

PROGRAMME UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

CENTRAL AMERICA

22 December 2003

Appeal No. 01.50/03

Appeal Target: CHF 3,875,324

Programme Update No.2

Period covered: 1 June – 30 September

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 180 countries.

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In Brief

Appeal coverage: 86.2%; See attached Contributions List for details.

Outstanding needs: CHF 542,390

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Guatemala Annual Appeal (Appeal 01.48/2003); Pan American Disaster Response Unit Annual Appeal (Appeal 01.47/2003)

Programme Summary: The Regional Delegation in Panama has completed the staffing process required to be fully functional and operational as officers in the areas of health, communications and administration have been hired. The Regional Reporting Unit also recruited a regional reporting officer.

Work continued over the reporting period on the revision of community-based disaster preparedness modules, five of which are scheduled to be finalized by the end of the year. Progress has been made in HIV/AIDS programming in the region, particularly in Honduras, Panama, Guatemala and El Salvador. Following a workshop held in Nicaragua, the regional health programme has begun the design process for integrated models of community health to be implemented in cooperation with Participating National Societies (PNSs) in the field. The regional organizational development programme continues to promote working with vulnerable populations, as integrated branch development projects are developed in the Darién, Panama with the indigenous population and in Chinandega, Nicaragua, with commercial sex workers. The regional programme is formulating strategies to involve and retain indigenous people as members of the newly formed Guatemala City branch of the Guatemalan Red Cross. The humanitarian principles and values coordinator is assisted by two members of local staff who are helping develop, implement and monitor projects focusing on youth violence and HIV/AIDS related stigma. An English version of the Honduran Red Cross "Breaking the Silence" video is under development.

The youth communication networks have begun the process of reviewing their current Plans of Action (PoA) and developing the PoA for 2004 to 2007. These two networks are currently run and managed by National Societies, with technical and financial support from the Federation, as the Regional Delegation gradually transfers increased project management responsibilities to National Societies.

The downsizing of operations in the field continues as a shift from Heads of Delegations to Federation Representatives has taken place. El Salvador and Nicaragua are now clustered under one Federation Representative who will finish his contract in December 2003, and Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico are clustered under a Federation Representative located in Guatemala.

A major challenge for the Regional Delegation continues to be receiving pledges from its committed donors late in the year. In particular, the lack of funding support for the disaster preparedness programme is hampering programme implementation.

Steady support to the Federation continues from the British, Norwegian and Swedish Red Cross Societies and the UK Department for International Development (DfID). In kind contributions were received from the American Red Cross (ARC) with the closure of Hurricane Mitch regional operations in Central America. ARC presence in the region has been limited to El Salvador, while the Italian, Netherlands and Spanish Red Cross Societies remain with a strong presence in the region.

Operational developments

The region remains vulnerable to social instability and natural disasters. Mexico has been hit several times by major storms that caused severe flooding in more than 20 states and affected 60 percent of the country's population. The flooding caused damage to homes, crops and roads in all the affected areas. There were no reported deaths, but thousands of people were forced out of their homes and into temporary shelters. With two months remaining in the hurricane season, the Federation decided to launch an emergency appeal in order to provide relief to the families affected by the flooding. Some 80,000 Swiss francs were allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to initiate the activities planned.

Guatemala has been threatened by major civil unrest as a result of the candidacy of the former dictator, Efraín Ríos Montt, who stands accused of grave human rights violations, to the presidency of the republic. On 24 July, after the Supreme Court overturned the Constitutional Court's decision to accept his candidacy, Montt's supporters took to the streets in the capital city, blocking traffic and causing riots. After this day, known as "Black Thursday," the stability, efficiency and credibility of the government deteriorated, as well as the government's ability to guarantee fundamental human rights in the country. Coordination between volunteers, the Guatemalan Red Cross, the ICRC and the Federation enabled the GRC to provide humanitarian assistance to persons affected by these events. The GRC, the ICRC and the Federation also agreed on a special contingency plan as a preventative measure against problems surrounding the electoral process.

In El Salvador, the Salvadoran government declared a 30-day state of emergency on 24 July as a result of an increase in the number of pneumonia cases in the country. According to the statistics from the Ministry of Health, during the first half of the year more than 300 people died from pneumonia, 60 percent of which were persons over 60 years of age and 27 percent of which were persons under 9 years of age. There were several reasons for the rapid increase in the number of pneumonia cases, including biological and nutritional factors, environmental pollution, climate change and an inability to recognize the warning signs of severe respiratory infections. The Salvadorean Red Cross Society provided respiratory treatment, particularly to children under five years of age, and developed a plan of action with the Federation and local PNSs to raise awareness of warning signs and preventative measures. By the beginning of September, the epidemic was under control.

