



Armenian Red Cross Society volunteer conducting needs assessment. Photo credit: ARCS/IFRC

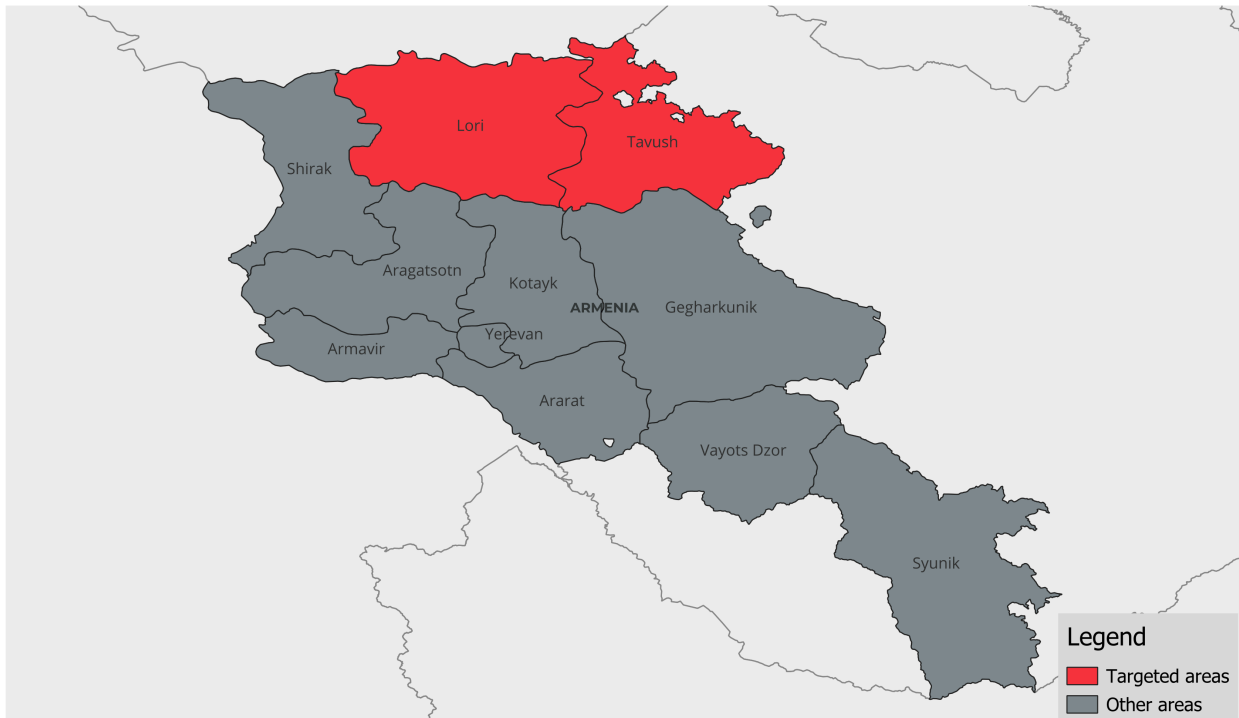
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|--|--|--|---|
| Appeal:<br><b>MDRAM011</b>                 | Total DREF Allocation:<br><b>CHF 386,194</b> | Crisis Category:<br><b>Yellow</b>          | Hazard:<br><b>Other</b>                       |
| Glide Number:<br><b>ST-2023-000106-ARM</b> | People Affected:<br><b>18,000 people</b>     | People Targeted:<br><b>4,120 people</b>    |   |
| Event Onset:<br><b>Slow</b>                | Operation Start Date:<br><b>29-06-2023</b>   | Operational End Date:<br><b>31-12-2023</b> | Total Operating Timeframe:<br><b>6 months</b> |
| Targeted Areas: <b>Lori, Tavush</b>        |  |  |   |

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, Germany, 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

## Armenia: Hailstorm

June 2023



The maps used do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies or National Societies concerning the legal status of a territory or of its authorities.

Map data sources: GADM, IFRC. Map produced by: IFRC Europe Region Office, Budapest.

Map of areas targeted by the DREF Operation.

## Date when the trigger was met

02-08-2023

## What happened, where and when?

In June 2023, severe hailstorms struck various regions of Armenia, causing extensive damage and disruption. On 15 June 2023, the South region, particularly rural communities near the border, experienced heavy precipitation. This overwhelmed sewage systems, flooded streets and houses and rendered roads and bridges impassable. The hail and subsequent flooding resulted in significant damage to houses, livestock, gardens, and food stocks.

The hailstorm significantly impacted four regions of Armenia: Syunik, Shirak, Lori, and Tavush. On 18 June, Gyumri and neighbouring villages in the Shirak region were hit by a hailstorm, followed by heavy rainfall in Ijevan and neighboring villages in the Tavush region on 19 June. The Tavush Regional Rescue Department Crisis Management Center received numerous alerts on 19 June, reporting significant damage caused by heavy rain, hail, and wind in Ijevan, Tavush. Uprooted trees, flooded roads and buildings, damaged roofs, and disruptions in power and gas supply networks were observed. Crop gardens and fields were also affected, leading to accidents in utility and energy systems. Committees were formed in the municipalities of Tavush Marz and Ijevan to assess the extent of the damage. Additionally, the Lori region experienced another wave of heavy rain on 19 and 20 June, affecting rural areas near the town of Stepanavan. On 2 August, heavy hail caused damage to the houses in the Alaverdi community. These events led to road destruction, electricity and water supply disruptions, and other infrastructure damage. The damage caused by the storms exacerbated the vulnerabilities of some population groups, particularly in communities already burdened by earlier conflict escalations and their aftermath.

