



Household affected by cold receives cash in Shirzad district, Nangarhar province (Photo credit: IFRC.)

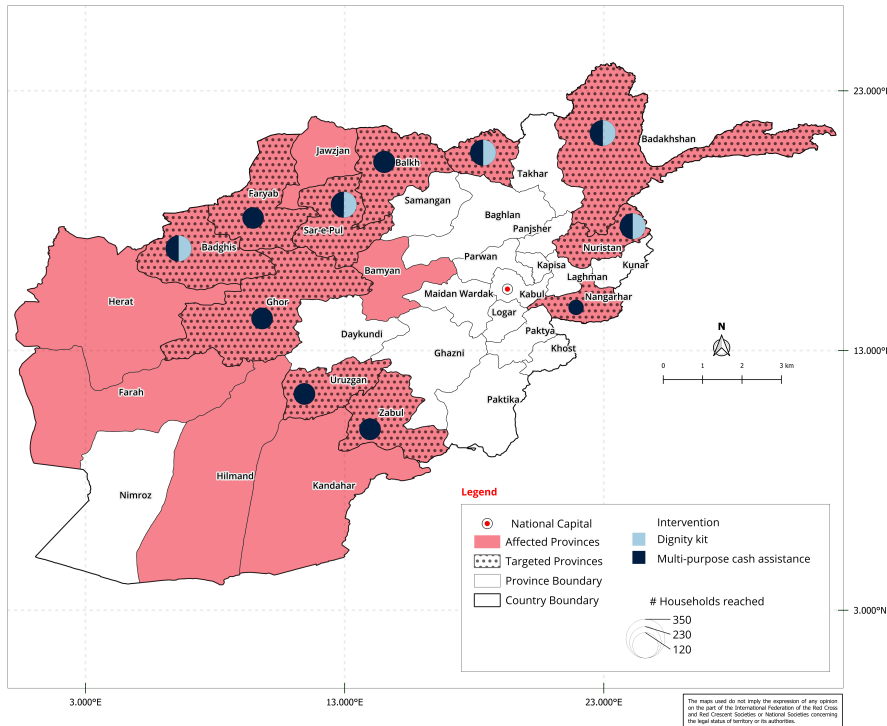
Appeal: MDRAF014	Total DREF Allocation: CHF 499,885	Crisis Category: Yellow	Hazard: Cold Wave
Glide Number: CW-2024-000025-AFG	People Affected: 325,205 people	People Targeted: 22,400 people	
Event Onset: Sudden	Operation Start Date: 16-03-2024	Operational End Date: 31-07-2024	Total Operating Timeframe: 4 months
Targeted Areas: Badakhshan, Badghis, Balkh, Faryab, Ghor, Kunduz, Nangarhar, Nuristan, Sari Pul, Uruzgan, Zabul			

The major donors and partners of the IFRC-DREF include the Red Cross Societies and governments of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Britain, China, Czech, Canada, Denmark, German, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Malta, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand and the Netherlands, as well as DG ECHO, Mondelez Foundation, and other corporate and private donors. The IFRC, on behalf of the National Society, would like to extend thanks to all for their generous contributions.

Description of the Event



Afghanistan: Cold Wave
DREF Final Report
As of 31 Jul 2024



Map of provinces affected by cold wave and targeted by the operation (Source: IFRC)

Date of event

03-03-2024

What happened, where and when?

An unusually late winter season affected several provinces in Afghanistan, bringing heavy snowfall and severe cold temperatures. In response, the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) convened an Emergency Task Force Meeting on 3 March 2024. During this meeting, findings from rapid assessments were shared, and potential interventions were discussed with local partners. Reports indicated that high-altitude provinces experienced casualties, significant livestock losses, road blockages, and disruptions to economic activities.

The DREF allocated CHF 352,000 for Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA), accounting for 70 per cent of the total DREF budget.

Further assessments highlighted the extensive impact of the cold wave, with the National Disaster Organization reporting that approximately 325,205 people were affected across at least 18 provinces. Thousands of livestock losses were also recorded, severely undermining livelihoods. The hardest-hit provinces included Badakhshan, Badghis, Balkh, Farah, Faryab, Ghor, Herat, Jawzjan, Kunduz, Nuristan, Nangarhar, Sar-e-Pul, Uruzgan, and Zabul.

The March 2024 cold wave mirrored the January 2023 event but had more severe consequences. ECHO reported temperatures plummeting to -33 degrees Celsius in Ghor, resulting in the loss of over 70,000 cattle and 70 human lives. Nuristan was particularly affected, still recovering from a landslide caused by heavy snowfall, which claimed 25 lives, destroyed 20 homes, and displaced 350 households.

The humanitarian needs were substantial, requiring long-term interventions to strengthen community resilience, particularly in Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction.





Communities received detailed information about distribution from ARCS in the target area under Cold Wave Response Operation.
Photo: ARCS

Scope and Scale

Detailed assessments conducted by various agencies, including local authorities, revealed the true impact of the severe winter event on the population. The toll included over 1,197 deaths, 2,217 injuries, and damage to more than 39,000 households, along with significant losses in agricultural land and livestock. These humanitarian impacts were considerable, necessitating a comprehensive response to address diverse needs. The situation was further complicated by an influx of returnees from neighboring countries seeking new livelihoods and opportunities.