In Honduras, heavy rains whipped the northwest region of the country on 14 and 15 September, causing the River Ulúa to rise at a rate of 25 to 50 centimetres per hour. At its peak, the river level was 3.12 metres higher than normal. The flooding and rains caused serious damage to the country's infrastructure and to the agricultural and fishing sectors. The Honduran Red Cross activated its national intervention teams (NITs) in the northwest region of the country to evacuate families from flooded areas, provide food and psycho-social assistance, and monitor the rising levels of local rivers.

Panama experienced heavy flooding in July, prompting the Panamanian president to declare a state of emergency in an area just outside the capital city. Heavy rains combined with high tides, causing several rivers to overflow and flooding 12 communities. Volunteers from several branches of the Red Cross Society of Panama (PRC) took part in rescue operations and provided relief to affected communities. Less than one month later, on 13 August, Panama was hit by an earthquake measuring 5.3 on the Richter scale. Since earthquakes are rare in Panama, there was a degree of panic among residents, but fortunately no one was killed or injured. The earthquake caused only minor structural damage; three houses near the epicentre of the earthquake were totally destroyed and seven were

condemned for demolition. The PRC undertook search and rescue activities and assisted in calming residents. The PRC also assisted the local government in managing a temporary shelter for the people who lost their homes, including providing relief items and food rations.

Health and care

Goal: Efficient, responsive, and focused programmes that contribute to reducing vulnerability are implemented by the National Societies in the region.

Objective: The National Societies of the region are contributing to a significant improvement of health conditions and are empowering vulnerable groups and communities to reduce vulnerability to ill health and disease.

A plan of action for the region has been drawn up based on the findings of a valuable five day workshop that was attended by representatives of National Societies and PNSs in the region. The regional health delegate is supported by the health delegate in El Salvador and a health officer in Guatemala. In mid-September the team was joined by the newly-recruited regional health officer, based in Panama.

Objective 1: Red Cross / Red Crescent partnerships in health have been developed and strengthened, and the capacities of National Society health departments in Central America have been reinforced in line with Strategy 2010.

Progress/Achievements

As a follow up to the Santiago de Chile meeting, a health meeting for the Central America region was held between 5 and 9 May in Panama facilitated by the regional health delegate. In total there were eight participants representing the Federation and the American, Canadian, French and Italian Red Cross Societies. Participants agreed to hold four coordination meetings. The first to take place was "Models of Community Health" held in Nicaragua in late August. The meeting provided the Federation with feedback on the expectations of the National Societies and PNSs with respect to the Regional Delegation, emphasizing that the main role of the Federation is to facilitate communication and coordination.

Objective 2: The response of National Societies in Central America to the HIV/AIDS epidemic has been refined and scaled up in the areas of prevention, care and the fight against stigma and discrimination.

Progress/Achievements

Some tangible progress has been made in HIV/AIDS programming in the region, particularly in Honduras, Panama, Guatemala and El Salvador. There will also be a considerable increase in work on HIV/AIDS in the region as of late 2003, and a workshop on HIV/AIDS is scheduled to take place in Honduras in mid-November.

In Guatemala, a baseline study on HIV/AIDS was carried out in four Guatemalan Red Cross (GRC) branches. A monitoring and evaluation instrument was developed and cooperation agreements for technical and financial support from the Federation and the GRC were drawn up for these branches. Various prevention and anti-stigma activities were carried out in the GRC branches, such as eight informational radio spots that were broadcasted on the local radio in the Izábal province in local languages. In addition, four GRC branches now have training materials available to begin working on stigma prevention projects. Finally, strategic alliances have been drawn up between the GRC, the Guatemalan Ministry of Health and various NGOs working in the field. The GRC has also informed governmental and non-governmental bodies of its HIV/AIDS programme and sent two letters requesting the commitment of legislators of the next government.

In El Salvador, consultations were held with the National Secretary for Family Affairs to plan joint actions with Salvadorean Red Cross Society (SRC) youth in HIV/AIDS prevention. The SRC also participated in a training workshop on HIV/AIDS facilitation skills. The Regional Delegation continued to work with strategic partners to define priority areas for proposals to the Global Fund, such as the maternal support centre, CALMA, and the University of Central America in El Salvador (UCA).