The Armenian government, regional authorities, local rescue services, and municipalities worked diligently to restore energy and water supply and reconstruct roads and bridges. Vulnerable population groups sought urgent assistance for basic needs such as food and household items to cope with the restoration of houses and recovery of agricultural activities.



As an auxiliary to the authorities in humanitarian situations, the Armenia Red Cross Society (ARCS) stepped in to assess and plan the response to the immediate needs of particularly vulnerable populations. As an immediate step, ARCS conducted an initial assessment of the damage experienced by the affected households and its effects on their livelihoods. The initial data collected by the ARCS revealed that nearly half of the rural families expressed concerns about meeting their essential livelihood needs as they strove to resume their main income-generating activities. The study found out of the affected 18,000 people more than 3,000 people residing in about 750 households in Alaverdi, Lori, and Tavush regions in need of immediate assistance. As for the extent of the damage, farming, the primary source of income and subsistence for the majority of rural households, was severely disrupted, further increasing their vulnerability in terms of food security and livelihoods in the coming months. Many villagers have debts, relying on the harvest season to repay them. Although the government introduced an insurance scheme for farmers, only a few have insured their crops, and the compensation amounts are often insufficient. Certain crops, such as beans, basil, and cumin, are not eligible for insurance coverage. The study found that among the affected households, the most vulnerable are those whose houses were significantly damaged by flooding and required additional support to restore dignified living conditions.



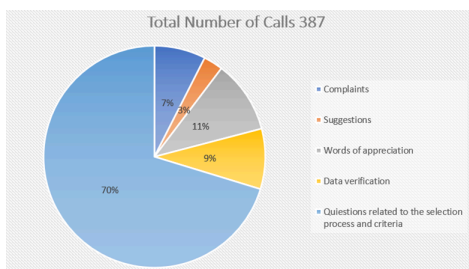
The photo displays a severely damaged car by the hail. Photo credit: Municipality.



A road covered by hail. Photo credit: Municipality.



A house damaged by the storm: Photo credit: ARCS



Visualization of feedback distribution received through ARCS helpline in August 2023. Credit: ARCS

## Scope and Scale

The June 2023 hailstorms have significantly impacted four regions of Armenia: Syunik, Shirak, Lori, and Tavush. In total, 18,000 people were affected, of which ARCS assessment identified more than 3,000 in need of immediate assistance. When inquiring about the damage and effects of the disaster on the household's livelihood stability, ARCS found that 80 per cent of the families expressed concerns about meeting their essential livelihood needs as they faced significant house damage (80 per cent) and more than 75 per cent agricultural loss. The negative effect of the disruption of agricultural activities is more visible in light of the overall statistics of people's reliance on agricultural produce in the affected regions. More than 80 per cent of surveyed ARCS families rely on income from agricultural activities. An additional 33 per cent mentioned seasonal work as a source of irregular income, and 20 per cent reported they generate some income from private activities.

Armenia is a landlocked country in the geopolitical South Caucasus region, with a total population of 2.9 million people (2021), with over

12 percent aged over 65. The republic consists of 10 regions called "Marzes" and the capital city of Yerevan, which has the status of a Marz. The whole country is a high-risk zone area, with 100 percent of Armenian territory prone to natural disasters and exposed to various hazards, both natural and conflict, on border disputed areas. Agriculture remains a significant income-generating activity for 24 per cent of the total workforce in the country. In addition, 26 per cent of the population lives below the national poverty line. These factors combined make a significant portion of the population extremely vulnerable to the aftermaths of natural and manmade disasters, which, in many cases, exacerbate already existing multiple vulnerabilities in the same households.

Although the storms affected several hundred households across four regions, the impact on each household was severe due to preexisting socio-economic vulnerabilities. These households faced significant challenges to their livelihood security. The storms exacerbated existing hardships, leading to dire consequences for those already struggling with limited resources and support.

## 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                                       | -  |

## IFRC Network Actions Related To The Current Event

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Secretariat | <p>IFRC has been present in the South Caucasus region, including through a Country Delegation in Armenia since 1992 with large-scale humanitarian assistance. Currently, IFRC has a Country Cluster Delegation for the South Caucasus based in Tbilisi, Georgia, to support the three Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies in Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia. A full-fledged IFRC country office is maintained in Armenia, providing direct support to the Armenian Red Cross Society through DREF allocations and the resources generated through the Armenia - 2023 IFRC Network Country Plan, through sectoral expertise of Operations and Programmes Manager, Disaster Management, Logistics Expert, Communications, Community Engagement and Accountability, Education in Emergencies, Health, Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER), Cash and Voucher Assistance, and Information Management to support capturing and analyzing the situation and needs continuously.</p> <p>Armenia is one of the 14 countries globally who has been piloting the New Way of Working (NWoW), and a Country Coordination Team has been formed since early 2022. In contrast, a Federation-wide member with ARCS in the center has a joint effort to implement the Armenia - 2023 IFRC Network Country Plan whenever a collective movement emergency response is deemed necessary. Moreover, all Movement partners in the South Caucasus have agreed to work together in the spirit and mindset of the Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation (SMCC) agreement, with the Council of Delegates Resolution (CD/17/R1, Antalya 2017) as a core guiding document. Partner National Societies are not involved in the current operation.</p> <p>Since September 2023, Armenia has seen a significant influx of people due to the escalation of hostilities. A total of 115,251 individuals have arrived and been registered in Armenia, with approximately 70 per cent settling in the capital region, including Yerevan, and surrounding districts. By November 2023, ARCS had registered the needs of 14,266 individuals, representing a total of 65,166 family members, through various channels, including its helpline and branch offices. Deploying approximately 1,500 volunteers and staff, the ARCS has been providing critical assistance, reaching over 84,500 affected individuals. An IFRC Network Emergency Appeal for CHF 20 million (CHF 15 million IFRC Secretariat funding ask) was launching, supporting an Operational Strategy which includes support by the distribution of basic household items, multi-purpose cash, livelihoods support, continued mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), and education services for both children and parents in child-friendly spaces.</p> |
|-------------|--|