Afghanistan continued its recovery from decades of conflict and complex crises, which had significantly weakened the country's capacity to respond effectively. Events like the cold wave highlighted the vulnerabilities of the population, including inadequate housing and a struggling agricultural sector further exacerbated by climate change and ongoing health challenges.

Women and children were particularly affected by the humanitarian crisis, often lacking the resources needed to cope. Cultural norms posed additional barriers for this group. With the agricultural sector severely impacted, urban centers became focal points for population movement, as families sought new opportunities after losing their livelihoods.

Source Information

Source Name	Source Link
1. Afghan Red Crescent Society	https://www.arcs.org

National Society Actions

Have the National Society conducted any intervention additionally to those part of	No
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this DREF Operation?	
Please provide a brief description of those additional activities	-

IFRC Network Actions Related To The Current Event

Secretariat	The IFRC Country Delegation assisted ARCS in coordinating with clusters, inter-agency working groups, and other (inter)national humanitarian organizations at both national and sub-national levels. The IFRC took part in the Emergency Taskforce meeting organized by ARCS. Additionally, the IFRC monitored the situation in the affected provinces and kept in regular contact with ARCS. The IFRC also contributed to the development of the IFRC-DREF application and the preparation of field reports for dissemination on the IFRC GO platform. Furthermore, the IFRC maintained stocks of relief items, which were readied for distribution to support ARCS's ongoing response once the IFRC-DREF was approved for replenishment.
Participating National Societies	In-country Participating National Society (PNS) took part in the Emergency Taskforce meeting organized by ARCS. The participating organizations included the Turkish Red Crescent, Danish Red Cross, Qatar Red Crescent Society, and Norwegian Red Cross.

ICRC Actions Related To The Current Event

The ICRC participated in the emergency task force meeting convened by ARCS and indicated readiness to provide complementary support to ARCS's response efforts. Additionally, the ICRC contributed AFN 1.8 million to ARCS's response to the cold wave operation.

Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

Government has requested international assistance	Yes
National authorities	Local authorities sought the assistance of international organizations to address the needs of the affected population. Additionally, the government formed committees to coordinate responses across the impacted provinces. Furthermore, the government allocated AFN 1 million per district to purchase dry grass and pug, which was distributed to the affected herdsmen.
UN or other actors	The UN has scaled up its response in the affected provinces to accommodate the needs of the affected population.

Are there major coordination mechanism in place?

The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) served as a strategic, policy-level decision-making forum guiding principled humanitarian action in Afghanistan. The IFRC participated in these meetings weekly as a representative of its member organizations.

Both ARCS and IFRC actively engaged in monthly coordination meetings at the national level across various clusters, including the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster, Cash and Voucher Working Group, Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items (ES-NFI) Cluster, Accountability to Affected Population Working Group, Health Cluster, WASH Cluster, and Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group. Additionally, the IFRC attended the Inter-Cluster Coordination Team meeting.

The cluster system functioned as a sectoral coordination mechanism at both the national and regional levels, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of partners such as non-governmental organizations, UN agencies, public authorities, and other stakeholders. Cluster meetings were held monthly at the national level and coordinated by respective lead agencies in sectors including shelter, food security, health, WASH, protection, and nutrition, with oversight from UNOCHA.

The IFRC actively coordinated with cluster members at both national and sub-regional levels to ensure a unified approach, prevent duplication, and address the needs of the affected population in a timely and effective manner.

Needs (Gaps) Identified



Shelter Housing And Settlements

The assessments conducted thus far did not provide sufficient demographic disaggregation to fully capture the impacts and needs arising from the event. As the situation on the ground evolved, the needs and priorities of the affected population remained considerable. With Afghanistan transitioning into spring, the conditions necessitating the provision of winterization kits were no longer present, prompting modifications to the planned interventions.



Livelihoods And Basic Needs

The cold wave in early March 2024 caused significant losses in livestock and agriculture, severely impacting the livelihoods and food security of affected families. Many households struggled to afford basic necessities due to reduced incomes, highlighting the need for immediate assistance through multipurpose cash grants. These grants helped families cover essential expenses such as food and shelter, providing short-term relief. Despite these efforts, some gaps remained. While cash assistance addressed urgent needs for some families, many continued to face challenges in long-term recovery due to the scale of livestock losses and limited alternative livelihood options.



Health

The existing health facilities in the affected provinces were able to cover the needs of the population. While it was anticipated that there would be specific needs in this sector, such as mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), the assessments did not reveal this. As a result, ARCS did not target this area for intervention due to the required coverage and the uncertain capacity for referral services. Additionally, there were potential barriers to accessing mental health services. The National Society recognized the need to strengthen its capacity in this area to better meet the population's needs. No impacts on medical facilities were reported.

Constraints and gaps identified in delivering MHPSS to the affected population included an insufficient number of trained volunteers and staff to provide MHPSS services. There was also a lack of coordination at the provincial level to determine whether these needs were being met and if interventions were standardized to avoid harm to beneficiaries, in line with Do-No-Harm principles.

Afghanistan's recovery from multiple, compounding challenges was hindered by various shocks that could prevent access to healthcare services, including specialized care for individuals living with non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and other chronic illnesses. Additionally, it remained unclear whether there was a charge for accessing health services. To address some of these needs, ARCS needed to expand its Mobile Health Teams interventions, particularly in vaccinations and other essential medical assistance for vulnerable groups.