In Panama, an HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan was drawn up and presented at a meeting of the HIV/AIDS Thematic Group, at which time the Ministry of Health expressed interest in incorporating parts of the plan into its national HIV/AIDS strategy. The Federation is also supporting an HIV/AIDS coordinator in the Red Cross Society of Panama for six months to work on the plan and promote it to potential donors.

In Nicaragua, the Italian Red Cross has continued its valuable work on peer education and is in contact with the Federation regional health delegate to define methodologies.

Honduras remains the regional leader in HIV/AIDS programming with its anti-stigma projects and its progressive stance on working with groups of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWAs). It has also created a video entitled "Breaking the Silence" that addresses the needs of people living with HIV/AIDS. These projects are supported by the Federation and the American Red Cross (ARC). The Honduran Red Cross (HRC) is currently working with the American Red Cross on a voluntary testing and counselling (VCT) programme which addresses the needs of specific target groups, including street children. In addition, the HRC has coordinated work with the Central American network for persons living with HIV/AIDS (REDLA+), and with other organizations working in the field of HIV/AIDS.

Objective 3: High quality, integrated health interventions, with the participation of Ministries of Health, partners and vulnerable communities, are being implemented by the National Societies.

Progress/Achievements

From 20 to 23 August a workshop was held in Managua, Nicaragua focusing on "Models of Community Health." The workshop was attended by 29 representatives from the six National Societies in the region, as well as representatives from the Federation, and the American, Canadian and Spanish Red Cross Societies. The workshop included the following:

- Presentations by World Health Organization representatives regarding the importance of public health in the region, the current health status in Central America, the need to emphasize preventative campaigns and the issue of inequality and poor access to health services.
- Demonstrations of public health tools, such as water and sanitation tools, models of community participation (especially the PHAST methodology) and monitoring and evaluation tools.
- A presentation by the regional health delegate on the Santiago de Chile Commitment, emphasizing the importance of carrying out health programmes in accordance with the Commitment and the Plan of Action of the Inter American Conference.
- A visit to a Nicaraguan Red Cross IMCI community health project funded by the Canadian Red Cross in the outskirts of Managua that focuses on home-based care, including examining children and educating mothers and caregivers.
- A visit to a health centre where youth health educators presented their health education programme.
- Discussions on the importance of networking and sharing knowledge.
- A presentation by the regional health delegate on the Caribbean Red Cross HIV/AIDS Network (CARAN).

As a result of the workshop, it became clear that most National Societies are using community health models based around IMCI. Also from this workshop, three working groups were formed to discuss the formation of a Central American health network. The working groups agreed on the need for a Central American health network, and decided that a team should develop this idea further and report on its findings at the next health meeting in Honduras in November.

In Guatemala, an IMCI baseline study was carried out in the GRC branches of Coatepeque, Tecún Umán, El Palmar and Retalhuleo. Various coordination meetings took place between GRC health staff, the Federation, the American Red Cross, the Ministry of Health and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) to define the role of each and work out common strategies. An agreement for technical cooperation between the GRC and the Ministry of Health was signed on 9 September. Cooperation agreements to implement IMCI in GRC branches have been drawn up and approved, and instructional manuals for IMCI have been reproduced and sent to four branches in the country. In

In addition, 70 volunteers and health workers from the GRC and the Ministry of Health were trained in the IMCI methodology.

The GRC has completed the construction of latrines for 64 families in the Sacapulas province and the families have been trained in hygiene and sanitation. The GRC water and sanitation unit will receive financial support from the American Red Cross to revitalize its role and impact. The ARC also received a further USD 50,000 from Chlorine Chemistry Council, a private foundation in the US, to fund water and sanitation projects in Cobán. The American and Netherlands Red Cross Societies have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the use of this donation.

In El Salvador, the first semester of implementation of the IMCI methodology was evaluated. In addition, the latrine project of the Salvadorean Red Cross Society in San Miguel and Usulután is continuing and there have been coordination meetings with PRRAC regarding the proposal to implement a latrine and community education programme in the eastern provinces over 18 months. The proposal calls for the construction of 900 latrines and will be the responsibility of the Salvadorean Red Cross Society, with technical assistance from the Federation and PNSs. Also, in coordination with Salvadorean Red Cross Society management and the organizational development office of the SRC, a workshop focusing on project design was held with 28 volunteers of six branches in the Ahuachapan province. Finally, the Empress Shoken Fund Project moved ahead with the selection of community leaders.