### Participating National Societies

Partner National Societies, including the Swiss and Austrian Red Cross, are present in Armenia, based in Yerevan. Italian Red Cross has a delegation based in Tbilisi, Georgia, covering both Armenia and Georgia. It provides technical support and guidance to the Armenia Red Cross from its headquarters and frequent visits to the country. Monaco Red Cross provides its support via the Swiss Red Cross.

## ICRC Actions Related To The Current Event

The ICRC has been partnering consistently with the ARCS since its presence in 1992. Since 2020 it has further enhanced support in the areas of communication, Restoring Family Links (RFL), disaster management, dead body management, first aid, preparedness for emergency response, access to education, weapon contamination, and significantly strengthening the capacities of the regional and community branches in the escalations affected areas. In response to the escalations in September 2020 and September 2023, ICRC provided services within their mandate as a co-convener to ARCS.

## Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Government has requested international assistance | No   |
| National authorities                              | The national rescue services department led rescue operations during the initial days of the emergency to restore critical infrastructure affected by the climate hazard. The local authorities have also mobilized personnel for the "Unified Social Service Department" and established committees in respective municipalities to be closer to the affected people. These committees collected information on essential needs and infrastructure conditions and coordinated rescue operations. They have also set up a registration system for people to report damages from the hailstorm and subsequent flooding. |
| UN or other actors                                | No action has been reported by UN agencies and other actors in response to the current disaster.   |

### Are there major coordination mechanism in place?

Local administration coordinates activities in the affected region during natural disasters. In all three affected areas, local administration has established committees to monitor, assess, and coordinate community response activities. Municipalities control the reconstruction of roads and bridges and the recovery of water and energy supply.

## Needs (Gaps) Identified



### Shelter Housing And Settlements

Eighty per cent of the ARCS surveyed households reported damage. The survey found that support was necessary to repair damaged homes, replace bedding, and restore essential household items.



### Livelihoods And Basic Needs

Support for livelihoods and basic needs was identified as critical due to the recent disaster and the preexisting high vulnerability faced by the communities, which has been compounded by multiple hazards and regional conflict. These communities have been grappling with challenges that have severely impacted their income generation, particularly in the agriculture sector, which has faced significant setbacks.

The hailstorm has worsened the situation for these vulnerable communities, causing losses in homes, agricultural plots, and livestock, which has had dire consequences for their livelihoods and food production. 80 per cent of the homes and 75 per cent of agriculture plots



were reported damaged by the affected.

The ARCS initial assessment revealed that 76 per cent of the households in the sample were registered in a social system as vulnerable, indicating a higher susceptibility to socio-economic hardships. Additionally, 54 per cent of the households depend solely on income from pensions or social sources, making it more difficult for them to recover from the financial impact of a hailstorm. Almost 95 per cent of families reported they needed cash to recover from the disaster, renovate houses, and restore gardens. When asked about their second and third priority needs following cash assistance, 29 per cent of households identified food as their primary concern, followed by physical or medical care at 21 per cent, and money/finances at 18 per cent.



## Multi purpose cash grants

The initial findings of the rapid assessment by the ARCS and the secondary data collected from local authorities indicated that the disaster has severely impacted the community, leaving many unable to meet their various needs. The demand for assistance extends beyond food, household items, hygiene, and shelter; financial support has emerged as a significant requirement, as evidenced by the substantial volume of requests received through the ARCS helpline. The initial assessment discovered that almost 95 per cent of families needed multipurpose cash to recover from the disaster, renovate houses, and restore gardens. This high demand for financial assistance reflects the unexpected expenses and damages often brought by natural disasters.



## Health

As the ARCS's initial assessment did not identify specific disaster-induced health needs among the affected, the ARCS's operational strategy focused on disseminating information on personal hygiene, including safe water, proper handwashing, and waste management.



## Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

The needs found through ARCS's rapid needs assessment in the affected communities highlighted the critical importance of personal hygiene and sanitation in preventing disease outbreaks. Materials on personal hygiene, safe water, proper handwashing, and waste management were identified as essential, together with the need to provide information sessions on hygiene and sanitation maintenance and disease prevention measures.



## Protection, Gender And Inclusion

ARCS's initial need assessment identified that the majority of families have at least one child and one older person. Eighty per cent of families mention having a member who is receiving a pension or other government allowance, and 40 per cent of families have a member with a disability.

Older people, with only a pension income and fewer financial, physical, and emotional resources to cope with the disaster's damages, were identified as the priority vulnerable group, followed by families with more than three children and families with one parent (mainly women).



## Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation And Recovery

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## Community Engagement And Accountability

Community needs related to transparent two-way communication, reception, and response to individual and community feedback, inclusive participation, and accountability were determined as a priority focus for the DREF operation's Community Engagement and Accountability component.