Protection, Gender And Inclusion

Data provided by the authorities lacked the necessary disaggregation of the affected population, making it unclear who was included in this group. However, based on the demographic profile and other indicators, it was expected that women and children, along with other marginalized groups, were among the most affected. Additional support was needed to ensure that ARCS collected disaggregated data to address the specific needs of the affected population. The challenge of supporting families was particularly severe in single female-headed households and those where husbands were unable to provide due to conflict or other impairments. Response actions should have included the provision of dignity kits to affected women, especially in remote and conservative areas.

To address this gap, Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI) was integrated into all activities proposed under the IFRC-DREF, focusing on women and other marginalized groups, including people with disabilities. ARCS prioritized individuals who faced difficulties accessing humanitarian services through its extensive network of volunteers to provide necessary aid. Recognizing the unique vulnerability of children, a child safeguarding risk analysis was conducted to ensure that operations adhered to the principles of the IFRC's Child Safeguarding Policy, reinforcing the "Do-No-Harm" principle.



A total of 800 dignity kits were allocated for the most affected individuals in high-altitude areas, particularly for women who were disproportionately impacted. Additionally, cash was provided to the targeted population to help meet their basic needs.



Migration And Displacement

The influx of returnees decreased significantly due to the cold winter. However, this was expected to change with a second wave that was expected to return from Pakistan per a directive issued by the government. IFRC implemented a population movement IFRC-DREF (MDRAF013) and addressed the needs of the returnees in the areas of destination through the existing Humanitarian Crisis appeal (MDRAF007).



Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation And Recovery

Due to the substantial impacts on livelihoods, particularly in agriculture and livestock, further assessments were necessary to gather detailed information on the underlying factors that contributed to these significant losses. As the event was climate-related, recovery took time, and adaptation became essential as Afghanistan transitioned into the spring and summer seasons. This shift posed another serious threat to this vital sector. The risk to food security increased, potentially requiring a significant boost in food and other forms of aid to address the situation.



Community Engagement And Accountability

Accountability required that ARCS listen to and consider the needs of people during all phases of humanitarian programming. This included using feedback to design and adjust programs, communicating transparently and effectively through preferred channels, formats, and languages, and ensuring accountability for the conduct of aid workers, including the quality, effectiveness, and fairness of resources and programs. Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) is a core component of both IFRC's and ARCS's humanitarian efforts.

In this operation, IFRC and ARCS prioritized CEA in all aspects of field implementation, adhering to Movement-wide commitments and minimum actions for CEA. Affected communities were continuously engaged to ensure they could access humanitarian assistance as needed, receive information about available services, and participate in the planning and delivery of assistance, including beneficiary selection, cash distribution, and post-distribution monitoring activities.

Movement-wide commitments and minimum actions for CEA were integrated throughout operations as the context allowed. This involved building and enhancing CEA capacity, piloting and expanding a safe and inclusive feedback mechanism, collaborating with relevant inter-agency working groups, and incorporating CEA responsibilities across all sectors and operations, such as including CEA questions in all assessments.

Operational Strategy

Overall objective of the operation

The IFRC-DREF operation aimed to assist ARCS in addressing the immediate needs of 3,200 households (22,400 people) affected by the cold wave in March 2024. With 39,000 houses damaged, 311 destroyed, and more than 57,000 livestock lost, the funding enabled ARCS to support families and individuals in meeting their urgent needs and alleviating the hardships caused by the cold wave, including snowfall and heavy rains.

Specifically, the operation was designed to fulfill the basic needs of the affected population through multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) and the distribution of dignity kits to approximately 3,200 households in the most affected areas across 11 provinces: Badakhshan, Badghis, Kunduz, Nuristan, Sari-e-Pul, Balkh, Faryab, Ghor, Uruzgan, Zabul, and Nangarhar, over a period of four months.

Operation strategy rationale

The Government of Afghanistan anticipated playing a central role in responding to the events and leading recovery and restoration efforts, in coordination with humanitarian and development agencies in the country, as well as through bilateral agreements to rebuild



the lives of the affected population. ARCS, as part of its mandate, had the responsibility to provide relief and associated aid to the affected population, and was expected to partner with the government in this regard.

The main focus of ARCS's response under the IFRC-DREF operation was to provide MPCA as well as dignity kits to the most vulnerable households affected by the cold wave and related hardships. Given the expanded needs and the normalization of market conditions, MPC became the primary intervention, granting families the freedom to meet their needs. Information was provided to affected families, informing them that the MPCA could be used for food, animal feed (supporting the restoration of their livelihoods), and medicine if required. CEA, protection, and safeguarding were integrated into the interventions.

Given the prevailing context and to maximize ARCS's reach, IFRC continued its engagement with existing financial services providers (FSPs) for MPCA. ARCS facilitated the distributions through its extensive network across the country, including the most difficult-to-reach areas. In high-altitude provinces, winter ended, significantly reducing access concerns. However, as the season changed and the rains began, the situation evolved (both from a humanitarian standpoint and due to seasonal variability), with conditions remaining challenging for those who lost their livelihoods (farming and livestock). The provision of cash remained the most appropriate intervention to support recovery and enable the affected population to cover their basic needs.