Objective 4: The Federation's response capacity in Central America in the area of emergency health has been increased.

Progress/Achievements

The regional health delegate has been working closely with the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) water and sanitation delegate. Both participated in the South American Health Directors' meeting in Lima, and also participated in the partnership meeting in Guatemala, where they discussed future water and sanitation projects with the GRC. The two delegates worked together on the Appeal 2004 process to avoid duplication and ensure coverage across health programmes.

The regional health delegate also met with a representative of the Canadian Red Cross (CRC) to discuss psycho-social health needs during and after disasters. The CRC is carrying out evaluations on psycho-social health programmes in Central and South America and will share the results with when available.

Impact

- National Societies are designing and implementing health programmes in accordance with the Santiago de Chile Commitment and the Plan of Action of the Inter American Conference, concentrating on Community Health; HIV/AIDS; Voluntary Non-Remunerated Blood Donation (VNRBD) and Health in Emergencies.
- Programmes addressing HIV/AIDS and focusing on prevention and anti-stigma have increased.
- Communication and coordination between the Federation, National Societies and PNSs have improved through regular dialogue and meetings. This has led to sharing of ideas, materials, lessons learned and methodologies.
- Coordination with PAHO, UNAIDS and UNICEF has improved.
- The number of proposals being written has increased, with the Salvadorean Red Cross Society applying for EURO 400,000 of PRRAC funding as well as Inter American Development Bank funds. The National Society has already secured Empress Shoken funding.
- Youth departments and HIV/AIDS programmes have improved through involving youth in projects.
- Working groups have been formed to examine a Central American health network and will report their findings at the Honduran HIV/AIDS workshop.

Constraints

- Many PNSs in the region are scaling-down. For example, the American Red Cross closed its regional office in Guatemala at the end of October, leaving no health delegates in the area. This will place an extra burden on the Federation in following up programmes with National Societies.

- The Santiago de Chile Commitment and the Plan of Action of the Inter American Conference need to be promoted as many National Societies and PNS are not fully aware of their implications.
- Improved coordination with PAHO is necessary as the general perception is that many of key members of the organization are not aware of the “special relationship” with the Federation.
- The development of the Inter-American Network on VNRBD needs to be re-energized. A coordinator for this programme was selected in Honduras in 2002, however, roles should be more clearly defined and a plan of action formulated.

Coordination

The National Societies of Panama and Honduras lead the region in terms of coordination with PLWAs. This must be encouraged in all National Societies. In addition, the Regional Delegation has continued to foster good relationships with PAHO, and will make this a priority for all Red Cross health personnel at the Secretariat, National Society and PNS levels. Finally, regular meetings with all Red Cross regional health actors in May and August have fostered a more cohesive approach.

Disaster Preparedness

Goal: Efficient, responsive and focused programmes that contribute to reducing vulnerability are implemented by National Societies in the region.

The disaster preparedness programme has faced several challenges since the last programme update. Throughout the period, there has been a continued lack of funding that has hampered the accomplishment of many of the disaster preparedness programme’s goals. In addition, the regional disaster preparedness delegate left the delegation in September, leaving an opening in the Regional Delegation that is yet to be filled.

The head of the Regional Delegation, with support from interns from National Societies, taken on the task of reviewing the community based disaster preparedness modules. There remains a strong commitment to have the materials ready and published by December 2003.

The Costa Rican Red Cross continues to lead the way in reviewing and developing new modules, work that is being carried out with support from local universities and regional disaster organizations.

Objective 1: To continue the process of strengthening the disaster preparedness and response capacity of the National Societies and the Regional Delegation.

Progress/Achievements

During the reporting period, the regional disaster preparedness delegate worked to strengthen the regional team by coordinating activities with the newly appointed disaster coordinator of the Federation’s country office and the head of the disaster preparedness office in the Costa Rican Red Cross. In addition, the delegate assisted the Salvadorean Red Cross Society’s relief director in planning a national intervention team (NIT) workshop.

Discussions were held with the disaster coordinator of the Haitian National Red Cross Society regarding the support required to further develop the national disaster management programme, and work was done with the Nicaraguan Red Cross relief director on the revision of the National Society’s disaster plan.