Throughout the operation, ARCS maintained an active and open line of communication with the affected communities through its network of branches and dedicated volunteers. The ARCS helpline served as a vital channel for community engagement, allowing continuous feedback from community members. This feedback mechanism enabled ARCS to receive valuable input, monitor the progress of the response, and regularly review and update not only the information shared with the communities, but also the modalities of engagement.

Through this central feedback mechanism, ARCS can learn and adapt throughout the response process, ensuring that the evolving needs and challenges faced by the affected population are effectively addressed.

## Operational Strategy

### Overall objective of the operation

The operation focused on addressing the immediate needs of the 3,421 affected people in 750 households in the communities of Lori and Tavush regions whose houses were severely damaged, and their livelihoods and security were compromised as a result of heavy rain and hailstorms throughout June and August 2023. In addition, ARCS directly reached 700 people through direct risk communication and community engagement activities accomplished through 25 community meetings.

The operational strategy focused on four main areas of intervention:

- Provision of Multi-Purpose Cash support for the most affected people as a primary assistance modality.
- Simultaneous Water Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion.
- Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation, and Recovery actions to help mitigate the risks associated with climate-related challenges in target communities.
- Proactive and continuous engagement with the target communities to ensure they have the information they need, participate in decision-making, and their feedback guides the operation.

### Operation strategy rationale

The ARCS response prioritised providing humanitarian assistance to families suffering the most severe consequences due to the hailstorm, heavy rain, and subsequent flooding. These families were facing considerable challenges due to the extensive damage to their houses, crops, and livestock. They urgently needed support to cover their basic needs, enabling them to begin the recovery process.

While the government was undertaking efforts to restore community infrastructure, energy, and water supplies, and clean and rebuild roads, the vulnerable families within these communities were encountering difficulties in renovating their homes. They required assistance to repair windows, doors, and roofs, as well as help in cleaning their gardens and replenishing food stocks. Additionally, they needed support in recovering clothing and essential household items damaged or lost during the disaster.

By focusing on the immediate needs of these vulnerable families, the operation aimed to ensure the well-being of the people affected and facilitate their recovery process. The combined efforts of the government and ARCS have been vital in addressing the broader community needs and the specific challenges faced by the most vulnerable households.

## Targeting Strategy

### Who was targeted by this operation?

According to official data, an estimated 18,000 people were affected in multiple communities in three regions. Out of the total affected population, the ARCS DREF operation targeted 3,421 individuals with multi-purpose cash assistance to cover livelihood and support needs. The target group eligibility was based on the vulnerability criteria developed in line with the findings of the vulnerability and needs assessment conducted in the affected settlements during July - August 2023.



In parallel to the 3,421 people reached through the multi-purpose cash assistance, ARCS covered an additional 700 people with direct risk communication and community engagement activities.

## Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population

ARCS determined the eligibility of the people to be supported with the multi-purpose cash assistance based on the following criteria:

- Families with more than five members, with at least two or more children under the age of 18.
- Families with more than five members, including at least two or more disabled members.
- Single-parent families with two or more children under the age of 18.
- Families with three or more children under the age of 18.
- Households consisting only of elderly persons aged 65 and over.
- Families whose only source of income relies on damaged agricultural means, such as crops or livestock.

The application of these criteria aimed to ensure that assistance is prioritized for households facing the most severe consequences and who urgently needed support to rebuild and recover.

## Total Targeted Population

|                           |       |                                      |     |
|---------------------------|-------|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Women                     | 2,184 | Rural                                | 30% |
| Girls (under 18)          | -     | Urban                                | 70% |
| Men                       | 1,936 | People with disabilities (estimated) | 2%  |
| Boys (under 18)           | -     |                                      |     |
| Total targeted population | 4,120 |                                      |     |

## Risk and Security Considerations

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

| Risk  | Mitigation action   |
|---|---|
| Since early February 2024, ARCS's institutional requirements have led to operational constraints, impacting the pace of the implementation of activities in the country.  | IFRC, together with Partner National Societies in country, Austrian Red Cross, Italian Red Cross and Swiss Red Cross, has been working since the beginning to preserve business continuity, including a more direct role in implementation of activities, coordination with ARCS branches and with local governmental authorities. Thanks to this temporary operating mechanism, essential activities and services have been preserved. IFRC will maintain this approach until the internal institutional crisis is solved. |
| People's frustration at not receiving support has not materialized in a decisive manner due to the timely response and measures applied.  | The cash disbursement, which is a crucial form of assistance expected to benefit recipients, was delivered on time. The targeting criteria were effectively communicated through ARCS communication channels. Moreover, a helpline was operational throughout the operations timeline, enabling easy access to information and providing adequate clarifications, with no reported issues.  |
| Since September 2023, Armenia has experienced a significant influx of people due to military escalation, with 115,251 individuals arriving in the country. ARCS has mobilized 1,500 staff and volunteers to provide assistance. This includes Psychological First Aid (PFA), registration for Restoring Family Links (RFL), conducting needs assessments, and distributing essential items. | The Red Cross has been actively supporting national and local authorities in addressing immediate humanitarian needs. This has been achieved through the implementation of a comprehensive contingency plan and effective preparedness. The local branches of the Red Cross and their community networks have played a crucial role in developing contingency plans for this situation.   |



|   |  |
|---|--|
| Another DREF operation has been activated to support the movement of people and transitioned to an Emergency Appeal for their assistance. | This has enabled the national society to manage multiple interventions, leading to some minor delays in less urgent activities as the main focus has been on responding to the immediate needs of the affected population. As a result, efforts have been restructured to ensure the successful completion of the last-mile deliveries of the DREF hailstorm activities. |
| Difficulties in communication with relevant authorities.  | The national and local government authorities have developed a high level of confidence and trust in the abilities of ARCS. This trust has been built on the extensive scale and commendable quality of the humanitarian response provided by ARCS during numerous recurring events, through their well-recognized auxiliary role.                                       |
| Difficulties in communication with the targeted population.   | Feedback mechanism functional throughout the operation as well as trusted channels of communication for proactive risk communication.  |

### Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation

Although a peace agreement was signed in November 2020, periodic border skirmishes were expected along the Armenia-Azerbaijan border north of the conflict zone. For this reason, the risks associated with travelling to the border with Azerbaijan were rated higher than the rest of the country. The main risk to security and safety was present in the bordering communities where the military forces were very close to civilians in some areas. Maintaining efforts in collecting and tracking alerts, situation highlights, and summaries were exchanged with the ARCS staff, volunteers and Federation-wide country team (existing staff, PNS and IFRC Country Cluster Delegation) to stay up-to-date on evolving situations.

Has the child safeguarding risk analysis assessment been completed?

No

## Implementation



### Livelihoods And Basic Needs

**Budget:** CHF 0

**Targeted Persons:** 3,420

**Assisted Persons:** 3,421

### Indicators

| Title   | Target | Actual |
|---|--------|--------|
| Number of families reached with cash assistance (one time)  | 855    | 812    |
| % of assisted persons reporting meeting their immediate needs through cash assistance provided by the ARCS (target: 80% of the people covered by PDM) | 80     | 95     |
| Number of people reached with cash assistance (one time)  | 3,420  | 3,421  |

## Narrative description of achievements

ARCS employed a multi-purpose cash assistance modality to respond to the livelihood needs that emerged due to the disaster damage to households. The decision was made based on the findings of the rapid needs and vulnerability assessment. While the assistance distribution progress is reported under the Multi-purpose cash sections, this section provides some insight into the livelihood needs and post-assistance reflections within the affected communities.

The needs assessment found that 80 per cent of the families expressed concerns about meeting their essential livelihood needs as they faced significant house damage and agricultural loss. An overwhelming 95 per cent of families reported they required cash to recover from the disaster, renovate houses, and restore gardens. It is also noteworthy that food security was a serious concern among the surveyed. Namely, 29 per cent of households identified food as their primary concern, followed by physical or medical care at 21 per cent, overall finances at 18 per cent, and property renovation support at 17 per cent.

A post-distribution monitoring survey also gave some insights into the socio-economic profiles of the affected households and their satisfaction with the impact of assistance on their livelihoods. When asked about the impact of the assistance, 66 percent of the surveyed reported that it reduced the financial burden on their households, while 32 per cent reported improved living conditions. While looking into the perceived benefits of the assistance in more detail, the survey found that 75 percent of the assisted households have utilized the money to cover their basic needs, followed by helping to pay rent (11 per cent) and repaying the debts (9 per cent). The survey validated the community's preference for cash assistance as a preferred modality (99 per cent).

## Lessons Learnt

- The lessons learned exercise was dedicated to CEA specifically. Therefore, no lessons for the others were documented.

## Challenges

- The lessons learned exercise was dedicated to CEA specifically. Therefore, no challenges for the others were documented.



## Multi Purpose Cash

**Budget:** CHF 319,211

**Targeted Persons:** 3,420

**Assisted Persons:** 3,421

## Indicators

| Title  | Target  | Actual  |
|--|---------|---------|
| Number of households reached with cash assistance (one time)                       | 855     | 812     |
| Amount of the cash assistance distributed (CHF)                                    | 319,211 | 310,742 |
| Percentage of the assisted people who reports satisfaction with the transfer value | 75      | 96      |

## Narrative description of achievements

Multi-purpose cash assistance was selected as a preferred modality of assistance based on the needs and vulnerability assessment findings, which was conducted within a few days of the onset of the discussion.

ARCS conducted a representative survey of 531 households in three regions to gather insights into the damage caused by the disaster, the community's demographics, financial dynamics, health concerns, immediate and primary needs, and preferences for accessing information and support services. The data were collected by 15 staff and 21 volunteers using a structured questionnaire, with data collected by volunteers through the Kobo tool. The data collection was conducted in a hybrid mode, with 54 per cent through face-to-face interviews and 45 per cent via phone calls. Additionally, ARCS branch representatives participated in local committees at the municipality level, where data on the damages and people affected were registered. Cash was named a preferred assistance modality by

an overwhelming majority at 95 per cent.

The assistance was defined at AMD 50,000 (CHF 118) per person, with the eligible households receiving the amount proportional to the number of family members. The value of unconditional cash for each person, was determined based on the latest information and guidance regarding the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) from the Armenian Government, the Unified Social Services (USS) department at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. This value is equivalent to the MEB developed by ICRC and Armenian RC during the last Winterization response (2022-2023).

The lists of the assistance-eligible people went through several steps of verification and validation, including collaboration with the local authorities to identify the affected households in line with the ARCS targeting selection criteria, door-to-door visits by the ARCS staff and volunteers for real-time data collection on eligibility and verification of contact details, cross-checking and cleaning the data to feed into the final beneficiary database to be shared with the Financial Service Provider (FSP).