Key lessons from previous operations implemented by ARCS, with support from IFRC, helped mitigate some of the challenges faced during the operation, and these lessons were applied accordingly. The operation targeted 3,200 households for cash distribution, with each household allocated CHF 110 (or CHF 352,000 cumulatively) to cover their basic needs. The amount of CHF 110 was agreed upon based on the MPC working group's assessment and was the standard rate adopted by ARCS for all its MPC programmes in the country. The Cash Working Group recommended a minimum expenditure basket of USD 156; however, ARCS used CHF 110, equivalent to 8,500, in all its programmes. For the flood operation (MDRAF015), the amount was increased to CHF 140. Changing the rate would have far-reaching implications for the National Society's programming and budgets. The markets functioned in the target provinces, and ARCS used secondary data for market monitoring.

Distributions were conducted using contracted FSPs, supported by ARCS at pre-established distribution points in the targeted provinces.

ARCS scaled up its interventions to address the needs of the affected population across 11 provinces, with a primary focus on displaced families and those in highland or remote areas:

- (a) Operationally, to avoid exceeding the limits of the National Society's capacity, one district per province was targeted, focusing on regions designated as white areas, where government resources were limited and where ARCS was already established and had relatively strong coverage.
- (b) Most other affected parts of the country likely returned to normalcy and also received aid and support from both the government and development agencies, particularly in urban areas.
- (c) The scaled-up interventions continued in areas where ARCS had great familiarity and could operationalize efforts with relative ease.

Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) was one of the planned activities carried out for MPC and dignity kits. A total of 1,750 dignity kits were allocated for the most affected provinces, as women and girls had been disproportionately impacted by past crises and the ongoing humanitarian situation. While market conditions returned to normal, the targeted districts were remote (some classified as "white areas" by the National Society) and typically benefited the least from interventions. The distance from markets also presented additional challenges for women and girls, as cultural traditions often prevented them from traveling to access necessary items. Furthermore, discussions about menstrual health with men were considered a cultural taboo. Therefore, providing dignity kits to households was prioritized, particularly in remote provinces. This ensured the protection and menstrual hygiene of women and girls living in areas distant from local markets. The costs were covered by savings from the removal of winterization kits as part of the intervention. Cash was provided to the targeted population in its entirety as a means of addressing their basic needs. IFRC had valid contracts with two existing FSPs, which were able to accommodate the increased demand.

IFRC has a framework agreement with FSPs, who use their own funds for cash distribution, with IFRC reimbursing them after the post-distribution process is completed.

Changes to the Operation Strategy:

- Increase in Target Provinces: The number of targeted provinces rose from 6 to 11 due to the widespread and severe impacts confirmed by initial assessments from ARCS and reports from ANDMA, revealing 1,197 deaths, 2,217 injuries, and damage to 39,315 houses.
- Increase in Targeted Households for MPCA: The number of households targeted for multipurpose cash assistance increased from 1,600 to 3,200. Market conditions stabilized, allowing the affected population to access essential supplies, particularly for livelihoods recovery, including agricultural and livestock goods available locally. The additional 1,600 households' MPCA costs were covered by funds allocated for winterization kits. During the cold wave, beneficiary girls and women lacked access to the market to purchase essential relief items, such as Dignity Kits. As a result, we distributed Non-Food Items (NFI) from our pre-positioned stock and replenished those supplies afterward.



- Removal of Winterization Kit Procurement: As the season changed, with reduced snow cover due to warming, normalcy returned to markets, allowing families to access necessary items. Suppliers initially assured that winterization kits could be procured and delivered in two days, but it was later communicated that the timeline extended to two weeks or more, making this intervention irrelevant.

- Increase in Dignity Kits: The number of dignity kits increased from 800 to 1,750, targeting the most affected provinces. Women and girls had been disproportionately impacted by past crises and the ongoing humanitarian situation. Although market conditions improved, the targeted districts were remote and often classified as underserved, making access to these items challenging for women and girls due to cultural restrictions. Discussions around menstrual health also faced cultural taboos. Providing dignity kits ensured the protection and menstrual hygiene of women and girls in high-altitude districts with limited market access.

Targeting Strategy

Who was targeted by this operation?

ARCS targeted 3,200 households (22,400 people) across 11 provinces: Badakhshan, Badghis, Kunduz, Nuristan, Sari-e-Pul, Balkh, Faryab, Ghor, Uruzgan, Zabul, and Nangarhar. Although multiple provinces were impacted, these eleven were identified as the most affected. The total count was twelve, as two districts within one province were selected for assistance.

Initially, ARCS had planned to respond in six provinces; however, the situation evolved as colder weather impacted high-altitude areas. In response to these changing conditions, ARCS expanded its coverage to include five additional provinces. An integrated approach was adopted, providing both dignity kits and MPCA in five of the most affected provinces.

Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population

The National Society provided assistance in collaboration with local administrations, village heads, and other partners, following the established coordination framework in Afghanistan. ARCS employed an integrated approach, where recipients of dignity kits were also provided with Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA).