In June, the regional disaster preparedness delegate participated in and supported the XII Regional Meeting of Disaster Relief Personnel, held in Honduras. During the meeting, it was agreed that rather than await the occurrence of emergencies, or disasters, the focus would be expanded to include non-traditional areas such as community based disaster preparedness. In accordance with Federation policy and the Plan of Action of the Inter American Conference, it was also agreed that relief personnel would adopt a more developmental approach, linking relief, rehabilitation and development activities.

Also in June, a pre-hurricane workshop was held for National Societies in the region that are affected by hurricanes. During this workshop, the English version of the guide for the regional hurricane plan was revised, and the National

Societies present developed drafts of their plans for the 2003 hurricane season. These documents will form the basis for the Secretariat's 2003 hurricane plan.

The regional delegate also worked with the regional information technology coordinator to develop the Spanish version of the Disaster Management Information System (DMIS) alert page, providing information on imminent or current disaster situations, for use by National Societies. The new version was sent to National Society and Secretariat representatives in the region. The page will be used to provide information in emergency situations, thus facilitating the input of data on DMIS.

The regional delegate coordinated a mission to Mexico for the disaster management delegate of PADRU to develop the emergency operation centre proposal for the Mexican Red Cross (MRC). The delegate provided support to the MRC for the planning and convening of its state disaster coordinators' meeting, which included a review of the disaster operations that were carried out by the MRC from 2002 to July 2003. In addition, the regional delegate gave a fundraising presentation to the state fundraising coordinators in Mexico.

Objective 2: An integrated community based disaster response programme model, complete with tools and guidelines, is implemented.

Progress/Achievements

Discussions were held with the Canadian Red Cross representative in Honduras regarding collaboration in the current review process of the community based disaster preparedness (CBDP) programme. The CRC representative in El Salvador has shown interest in participating in this process and would like to continue the dialogue with the Regional Delegation.

There are currently eight CBDP modules being created by disaster preparedness staff across the region.

- Community Preparedness
- Family Response Plan
- Exploring Community Development
- Psychological Support
- School Response Plan
- Business and Industry Response Plan
- Shelter Management
- Healthy Homes.

Of these eight modules, five will be published in 2003. Discussions were held with the PAHO representative in Honduras with regard to collaboration in the revision of the remaining manuals.

With financial support from the PAHO office in Quito, Ecuador, a CBDP facilitators' training workshop took place in Panama in July. The workshop was followed by a validation of the draft of the disaster prevention manual. Eight National Societies participated in the workshop as well as representatives from the Central and South American Regional Delegations and the disaster coordinator from the Federation's Guatemala office. Six National Societies committed to carrying out further validations during August and agreed to submit recommendations for adjustments to the manual.

The recommendations for the disaster preparedness manual have been received and incorporated into the revision of the existing manual. The sub regional disaster preparedness delegate in Trinidad, assisted by the CBDP programme coordinator from Costa Rica, completed the final edit before the manual was handed over to a local university in Costa Rica to add graphic art and complete the publishing process.

Agreements were reached with UNICEF for the use and inclusion of the board game "Riesgolandia," (Risk Land) in the disaster preparedness manual. The board game is available in Spanish, English, Creole and French. An additional agreement was reached with International Strategy for the Reduction of Natural Disasters for the use of a radio soap opera that addresses the topic of hurricanes and hurricane prevention. PAHO's Resource Centre for

Information in Disasters (CRID) has also committed to the production of a CD containing the CBDP manuals, reference documents and general bibliographical information.

The CBDP development will continue through the recruitment of National Society interns with expertise in the area. The Cuban Red Cross director for community preparedness will provide support through the end of the year in this process. Other experts will be sought from the American, British and Canadian Red Cross Societies for the beginning of 2004 until such time as a disaster preparedness delegate is recruited by the regional delegation.

Impact

- All National Societies will have access to common materials to strengthen their community based disaster programmes.
- The Costa Rican Red Cross is a valued resource within the region for CBDP programming and can be developed as a centre of excellence and a reference for all National Societies in the region.
- Reduction of loss of life has begun to be observed and documented in Costa Rica as a direct result of the CBDP activities in the communities.
- CBDP has helped create an awareness of the need for early warning and community alert systems as a means to save life and protect property.
- Many communities are engaged in completing their own risk mapping, which leads to greater participation in civil society as they make emergency management offices aware of shortcomings and risks.
- Risk reduction, increased awareness and increased activities are the result of community work in the field of disaster preparedness.