ARCS communicated regularly via SMS with the shortlisted people for assistance throughout the operation to inform them about the assistance they would receive and provide details about feedback mechanisms, ensuring a transparent and accountable process. In parallel, the ARCS coordinated with its established FSP, National Post Office (“Haypost” CJSC), to share the validated beneficiary list, lay the ground for funds transfer, and ensure the interaction with the people to be assisted through the FSP, primarily, on the matters related to collecting the assistance.

With all the preparations in place, ARCS started cash distribution in August, reaching 3,421 people in 812 households in the communities of all three regions by mid-November 2023, with AMD 131,674,710 (CHF 310,742) distributed in total. The amount distributed per household ranged between AMD 50,000 (CHF 118) and AMD 400,000 (CHF 944) per household composition. The largest portion of the households, 16 per cent, received assistance of AMD 50,000 (CHF 118), followed by 20 per cent of 2-4 person households, receiving AMD 100,000 to 200,000 (CHF 236 to 472).

Between 27 November and 4 December 2023, ARCS conducted post-distribution monitoring to inquire about assisted people’s reflections on the modality of assistance and its impact on coping with the disaster damage. Interviews were conducted in 21 communities in the Lori region, with a higher concentration in villages with more beneficiaries, such as Akori, Arevashogh, Odzun, Alaverdi, and Mets Ayrum. In the Tavush region, all respondents were in the Ijevan community. The PDM confirmed the effectiveness of diligence measures taken by the ARCS during the preparation phase for the distributions – an absolute majority of the surveyed, 99 per cent, reported they were satisfied with the selection procedures for the assistance. The survey findings also confirmed the assistance was conducted in a safe environment and did not contribute to any conflicts to the respondents’ knowledge. 92 per cent did not recall any tensions or disagreements related to cash assistance distribution in their communities.

## Lessons Learnt

- Although the assisted people expressed general satisfaction (46 per cent very satisfied) with the amount of cash they had received, a significant majority of 76 per cent of the surveyed post-distribution reported they had spent less than a month on assistance in its collection. This might call for revisiting the amount of assistance in future operations.

## Challenges

- No significant challenges are noted under this sector.



## Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation And Recovery

**Budget:** CHF 4,500

**Targeted Persons:** 2,000

**Assisted Persons:** 3,000

## Indicators

| Title   | Target | Actual |
|---|--------|--------|
| Number of printed materials developed on climate risk communication and mitigation events | 2,000  | 3,000  |



|   |    |    |
|---|----|----|
| Number of risk communication sessions in the communities  | 50 | 25 |
| % of surveyed people correctly recalling at least two recommended risk mitigation measures that can be adopted by the communities | 60 | 62 |

## Narrative description of achievements

- ARCS tailored the design and content of the risk communication materials to the findings of its rapid need assessment, focusing on essential health guidelines, risk mitigation strategies, and information on preparing for potential health challenges, particularly those related to hailstorms and other natural disasters. 3,000 information materials were produced and distributed in the affected areas.
- Apart from disseminating the information materials, between August and October 2023, ARCS conducted 25 community sessions, reaching out to about 700 people with direct risk communication messaging.
- To effectively deliver the risk communication sessions, refresher training was conducted for 10 ARCS staff and 21 volunteers in delivering Health and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) outreach. In addition, 12 volunteers in the Tavush and Lori Branches underwent specialized training focused on community engagement to allow them to interact effectively with the affected communities by delivering the risk communication messages and collecting feedback to inform the DREF implementation.

## Lessons Learnt

- During the lessons learned workshop, the participants assessed the risk reduction and community engagement actions as mostly successful based on their reflections on the refresher training received, actions in the field they have participated in, and the feedback from the communities they interacted with.
- The post-distribution monitoring found that although the majority, 65 percent of the people who received cash assistance, also received communication-related to protecting their health and reducing the risks in the aftermath of the disaster, 66 percent of the surveyed assessed this information as somewhat helpful and needed. This might call for further inquiry into the communities' information needs in the aftermath of similar disasters and adjustment of the risk communication materials so that they are more in line with the information gaps in the affected communities.

## Challenges

- The RCCE activities have been well-received, but there was a consensus among different working groups about improving informal communication skills. It has been suggested that a comprehensive CEA training program should be developed, which includes a specialized module on informal communications for volunteers and field staff to better prepare for future operations.



## Community Engagement And Accountability

**Budget:** CHF 4,652

**Targeted Persons:** 3,870

**Assisted Persons:** 4,120

## Indicators

| Title   | Target | Actual |
|---|--------|--------|
| Number and type of methods established to respond to community about their feedback of feedback channels actively operating throughout the response | 3      | 2      |
| Number of dedicated CEA personnel involved throughout the response  | 1      | 1      |
| Number of questions included in the needs assessment on how best to engage communities  | 5      | 5      |
| Number of feedback comments collected, disaggregated by sex, age and disability, including sensitive feedback linked to SEA, fraud, corruption      | 10     | 670    |

|   |    |    |
|---|----|----|
| or protection concerns  |    |    |
| % of people who received a response to their feedback about the operation   | 80 | 80 |
| % of community members who reported during the satisfaction survey that they know how the operation decided who should receive aid and who does not | 70 | 86 |
| % of people who reported during the satisfaction survey that they were aware of how to provide feedback to ARCS                                     | 80 | 83 |

## Narrative description of achievements

Throughout the operation, ARCS engaged with the communities to keep them informed about it, collect their feedback, and address any concerns.