The following vulnerability criteria were used to prioritize the selection of households for assistance:

- Poor households that lost livestock due to the cold wave in high-altitude areas.
- Poor households that lost their primary source of income due to livestock loss or damage to livelihood assets caused by the cold wave.
- Poor households whose homes were damaged by avalanches or other natural disasters.
- Households severely impacted by cold waves or avalanches.
- Households that lost productive assets (e.g., livestock, tools, or equipment) during the disaster.
- Poor households headed by widows or single mothers severely affected by the cold wave.
- Seniors responsible for children in the household.
- Households headed by widows or single mothers with young children.
- Households with members who have chronic medical conditions.
- Households with a member with a disability.
- Households that suffered significant losses to agricultural holdings or livestock.
- Pregnant and lactating women.
- Households with a member with a congenital heart defect.
- Returnees from neighboring countries and/or internally displaced persons (IDP) camps.

Total Targeted Population

Women	11,200	Rural	100%
Girls (under 18)	3,360	Urban	0%
Men	5,600	People with disabilities (estimated)	2%
Boys (under 18)	2,240		
Total targeted population	22,400		



Risk and Security Considerations

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

Risk	Mitigation action
Seasonal changes imposed additional strain on the population by affecting their health, livelihoods, and property.	The weather situation was continuously monitored throughout the country, and precautions were taken to avoid establishing Humanitarian Service Points in vulnerable areas.
Ethnic and social tensions impeded humanitarian assistance in the targeted communities.	ARCS collaborated with its branches to thoroughly understand the social dynamics in targeted communities before implementing any interventions. This information was used to develop appropriate strategies that considered factors that undermined community cohesion.
Changes in the security situation were possible. Although the overall security remained relatively stable across the country, there was always a chance that this could shift.	IFRC continuously monitored the security situation in Afghanistan and collaborated closely with various partners to anticipate potential changes in the country. It also provided guidance on the internal deployment of team members and conducted routine assessments in areas where it operated or planned to operate. Additionally, the risk to IFRC staff was minimal, as the implementation of the DREF operation was primarily carried out by ARCS operatives, who were also guided by established security protocols.
Afghanistan Red Crescent Society personnel may involved in the robbery incident as victim since they will be assumed as Financial Service Provider (FSP)'s agents traveling with Cash to community.	Clear procedure for travelling; avoid traveling with FSP's agent, especially when transporting the cash, should be emphasized.
Beneficiaries dissatisfaction due to lack of clarity on how beneficiary list was selected may cause problems.	CEA implementation designed with clear message and delivered through different channel including community leaders for better reach out.

Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation

Not Any

Has the child safeguarding risk analysis assessment been completed?

Yes

Implementation



Multi Purpose Cash

Budget: CHF 352,000

Targeted Persons: 22,400

Assisted Persons: 27,358

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
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# of households provided with multi-purpose cash	3,200	3,191
% of households surveyed reporting that the cash provided was sufficient to cover their most important needs	60	60
% of persons surveyed reporting that satisfaction with the cash distribution process	70	70
# of PDMs conducted	2	0

Narrative description of achievements

Emergency Needs Assessment

During and after disasters, the ARCS Branch Disaster Response Team (BDRT) conducted emergency needs assessments to identify the needs of affected populations. The verification process revealed considerable wait times for many respondents, with nearly one-third waiting over three hours. This delay was mainly due to the prioritization of aid recipients based on age and gender, with elderly and disabled individuals receiving the highest priority. Additionally, several aid recipients encountered issues with the required documents for verification, further contributing to the extended wait times.

Distribution of Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA)

With the support of the IFRC Secretariat, ARCS provided multipurpose cash assistance of AFN 8,500 (CHF 110) to each household across eight provinces. A total of 3,200 households were targeted, with 3,191 households successfully reached, benefiting 27,358 individuals (13,004 male, 14,354 female). The demographic breakdown of the population served is as follows:

- Males: 13,004
- Females: 14,354
- Newborns and Infants: 2,798
- Children (Aged 6-12): 3,117
- Adolescents (Aged 13-17): 2,332
- Male Adults: 3,713
- Elderly Males: 1,044
- Female Adults: 2,980
- Elderly Females: 1,063

The initiative also focused on vulnerable groups, including:

- 267 female-headed households
- 104 child-headed households
- 234 individuals living with disabilities

This comprehensive outreach reflected significant impact on diverse age groups and vulnerable populations across the targeted regions.

Provincial breakdown of households (HH) reached:

- Badakhshan: 349 (Individuals: 2,819; 1,396 Male; 1,423 Female)
- Badghis: 350 (Individuals: 2,924; 1,423 Male; 1,501 Female)
- Balkh: 250 (Individuals: 1,888; 875 Male; 1,013 Female)
- Faryab: 238 (Individuals: 2,201; 1,100 Male; 1,101 Female)
- Ghor: 240 (Individuals: 2,613; 1,296 Male; 1,317 Female)
- Kunduz: 350 (Individuals: 2,953; 1,487 Male; 1,466 Female)
- Nangarhar: 240 (Individuals: 2,833; 1,352 Male; 1,481 Female)
- Nuristan: 347 (Individuals: 2,158; 1,046 Male; 1,112 Female)
- Sar-e Pul: 347 (Individuals: 2,594; 1,153 Male; 1,441 Female)
- Uruzgan: 240 (Individuals: 2,129; 977 Male; 1,152 Female)
- Zabul: 240 (Individuals: 2,246; 899 Male; 1,347 Female)

Exit Survey and Feedback



The ARCS's Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (PMER) department conducted exit surveys at distribution points to gather feedback from recipients, enabling immediate improvements in the ongoing distribution process. In April 2024, a total of 60 recipients were interviewed in Nangarhar province, of which 56 (93%) were male and 4 (7%) were female. The age distribution was as follows:

- 18-50 years: 62 per cent
- Over 50 years: 22 per cent
- Under 18 years: 16 per cent

When asked how they accessed information about the distribution, the majority of respondents (52%) indicated they received information from the ARCS office, followed by ARCS volunteers (28%), and community representatives (20%).