Constraints

- Regional disaster preparedness activities are hampered by the lack of a regional delegate to coordinate efforts. Nevertheless, disaster activities and programmes are ongoing in National Societies and Federation country offices in the region.

Coordination

Discussions have been ongoing with the Centre for Natural Disaster Prevention in Central America (CEPREDENAC) regarding collaboration in disaster preparedness programmes. Relations have also been maintained with UNICEF, and plans for the organization's involvement in the disaster preparedness assessment mission to Haiti were made. The final documents from the Inter American Conference were shared with both CEPREDENAC and UNICEF. Finally, the Regional Delegation worked in close collaboration with PADRU to organize the relief meeting in Honduras and the pre-hurricane workshop held in Santo Domingo.

Organizational Development

Objective 1: The capacity of National Society branches in El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama to develop integrated programming is increased.

Progress/Achievements

Integrated branch development (IBD) projects were started in Chinandega, Nicaragua, and in El Real, Panama, during the reporting period. According to the IBD methodology, the branches are being developed on the basis of a concrete project that meets the needs of vulnerable people. In Chinandega, the Red Cross branch selected the city's 400 commercial sex workers as the vulnerable group to assist. In El Real, which is on the banks of the Rio Tuira in the Darién rainforest, the Red Cross branch selected approximately 500 Embera Indians as the focus of the project. In both branches, multi-sectoral teams have been established, including representatives of the vulnerable groups themselves, governmental agencies, and non-governmental organizations.

The multi-sectoral team in Nicaragua is in the process of carrying out a participatory needs assessment, which includes interviewing up to one hundred commercial sex workers, their children, their clients, bar owners and other major stakeholders. In Panama, the multi-sectoral team is in the initial stages of a participatory needs assessment, facilitating community mapping and interviews among the Embera Indians living in and around El Real.

Two training of trainers' modules have been prepared in English and in Spanish. A third, more simplified module, has been prepared for use in the Darién. Two training of trainers' workshops, focusing on participatory learning and action (PLA), were facilitated by the regional organizational development delegate in Nicaragua and one such workshop was also facilitated by the delegate in Panama. The workshops in Nicaragua included the participation of the Federation's organizational development officer in Guatemala, a member of the board of the newly-formed Guatemala City Red Cross branch, a regional organizational development officer, and the Nicaragua Golfo de Fonseca project coordinator.

In El Real, a computer and printer were supplied to the Red Cross branch through the IBD project and, with the help of the regional information technology coordinator, computer training was provided.

An evaluation meeting of the Golfo de Fonseca project was held in August, attended by representatives from the Nicaraguan and Salvadorean Red Cross Societies, the head of the Regional Delegation and the regional organizational development delegate. During the workshop, participants discussed various issues related to the project and future perspectives. The participants signed a proposal to transfer all future management responsibility for the project to the respective National Societies and the proposal was sent to London for approval by the British Red Cross. Meanwhile, activities under the Golfo de Fonseca project are continuing according to the plan set out in the 2003 Annual Appeal.

In El Salvador, several branches are participating in capacity building programmes in an effort to become financially self-sufficient. The process of strengthening branches is developing through the workers in the field that are supporting the strengthening of volunteer resources and promoting the organization of branches in areas where there is currently no Red Cross presence.

In Guatemala, the programme for the institutional rescue plan for the Guatemalan Red Cross is ongoing. This plan provides the Guatemalan Red Cross with guidelines to follow throughout the second half of the year in order to make the National Society stable and financially self-sufficient. The institutional rescue plan requires the GRC to increase its activities, communication and coordination, as well as to update its financial and administrative systems. In addition to this, the Regional Delegation has been assisting the GRC in efforts to create a new plan of action for the National Society.

Objective 2: A resource development programme, based on strategic marketing concepts, is implemented in the National Societies of El Salvador, Mexico and Nicaragua.

This project will be a priority in 2004.

Objective 3: A process of planned change—owned, directed and carried out by the Nicaraguan Red Cross headquarters and branch levels—is institutionalized.

Progress/Achievements

The Nicaraguan change process project continues to make progress, albeit slowly. The Nicaraguan Red Cross (NRC) change process is currently at a delicate stage and almost any changes in the environment could slow down the achievement of project goals. Similarly, a major disaster in the area could interrupt and set back progress.

The regional organizational development delegate has provided technical assistance to the Nicaraguan Red Cross and its efforts to restructure the National Society. In addition, negotiations are underway with the British Red Cross to place an organizational development delegate in Nicaragua.

