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DREF operation update Nepal: Extreme cold

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF operation n° MDRNP006
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The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross and Red Crescent emergency response. DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of National Societies to respond to disasters.

A total of CHF 69,134 was allocated from IFRC DREF to support the Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) to conduct rapid assessment and deliver immediate assistance to 5,000 families across nine districts (Ilam, Taplejung, Sankhuwasava, Panchthar, Dhankuta, Khotang, Terhathum, Bhojpur and Solukhumbu) who were made vulnerable by the extreme cold following the onset of winter after their homes had been severely damaged or destroyed by the earthquake in the eastern Nepal in September 2011.

This includes the distribution of 10,000 blankets, support for volunteer mobilization and transport costs to enable relief teams and goods to reach people affected in very remote areas. The International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) country office in Nepal has made an in-kind contribution of 2,000 blankets meanwhile the remaining procurement of 8,000 blankets will be covered under this DREF.

The major donors and partners of this DREF are the Australian government, the American government, the Belgian government, the Austrian Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross and government, Danish Red Cross and government, the European commission humanitarian aid (ECHO), the Irish government, the Italian government, the Japanese Red Cross Society, the Luxembourg government, the Monaco Red Cross and government, the Netherlands Red Cross and government, the Norwegian Red Cross and government, the Spanish government, the Swedish Red Cross and government, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the Medtronic and Z Zurich Foundations, and other corporate and private donors.

This DREF-supported operation was expected to be completed by 13 April 2012. However, the procurement process of blankets is taking longer than expected. NRCS has requested for a two-month extension and the operation is expected to be completed by 13 June 2012. A final report will be issued three months after the end of operation (by 13 September 2012).

IFRC, on behalf of NRCS, would like to extend gratitude to all donors and partners for their generous contributions. Details of the contributions to this DREF can be found on www.ifrc.org/dref.



NRCS volunteers and staff preparing for blanket distribution in Tehrathum district. **Photo:** NRCS.

The situation

Since the last week of December 2011, extreme cold weather has crippled lives of many in different parts of the country. There were sparse to heavy rainfall in the *tarai* (southern part of the country), and hailstorm and intense snowfall in high-altitude areas leading to freezing temperature at night. Among them, the families in most of the areas affected by last September's earthquake were the most vulnerable, as their houses were severely damaged by the earthquake and they were taking shelter under self-made temporary structure using tarpaulin and other local materials, or are living in their damaged homes reinforced by tarpaulins.

Of the total 7,746 families displaced by the earthquake across 12 districts, some 5,000 families were suffering from extreme cold in nine districts: Taplejung, Ilam, Panchthar, Bhojpur, Sankhuwasava, Khotang, Solukhumbu, Tehrathum and Dhankuta.

Given the time sensitive nature of the support, the dispersed nature of the target group and the difficult terrain, it was not possible to conduct another detailed needs assessment of each individual family. Therefore, NRCS determined to distribute an additional two blankets per family to the 5,000 families affected highly by the extreme cold.

In recent weeks, with the end of the winter season, although there is some improvement of temperature in some districts, the temperature is still very low in the remote mountainous villages of Taplejung, Solukhumbu, Panchthar, and Sankhuwasava districts. Most of the displaced families are still living under their self-made temporary shelter. The Government of Nepal has prepared relief packages for the families affected by September's earthquake in the eastern region of the country. However, the distribution has not commenced yet.

NRCS district chapters (branches) have been distributing the additional blankets (two pieces of blankets per family) targeting 5,000 families in nine districts. So far, the distribution has been completed in Ilam, Sankhuwasava and Khotang districts. The other district chapters are intensifying the distribution activities.

Table 1: Distribution of blankets based on families unit

SN	District	No. of families targeted	Distribution during this reporting period	No. of families reached	Remarks
1	Ilam	1,089	854	1,089	Distribution completed
2	Taplejung	1,000	634	993	
3	Sankhuwasava	300	100	300	Distribution completed
4	Panchthar	1,075	225	400	
5	Dhankuta	541	-	-	Distribution data yet to receive from district*
6	Khotang	85	80	85	Distribution completed
7	Tehrathum	530	343	493	
8	Bhojpur	300	158	188	
9	Solukhumbu	80	-	-	Distribution data yet to receive from district*
Total		5,000	2,394	3,548	

**District chapters have sent blankets to sub-chapters for distribution and sub-chapters are distributing the blankets in their areas. Due to remoteness and lack of effective communication and transportation facilities from sub-chapters to district chapters, the collection of data and report is being delayed.*

Coordination and partnerships

Central Natural Disaster Relief Committee led by the Ministry of Home Affairs has recently decided to provide grants to reconstruct individual houses, school buildings, health service centres and office buildings damaged by the earthquake. Thus, the Government of Nepal is taking necessary steps to provide the grants. In accordance to the government's recovery plan, UNDP has commenced conducting masons training in some of the affected districts. The masons will be deployed for the reconstruction work in the near future.

The District Disaster Relief Committee (DDRC) has been coordinating the overall response operation in each district to minimize overlapping of activities and to maximize the number of targeted people are reached. NRCS district chapters have regularly been attending DDRC meetings and sharing their relief updates (distribution update) with the DDRC members in the operation districts.