Regarding the time spent in the verification process:

- 0 minutes to 1 hour: 32 per cent
- 1 to 2 hours: 27 per cent
- More than 3 hours: 31 per cent

Additionally, respondents were asked about the cost of transportation to the distribution points. One respondent from Sherzad district of Nangarhar spent AFN 1,000, while 14 respondents (23%) spent nothing, as they lived within walking distance. On average, respondents spent AFN 166 for transportation.

CEA and Feedback Mechanism

Nearly all respondents were satisfied with the information provided by ARCS regarding the date and time of the distribution. In terms of understanding how to register a complaint:

- 93 per cent of respondents knew how to register a complaint
- 7 per cent did not know how to register a complaint

Key Findings:

- All respondents reported that they did not pay money or receive any other benefit to be included in the distribution list.
- All respondents confirmed that ARCS staff and volunteers treated them with respect.
- All respondents were satisfied with the distribution process and the information provided by ARCS.
- All respondents felt that the distribution was safe and respectful.

Lessons Learnt

- The delayed transfer of operational funds led to most operations being conducted with limited resources.
- Allocating sufficient time for the registration process of MPCA aid recipients was crucial for effective project implementation.

Challenges

Budget limitations restricted the project's ability to address the full scope of need, highlighting the challenge of providing support to all vulnerable populations within resource constraints. To address these limitations and maximize impact within available resources, a prioritization strategy was implemented, focusing on the most vulnerable populations identified through a needs assessment. While 325,205 people were affected, targeting was concentrated on 22,400 individuals deemed to be at the highest risk. Additional advocacy efforts are required to secure supplementary funding, enabling the expansion of support to a larger portion of the affected population in future phases.



Protection, Gender And Inclusion

Budget: CHF 82,500

Targeted Persons: 22,400

Assisted Persons: 6,796



Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
% of deployed staff and volunteers oriented in PGI sensitization and minimum standards	100	100
# households receiving dignity kits	1,750	1,746

Narrative description of achievements

PGI Integration

PGI (Protection, Gender, and Inclusion) sessions were conducted for all health master trainers, both female and male. This session was integrated into various health-related training topics to ensure a comprehensive understanding of PGI principles. The master trainers cascaded this knowledge to grandmother committees and other relevant target groups. Additionally, a PGI minimum standards checklist was developed, and the IFRC health programme team received orientation on its use. This checklist will facilitate the mainstreaming of PGI minimum standards into the team's daily activities, promoting a more inclusive and equitable approach to health programmes.

Dignity Kits Distribution

Each household received dignity kit packages containing the following items: six handwashing soaps, one bucket, one plastic bowl, six laundry soaps, three washable sanitary pads, cloths, 12 pieces of female underwear, one bag, two toothbrushes, one toothpaste, one female shawl, one bottle of shampoo, one pair of sandals/slippers, one women's hijab, one package of Vaseline, one nail clipper, two hair combs, four pairs of socks for females, and two pieces of towels.

To ensure transparency and clarity, IFRC and ARCS collaboratively designed a leaflet to be included in the packages. This leaflet contained awareness-raising messages affirming that ARCS and IFRC services were free of charge and provided without discrimination. It also included information on how to share feedback.

The distribution of dignity kits was carried out across five provinces, targeting 1,750 households, with 1,746 successfully reached. In total, 6,796 individuals (3,398 male, 3,398 female) benefited from the distribution, including 116 female-headed households, 33 child-headed households, and 128 individuals living with disabilities. In Kunduz, all 350 targeted households were reached, followed closely by Badakhshan with 349 households. Sar-e Pol, Badghis, and Nuristan also met their targets, though there were slight shortfalls in Badakhshan and Nuristan. Dignity Kits breakdown details as follows:

- Kunduz: 350 households reached
- Badakhshan: 349 households reached
- Sar-e Pol: 350 households reached
- Badghis: 350 households reached
- Nuristan: 347 households reached



Community Engagement And Accountability

Budget: CHF 1,000

Targeted Persons: 22,400

Assisted Persons: 27,358

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of household reached through dissemination of key information and messages, and with each dignity kit, we distributed IEC materials.	3,200	3,191
% of people satisfied with receiving services and with dignity	70	70



Narrative description of achievements

The selection criteria for assistance were communicated in alignment with CEA principles, using a range of channels to ensure broad and inclusive reach. These included community meetings, local radio broadcasts, printed leaflets, social media platforms, and text messages. Awareness-raising campaigns were conducted within local communities to clearly explain the selection criteria, ensuring that both recipients and non-recipients understood the process. Feedback was actively solicited from the community regarding the clarity of the criteria, and any necessary adjustments were made to enhance understanding, transparency, and accountability.