The process of expanding the Statutes of the NRC is ongoing. It was hoped that the new Statutes would be ready to be submitted to the Joint Commission by 2 August but, as this was not possible, the final draft is scheduled to be sent to Geneva by the end of October.

There has been much discussion within the Nicaraguan Red Cross regarding the definition of the structure of the National Society. This will be one of the first challenges in the process of modernizing the National Society in order to establish a structure that meets the needs of the National Society and, at the same time, is financially self-sufficient.

Changes were made to the administrative and financial procedures manual with the support of the Spanish Red Cross. Several meetings took place to discuss the format of the manual until the final version was submitted to the National Board for approval. The NRC received a great deal of support for this project from a Federation volunteer who contributed to specific modules, particularly those regarding purchasing, bank control, storage, internal control and proposals. The procedures outlined in these specific modules are being implemented in the National Society, but the administrative and financial procedures manual as a whole is still awaiting approval. In addition, administrative, policy and procedure manuals continue to be drawn up, and four additional manuals are expected to be ready by the end of the year.

The general management of the NRC is planning to launch both the strategic plan and the national development plan (NDP) in October on World Risk Management Day, on the same day that the World Disaster Report is presented in Geneva.

A new programme for the creation of a SISPRO database is available. This database will allow for the collection of information regarding different projects, areas of intervention, log frames, appeals, counterparts, donors and the generation of reports. The database is expected to be ready by the end of the year.

Objective 4: An inclusive, modern, and innovative volunteer management plan is consolidated by the National Society of Honduras and strengthened in Costa Rica, Guatemala and Nicaragua.

This project will be a priority in 2004.

Objective 5: The roles of governance and management are well-defined in practice by the National Societies of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

Progress/Achievements

During this period, the regional organizational development delegate participated in a capacity building workshop for the national board of the Nicaraguan Red Cross that was organized by the National Society. The workshop was also attended by the head of the Regional Delegation and the ICRC's cooperation delegate.

An identification and formulation of projects workshop was held in Nicaragua in July. Participants in this course were those who had previously taken the leadership and management certification course for NGOs. These same participants also took part in a Project Planning Process (PPP) workshop during June.

Objective 6: The internal and external communications capacity has been strengthened in each of the seven National Societies and increased competence is gaining in professional and dependable reporting during times of disasters.

Progress/Achievements

During this period, the Regional Delegation's information officer resigned and the responsibility of the communications capacity building project was transferred to the Red Cross Society of Panama (PRC).

A proposal for a follow up of the communications capacity building project was discussed and approved by the head of the Regional Delegation and the Red Cross Society of Panama.

A meeting was held during the first week of July to undertake a joint review of the communications plan with the participation of the Federation, the ICRC and the coordinator of the Communications Forum. This plan requires further review in order to be finalized.

A workshop for journalists was scheduled to take place in El Salvador, but the event was cancelled due to the tense political situation in neighbouring Guatemala.

Impact

- In Nicaragua, a cohesive, highly-motivated team for the IBD project, made up mostly of volunteers has been established. The team has been successful in obtaining the support of the city's commercial sex workers for the project.
- The Chinandega branch of the Red Cross has taken ownership of the IBD project from the outset, bearing in mind that the Federation's role is the provision of technical assistance.
- In El Real, the regional "cacique" of the Embera Indians living along the Rio Tuira has publicly endorsed the project, stating that the Red Cross is the only organization that has questioned the Indians about their needs and their opinions about their problems. The endorsement and participation of the "cacique" has ensured that the project will be supported by this vulnerable group.
- Several other organizations have expressed an interest in the integrated branch development methodology and in collaborating with the regional organizational development programme, such as the World Food Programme (WFP), the Pan American Health Organization, UNICEF, the Panamanian Ministry of Health and the Inter American Development Bank (IDB), among others.
- The Guatemala City Red Cross branch has requested to begin implementation of an IBD project.

Constraints

- Finding suitable counterparts for the project at the headquarters of both the Nicaraguan Red Cross and the Red Cross Society of Panama has been difficult. Discussions are continuing between the regional organizational development programme and the leadership of the two National Societies. There is a lack of capacity within the National Societies.
- The biggest constraint in the Nicaragua change process continues to be the leadership of the National Society, which is constrained by the day-to-day demands of running the organization. These tasks need to be delegated.
- The Unión branch office of the Golfo de Fonseca project in El Salvador was robbed. Among the items taken were a computer, a telefax, a digital camera and a television. The total value of the stolen items is estimated at USD 6,537. These goods were later recovered and are slowly being reinstalled in the office.