In the initial phase of the operation, ARCS prepared volunteers in Lori and Tavush regions with a brief training on community engagement and accountability, as well as on conducting the needs assessment. The team then conducted a rapid needs and vulnerability assessment to gather information about the severity of the damage caused to the households, validate vulnerability criteria and the preferred assistance modality, and understand community dynamics as well as how to best engage with the affected communities. Qualified ARCS staff and volunteers surveyed 424 households through phone interviews and door-to-door meetings, collecting valuable insights into the community's demographics, financial dynamics, health concerns, immediate and primary needs, capacities, and preferences for accessing information and support services.

In parallel with the needs assessment, ARCS Headquarters and branch staff actively collaborated with local authorities to foster inclusive planning, cross-check, and confirm the accuracy of information about damage and pre-existing vulnerabilities in the regions.

ARCS emphasized utilizing direct community feedback to validate the implementation of the revised operational strategy, particularly within the Alaverdi community. This approach was in addition to the routine collection of community feedback and providing appropriate responses. During the operation, the ARCS helpline received 670 calls, all individually addressed by respective units of the ARCS. As many calls reported a need for improved communications regarding selection criteria, community meetings were organized in which community members could engage directly with ARCS to share feedback.

A Post-Distribution Monitoring survey collected feedback from 531 assisted households about the distribution modality, the effectiveness of the process, and their overall perceptions of the assistance's effect. Nearly all respondents reported being satisfied with the aid provision and selection procedure, and all reported being satisfied with the amount of information provided prior to receiving financial assistance. Two-thirds of respondents indicated that they were aware of how to provide feedback and/or make complaints. Despite awareness, only a minority (11 per cent) reported that they submitted a suggestion or complaint to ARCS. Of the respondents who reported giving feedback, the majority (86 per cent) reported receiving a response to their feedback. Three people (14 per cent) indicated not having received a response. To understand which feedback channels the community would prefer to use, respondents were asked for their preference. 98 per cent reported that they would prefer a hotline. 8 per cent noted that they would like to speak in person with ARCS staff.

ARCS dedicated the concluding lessons learned workshop specifically to discussing Community Engagement and Accountability learnings and challenges, as the findings of the previous operations post-distribution monitoring regularly indicated some spaces for improvement in assisted people's satisfaction levels with the information reception and feedback provision within the DREF operations.

## Lessons Learnt

- Alignment with the 14 minimum CEA actions: The participants highlighted the strong cooperation with local authorities during needs assessment and planning, which led to positive engagement and recognition, such as receiving a certificate of appreciation from Lori community authorities post-implementation. Within teams, close collaboration among team members, volunteers, and local communities fostered a constructive environment, enhancing project effectiveness. Working with local volunteers familiar with the context improved project relevance and acceptance. Risk communication and reduction activities were crucial for proactive engagement, while face-to-face visits and productive Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) built trust and ensured accurate information. Continuous community connection, including face-to-face opportunities, demonstrated readiness to respond. This emphasized the importance of ongoing engagement. Additionally, the involvement of an IFRC representative during the initial needs assessment added credibility and value to the process.

- The participants recalled the essential components of CEA training, including the introduction to the questionnaire, the Kobo Toolkit,



mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), general fieldwork knowledge, the use of helplines and other communication channels, stress management, and practical communication skills for face-to-face meetings and calls. However, a couple of points were raised about more targeted communication of the CEA approach within the communities and enhanced coverage of informal communication ways during the volunteer skill strengthening sessions.

- During the needs and post distribution assessments, Red Cross visibility enhanced trust among the communities inclined to be skeptical of the surveys. Often, overcoming the community's mistrust of call interviews required providing more information about the questions and clarifying the survey's purpose.
- The group work discussion affirmed the diversity of feedback channels. However, some suggestions were raised for optimizing the feedback flow, such as the increased involvement of branches to respond to the feedback received from their areas of mandate locally, scaled-up communication of the eligibility criteria using diverse information dissemination channels throughout the whole process to limit unclear expectations within the communities, and optimizing the helpline personnel in line with the feedback flow received.
- The overall experience of the community meetings was positive. Community members attended, engaged, and understood the discussions, which was evidenced by the robust conversations, particularly around eligibility. A significant indicator of success was the critical decrease in the number and topics of phone calls, suggesting that community members felt more informed and confident about the program through these meetings.

## Challenges

- Points raised regarding the informal communication challenges call for integrating more targeted modules on informal communication in future training.
- The groups have outlined some limitations in communities' understanding of CEA. While the focus in the current operation has primarily been on how to provide feedback, there was a need for broader awareness about the overall CEA approach, its impact on the community, and ways for individuals to get involved beyond just giving feedback. This might call for expanding community education efforts to include comprehensive information about the CEA approach.
- The groups reported an insufficient number of interviewers during the assessments. This might suggest revisiting the optimum interviewer-to-household visits ratio for the following evaluations.
- Points related to the disproportionately larger volume of feedback registered at the headquarters indicate a need for a branch positioning strategy to provide reliable information at local levels.
- Workshop participants pointed out some confusion about the fairness of the aid distribution amounts raised during the community meetings, as well as confusion about assistance providers. This calls for a proactive explanation of source, purpose, and assistance distribution logic during future operations, as well as improved communications with the affected communities about selection criteria.