Additionally, regular updates on sectoral plans, progress, activities, and distribution processes were shared through community meetings, providing opportunities for ongoing dialogue and fostering trust. To reduce the risks of sexual exploitation, abuse, and corruption, it was repeatedly communicated that aid was provided free of charge. This message was consistently reinforced through all communication channels to ensure that the community was fully informed and able to hold the operation accountable.

Lessons Learnt

- Importance of Multiple Feedback Channels: While face-to-face communication is valuable, offering additional channels, such as a toll-free hotline, is beneficial in ensuring broader community engagement. This is especially important for individuals who may have mobility challenges, such as women, the elderly, and people with disabilities or chronic illnesses.
- Effectiveness of the Toll-Free Hotline: The toll-free hotline provided a direct, accessible means for vulnerable groups (such as women and individuals with disabilities) to share their concerns and participate in the feedback process, even if they were unable to leave their homes.
- Value of Cross-Cutting Training: The cross-cutting training conducted in the Nangarhar region (focused on PGI, CEA, and Safeguarding) was instrumental in preparing participants to effectively address challenges in the DREF operation. The training sessions helped participants develop a strong foundational understanding of critical issues like PGI, CEA, and Safeguarding, enabling them to respond more effectively to challenges during the operation.

Challenges

- Inadequate Female Volunteer Representation: The insufficient number of women volunteers limited the ability to effectively engage with and reach women in the community, impacting the inclusivity of the operation.
- Lack of an Integrated Feedback Mechanism: There was no proper feedback mechanism in place, or the existing feedback channels were not integrated into the central system. This resulted in a lack of coordination and the failure to properly document feedback, hindering the ability to address community concerns effectively.
- Limited Awareness of CEA and PGI Integration: There was a lack of awareness regarding the importance of integrating CEA and PGI into programme implementation, which affected the overall effectiveness and inclusivity of the response.



Coordination And Partnerships

Budget: CHF 0

Targeted Persons: 0

Assisted Persons: 0

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of coordination meetings conducted/participated.	6	1

Narrative description of achievements

Operation Overview and Resource Allocation

The operation concluded successfully, with ARCS effectively allocating resources internally and coordinating with clusters, inter-agency



working groups, and various national and international humanitarian actors at both national and sub-national levels. The National Society actively participated in committees established at local and national levels, ensuring a cohesive and well-organized response to the needs of affected communities.

Activation of Emergency Operation Centre and Taskforce Meeting

On 3 March, ARCS activated its Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) and convened an Emergency Response Taskforce meeting. This meeting brought together all in-country Movement partners, including IFRC, ICRC, Danish Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, Qatar Red Crescent, and Turkish Red Crescent, to assess the situation's impact and explore collective support for ARCS in addressing the needs of affected populations.

Field-Level Collaboration and Local Committees

At the field level, ARCS branches collaborated effectively with local authorities and representatives through committees established to coordinate emergency responses. In these committees, local authorities requested ARCS to strengthen its auxiliary role in addressing the emergency. Provincial committees were also set up to tackle emerging challenges, supported by standing arrangements embedded in legislation that designated commissions and relevant ministries as key actors.

Role of ANDMA and Multisectoral Assessments

The Afghan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) served as the secretariat, with ARCS actively participating to facilitate coordinated responses across various sectors. Multisectoral assessments conducted during the operation involved collaboration with other partners, ensuring comprehensive support for affected populations.

Overall, the operation showcased effective coordination, responsiveness, and a strong commitment to meeting the needs of those impacted by the crisis.



Secretariat Services

Budget: CHF 1

Targeted Persons: 0

Assisted Persons: 0

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
% of financial reporting compliance to IFRC procedures - the IFRC didn't provide any budget	100	100

Narrative description of achievements

The IFRC Secretariat provided comprehensive support to ARCS throughout the response to the cold wave, ensuring effective and timely assistance to affected communities. Key actions included providing both technical and management support for the operation, leveraging existing IFRC Secretariat capacities in the country under the ongoing Emergency Appeal. This support was crucial in enabling ARCS to carry out the necessary activities to assist those in need.

The IFRC also played a vital role in providing membership services, which encompassed security, reporting, procurement, communication, and resource mobilization. These services facilitated a well-coordinated response, ensuring that all necessary resources were available and properly managed throughout the operation.

Additionally, ARCS, with the support of IFRC, successfully mobilized volunteers and the Branch Disaster Response Team (BDRT) to deliver timely assistance to cold wave-affected populations in 11 provinces. This mobilization ensured that aid reached the most vulnerable individuals promptly and efficiently.

Furthermore, IFRC provided technical support in the procurement of 1,750 dignity kits, which were distributed to cold wave-affected



communities across the 11 provinces. This assistance contributed to addressing the immediate needs of those affected by the cold wave, reinforcing the effective collaboration between ARCS and the IFRC Secretariat in delivering critical humanitarian aid.

National Society Strengthening

Budget: CHF 12,100

Targeted Persons: 0

Assisted Persons: 0

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of lessons learnt workshop conducted	1	1
% of volunteers insured	100	50

Narrative description of achievements

Volunteer Mobilization and Orientation

The ARCS mobilized volunteers through the BDRT team, providing them with orientation prior to their deployment to the field. This preparation ensured that volunteers clearly understood the intervention. The operation was implemented smoothly, with no incidents reported during the execution phase of the cold wave response. Notably, the IFRC supported transportation and accommodation costs for female volunteers, which was crucial in enabling their effective participation in the operation.

