1-5	Budget	APPROVED

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Prepared on 28/May/2024

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRGW004 - Guinea Bissau - Fire incident Menegue

Operating Timeframe: 29 Jan 2023 to 31 May 2023

III. Expenditure by budget category & group

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
Relief items, Construction, Supplies	85,015	43,533	41,482
Shelter - Relief	41,956		41,956
Construction - Housing	16,994		16,994
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	4,848		4,848
Teaching Materials	14,306		14,306
Cash Disbursement	6,910	43,533	-36,623
Logistics, Transport & Storage		522	-522
Transport & Vehicles Costs		522	-522
Personnel	2,450	35,648	-33,197
National Staff	692		692
National Society Staff	1,269	8,171	-6,902
Volunteers	489	27,477	-26,988
Workshops & Training	3,715	5,789	-2,074
Workshops & Training	3,715	5,789	-2,074
General Expenditure	18,074	11,769	6,305
Travel	10,998	13,879	-2,881
Office Costs	705	446	259
Communications		381	-381
Financial Charges	833	-2,938	3,771
Other General Expenses	5,538		5,538
Indirect Costs	7,102	6,322	780
Programme & Services Support Recover	7,102	6,322	780
Grand Total	116,357	103,582	12,774