In the last week of February, a team comprising of deputy director and senior officer from NRCS, and representatives from IFRC and ICRC carried out field visit in Taplejung, Panchthar and Ilam districts to monitor the overall situation and distribution progress.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Progress towards outcomes

Outcome: 5,000 displaced families (approximately 30,000 people) who have been suffering from extreme cold in earthquake affected areas will benefit from the provision of blankets to meet their immediate needs.	
Outputs (expected results): Families receive blankets to better protection from the cold environment and adverse health conditions.	
Activities planned	Progress to date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement and storage of, as replenishment of 8,000 blankets, according to IFRC/NRCS standard procedures (2,000 blankets have been donated by ICRC). 	<p>Procurement of 8,000 blankets is on process as per NRCS procurement policy and procedure. Tender for procurement was made and blanket samples from some selected suppliers were sent to Nepal Bureau of Standard and Metrology for quality checking.</p> <p>During the reporting period, NRCS received reports from the Nepal Bureau of Standard and Metrology which showed the blankets meeting standards as mentioned in specifications. Following this, NRCS procurement section issued purchase order to the selected supplier. The supplier will provide the delivery by the end of May 2012.</p> <p>Hence, NRCS requires additional two months to complete the procurement (no cost extension of operation for two months, until 13 June 2012).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobilization of staff and volunteers in nine districts for assessment and distribution. 	NRCS has mobilized over 160 trained staff and volunteers for assessment and distribution of blankets.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dispatch and transport of 10,000 blankets from NRCS warehouses in national headquarters and Biratnagar to the distribution sites. 	A total of 8,000 blankets were dispatched from central warehouse at national headquarters to regional warehouse at Biratnagar. Meanwhile, the regional warehouse also received 2,000 blankets from ICRC. The regional warehouse has dispatched all 10,000 blankets to the nine districts respectively based on the need assessment reports.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribution of blankets (two per family) at unit level by trained staff and volunteers. 	The district chapters have intensified distribution of additional blankets to the families affected by extreme cold in the nine districts. So far, more than 3,500 families have received blankets. The distribution has already been completed in three districts: Ilam, Sankhuwasava and Khotang.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and reporting of distributions. 	<p>District chapters have been documenting the distribution data and reporting to national headquarters regularly. District chapter and sub-chapter governance volunteers have been monitoring the situation and distribution activities closely.</p> <p>The national headquarters has been coordinating and monitoring the operation based on the regular information received from district chapters as well as the monitoring visits carried out by the headquarters itself.</p> <p>In the last week of February, a team comprising of a deputy director and senior officer of NRCS disaster management department and representatives from IFRC and ICRC, visited Taplejung, Panchthar and Ilam districts to see the overall situation and progress on distribution.</p> <p>During the visit, the team noticed that most of the families</p>

	<p>affected due to the extreme cold had received additional blankets in Taplejung and Ilam districts while there were many families in Panchthar who had yet to receive the blankets. The monitoring team suggested the district chapter to expedite distribution and complete within stipulated time.</p> <p>The team also visited field and interacted with the families who had received additional blankets from NRCS. They were using the blankets and they said that they were satisfied with the things received from Red Cross.</p>
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Table 2: Distribution of blankets based on provision unit

SN	District	No. of blanket needed	No. of blanket distributed	No. of blanket yet to be distributed	Remarks
1	Ilam	2,178	2,178	0	
2	Taplejung	2,000	1,986	14	
3	Sankhuwasava	600	600	0	
4	Panchthar	2,150	800	1,350	
5	Dhankuta	1,082	-	1,082	Distribution data is yet to receive from district chapter.
6	Khotang	170	170	0	
7	Terhathum	1,060	986	74	
8	Bhojpur	600	376	224	
9	Solukhumbu	160	-	160	Distribution data is yet to receive from district chapter.
Total		10,000	7,096	2,904	

Lessons learnt workshop

On 29-30 March 2012, NRCS conducted a lessons learnt workshop in Biratnagar to discuss on lessons learnt, challenges and best practices of the overall response operations (earthquake and extreme cold DREF operations). The NRCS chairperson, vice chairperson, treasurer general, president of disaster and crisis management committee, district executive committee members from the operation districts, and director, deputy director and other concerned staff from disaster management department attended the meeting. The meeting has intensively discussed on the strengths and gaps of the overall response operation. NRCS is drafting the workshop report. Findings from the workshop will be captured in the final report.

Challenges/constraints

Due to the time consumed by Nepal Bureau of Standard and Metrology in providing quality checking report of blankets, NRCS could not place purchase order to the supplier in time. This finally has led to the delay in receiving required quantity of blankets. It is expected that the supplier will deliver the blankets by the end of May 2012, so there is a need of a no-cost extension of the operation period for two months (until 13 June 2012).

Dispersed nature of target group as well as difficult terrain made it some difficulty in distributing the blankets in remote areas of hilly districts.

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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGOs\) in Disaster Relief](#) and the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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The IFRC's work is guided by [Strategy 2020](#) which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.