Humanitarian Coordination and Collaboration

ARCS played a pivotal role in coordinating humanitarian activities at the local level. In its auxiliary role, ARCS ensured that aid efforts were well-organized and effectively implemented. This involved close collaboration with local authorities and other aid agencies to streamline activities and avoid duplication of efforts. During recent operations, ARCS demonstrated exemplary coordination with local authorities, ensuring that aid reached the most vulnerable populations efficiently. By working hand-in-hand with other aid agencies, ARCS leveraged resources and expertise, enhancing the overall impact of humanitarian interventions through the BDRT and its network of volunteers.

During the operation, ARCS teams were on the ground, working closely with local authorities to assess the needs of affected communities. They coordinated the distribution of relief supplies, ensuring that aid was delivered promptly and equitably. Additionally, ARCS facilitated communication among various stakeholders, including international aid organizations, to ensure a unified response. These efforts reinforced ARCS's role as a vital link between local communities and the broader humanitarian network. Their commitment to coordination and collaboration significantly improved the effectiveness of aid delivery, ultimately benefiting those in need.

Lessons Learned Workshop on MPCA

From 1 to 12 June 2024, the ARCS/IFRC PMER teams conducted a lessons learned workshop in Kabul, focusing on MPCA. The workshop was attended by 40 participants, including ARCS and IFRC representatives, financial service providers, and volunteers. It aimed to share best practices, assess community participation and inclusivity, discuss challenges faced in the MPCA programme, and document remedies implemented by project staff.

Key findings highlighted budget limitations that restricted support to vulnerable populations. However, good practices included timely registration and distribution of assistance, effective community engagement, and real-time feedback through exit surveys. Recommendations emphasized the importance of timely fund transfers, adequate budget allocations to meet community needs, and sufficient time for the registration process to enhance project effectiveness.

Overall, the workshop underscored the importance of planning, resource allocation, and community involvement in successfully implementing MPCA programmes.



Lessons Learnt

- Adequate time was allocated for the registration process of MPCA aid recipients, ensuring the project was implemented effectively.
- ARCS staff involved in the MPCA received orientation and training, completing all household registrations via the RedRose system. This approach promoted standardized and efficient processes through proper database management.
- The registration and distribution of MPCA assistance were carried out in a timely manner, ensuring prompt delivery of support to the target population.
- Project staff engaged with the community prior to implementation to provide information about the project criteria, thereby promoting transparency and understanding.

Challenges

- Budget limitations constrained the project's ability to fully address the scope of needs, underscoring the challenge of supporting all vulnerable populations with limited resources.



Financial Report

DREF Operation

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2024/3-10	Operation	MDRAF014
Budget Timeframe	2024/3-7	Budget	APPROVED

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Prepared on 30/Dec/2024

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRAF014 - Afghanistan - Cold Wave

Operating Timeframe: 16 Mar 2024 to 31 Jul 2024

I. Summary

Opening Balance	0
Funds & Other Income	499,885
DREF Response Pillar	499,885
Expenditure	-499,803
Closing Balance	82

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	373,776	397,696	-23,920
PO04 - Health			0
PO05 - Water, Sanitation & Hygiene			0
PO06 - Protection, Gender and Inclusion	82,500	80,426	2,074
PO07 - Education			0
PO08 - Migration			0
PO09 - Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery			0
PO10 - Community Engagement and Accountability	1,000		1,000
PO11 - Environmental Sustainability			0
Planned Operations Total	457,276	478,123	-20,847
EA01 - Coordination and Partnerships			0
EA02 - Secretariat Services	30,509	17,663	12,846
EA03 - National Society Strengthening	12,100	4,017	8,083
Enabling Approaches Total	42,609	21,680	20,929
Grand Total	499,885	499,803	83

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

Please explain variances (if any)

A total of CHF 499,885 was allocated for this operation. The total expenditure recorded at the end of this operation was CHF 499,803 (99 percent of the budget), with a balance of CHF 82 to be returned to the DREF pot.

Upon consultation with the Finance and Operations teams, the variance in the financial report is due to the system not accurately reflecting the appropriate AP budget codes within their respective expenditure categories. For instance, although no budget was allocated under the construction and housing line, the system incorrectly indicates that a budget exists in this category.

Additionally, the total amount of CHF 23,920 under PO03 was intended to be allocated to its respective codes and categories. However, the financial report currently aggregates this amount under the PO03 multi-purpose cash line, leading to discrepancies in the allocation.

Given that the DREF was closed on 31 July 2024, any adjustments to the financial report would be time-consuming and could delay the reflection of these changes in both the ERP and BIO systems. Therefore, based on the justification provided by the Operations team, it is recommended to proceed with the current financial report and close the DREF operation. The current financial report is closely aligned with the overall approved budget, and there are no issues of underbudgeting or overbudgeting.

In moving into Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), expenditures that are completed by the National Society, including the sectoral level expenditures are captured in the financial report as one line under National Society Expenses (SFI 1). This therefore cause variances under other budget groups where NS expenditure was initially budgeted.



Contact Information

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[Click here for reference](#)