## Secretariat Services

**Budget:** CHF 9,542

**Targeted Persons:** 2

**Assisted Persons:** 4

## Indicators

| Title  | Target | Actual |
|--|--------|--------|
| Number of IFRC Country Officer Support Service   | 1      | 1      |
| Number of Banking Services / Charges   | 1      | 1      |
| Number of CCD Team members conducted Monitoring, Evaluation and Technical Support visits | 2      | 2      |

## Narrative description of achievements

The IFRC provided technical support throughout the operation. This support included oversight of program implementation, technical oversight of needs assessment, post-distribution monitoring, and concluding lessons learned workshop.

At the beginning of the operation, a monitoring and evaluation package and a detailed Plan of Action were designed to provide the basis for regular data collection and inform the implementation process.



- The IFRC Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (PMER) focal point co-led the regular monitoring of the operation with the ARCS PMER focal point and the Disaster Management Department team.
- DREF progress monthly reports were compiled by the ARCS, informing the IFRC on the progress and challenges of the operation, along with a monitoring plan and indicator tracking table to map out, ensure the collection, and keep track of the key project indicators.
- At the end of the implementation, a lessons-learned workshop was conducted to follow up on key operational and organizational learnings specifically focused on CEA and document the findings as a reference for future interventions. IFRC PMER focal point and CEA Delegate supported the design of the methodology and facilitated the discussion during the event.
- A post-distribution monitoring survey examined the level of satisfaction among the targeted population.
- IFRC PMER focal point and CEA delegate analyzed results of the post-distribution monitoring survey, and lessons learned workshop findings to record the learnings in the final report of the operation and, thus, inform the future operations.

Four joint monitoring visits by IFRC and ARCS assessed ARCS's preparations for operation implementation, compliance with best practices, and assistance distribution requirements.

## Lessons Learnt

- The lessons learned exercise was dedicated to CEA specifically. Therefore, no lessons for the others were documented.

## Challenges

- The lessons learned exercise was dedicated to CEA specifically. Therefore, no challenges for the others were documented.



**Budget:** CHF 49,807

**Targeted Persons:** 40

**Assisted Persons:** 35

## Indicators

| Title   | Target | Actual |
|---|--------|--------|
| Number of assigned branches to support the operations for a period of 2 months        | 2      | 2      |
| Number of delegated existing staff to support the operations for a period of 2 months | 3      | 3      |
| Number of lessons learned workshops conducted   | 1      | 1      |
| Number of volunteers involved in the operation  | 27     | 25     |

## Narrative description of achievements

ARCS brought together a pool of 25 volunteers and ten staff through induction and refresher training on disaster response, humanitarian assistance principles, community engagement and accountability basics, and Psychological First Aid (PFA) refresher course. Regular operational task force meetings brought together ARCS core team members and IFRC sectoral expertise to exchange the progress regarding Plan of Action implementation, resource allocation, logistics and planning, safety and security, and capacity strengthening.

## Lessons Learnt

- The lessons learned exercise was dedicated to CEA specifically. Therefore, no lessons for the others were documented.

## Challenges

- The lessons learned exercise was dedicated to CEA specifically. Therefore, no challenges for the others were documented.



# Financial Report

## DREF Operation

### FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

#### MDRAM011 - Armenia - Hailstorm 2023

Operating Timeframe: 29 Jun 2023 to 31 Dec 2023

| Selected Parameters |               |           |          |
|---------------------|---------------|-----------|----------|
| Reporting Timeframe | 2023/6-2024/7 | Operation | MDRAM011 |
| Budget Timeframe    | 2023/6-12     | Budget    | APPROVED |

Prepared on 22/Nov/2024

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

### I. Summary

|                                 |                 |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Opening Balance</b>          | <b>0</b>        |
| <b>Funds &amp; Other Income</b> | <b>386,194</b>  |
| DREF Response Pillar            | 386,194         |
| <b>Expenditure</b>              | <b>-381,286</b> |
| <b>Closing Balance</b>          | <b>4,908</b>    |

### II. Expenditure by planned operations / enabling approaches

| Description  | Budget         | Expenditure    | Variance      |
|--|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| PO01 - Shelter and Basic Household Items               |                |                | 0             |
| PO02 - Livelihoods                                     |                |                | 0             |
| PO03 - Multi-purpose Cash                              | 319,211        | 309,269        | 9,942         |
| PO04 - Health  |                |                | 0             |
| PO05 - Water, Sanitation & Hygiene                     |                |                | 0             |
| PO06 - Protection, Gender and Inclusion                |                |                | 0             |
| PO07 - Education                                       |                |                | 0             |
| PO08 - Migration                                       |                |                | 0             |
| PO09 - Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery | 2,982          | 6,005          | -3,023        |
| PO10 - Community Engagement and Accountability         | 4,652          | 4,061          | 591           |
| PO11 - Environmental Sustainability                    |                |                | 0             |
| <b>Planned Operations Total</b>                        | <b>326,845</b> | <b>319,335</b> | <b>7,510</b>  |
| EA01 - Coordination and Partnerships                   |                |                | 0             |
| EA02 - Secretariat Services                            | 9,542          | 16,935         | -7,392        |
| EA03 - National Society Strengthening                  | 49,807         | 45,016         | 4,791         |
| <b>Enabling Approaches Total</b>                       | <b>59,349</b>  | <b>61,951</b>  | <b>-2,602</b> |
| <b>Grand Total</b>                                     | <b>386,194</b> | <b>381,286</b> | <b>4,908</b>  |

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

# Contact Information

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[Click here for reference](#)