Coordination

The regional organizational development team has coordinated extensively with partners working on the integrated branch development projects, both in Chinandega, Nicaragua and El Real, Panama. The Nicaraguan branch of the Red Cross initiated meetings with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) regarding funding for the Chinandega project. JICA has also expressed interest in working with the regional delegation on a regional HIV/AIDS programme. The Federation Representative in Nicaragua discussed the Chinandega project with the World Bank and DFID regarding possible funding and cooperation. In Panama, the Regional Delegation has been discussing the possibility of collaborating with UNICEF and PAHO on the project taking place in El Real.

As part of the El Real project, the Regional Delegation has been working with the Organization of American States (OAS) to collect information about health and living conditions of the indigenous people in the Darién region of Panama. This information is being shared with the regional coordinator for humanitarian principles and values for use in projects addressing the rights of indigenous people.

Humanitarian Values

Goal: Efficient, responsive, and focused programmers that contribute to reducing vulnerability are implemented by the National Societies in the region.

Objective: Principles and humanitarian values are integrated into and form the foundation of all core areas and the programming of National Societies within the region.

In July, two local staff members were hired to assist the regional coordinator of humanitarian principles and values. They were hired to facilitate coordination between National Societies and increase the Regional Delegation's ability to achieve the goals set forth in the Annual Appeal. The two assistants were hired until the end of December of this year, at which time the delegation will evaluate the necessity of having full-time staff to assist the coordinator.

- A finance assistant was hired to manage the funds for humanitarian principles and values projects, specifically the funds for the youth violence and HIV/AIDS stigma projects that are being developed in Honduras.
- A humanitarian principles and values assistant was hired to support the coordinator, focusing on youth violence, HIV/AIDS stigma and the education for human rights project developed with the ICRC. The assistant is also responsible for reports, translating English documents into Spanish and for coordination with the Regional Delegation of the ICRC.

Objective 1: A regional humanitarian principles and values programme, including strategy, sustainable infrastructure, a volunteer network and partnerships (including vulnerable groups) has been developed and is functioning.

Progress/Achievements

During the period covered by this update, the regional office for humanitarian principles and values hosted a meeting with communications, reporting and youth officers in order to coordinate regional humanitarian principles and values initiatives.

Recently, much work has been carried out to improve the resources available to train volunteers. There was a meeting between the Regional Delegation and the Costa Rican, Honduran and Salvadorean Red Cross Societies in order to revise the humanitarian principles and values sections of the documents used by National Societies to train volunteers. In addition, the Costa Rican Red Cross presented a volunteer training manual that can be used throughout the region and the Honduran Red Cross presented a needs assessment analysis for the training of volunteers on the subject of humanitarian values during times of disaster.

The Regional Delegation translated the document "Human Rights and Minorities" into Spanish. This document is being distributed to National Societies in order to promote minority rights and will be used by National Societies in their training programmes.

The drafts of the information material created for the Misquita and Garifuna indigenous populations in Honduras and Nicaragua have been revised. These documents have been written in their respective native languages and contain information regarding the fundamental principles and humanitarian values.

Objective 2: At least three national societies in the region have developed and are implementing projects to reduce youth violence by 2007.

Progress/Achievements

Projects addressing youth violence are ongoing in Honduras and El Salvador, where youths, their families and schools are benefiting from awareness raising with regard to the problem. Youth volunteers from the Honduran Red Cross (HRC) have been active in this area, and are particularly benefiting from these projects as they are able to participate in activities designed to help their peers.

In Honduras, the regional coordinator for humanitarian principles and values has been working with the executive board of the HRC and has approved a study and project to be developed within the National Society that address youth violence. Proposals for two youth violence projects were designed for the communities of Ciudad España and San Francisco, both located in the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa.

Building on workshops held earlier in the year to address youth violence in the country, representatives of the Honduran, Italian and Netherlands Red Cross Societies met with consultants from the Honduran Christian Youth Association (ACJH) to revise documents addressing projects in this area. These documents defined the goals of the

projects, outlined their timeframes and designated responsibilities to the projects' various participants. In addition, three meetings were held with PNSs to revise and expand the humanitarian principles and values component of the institutional strategy for the Honduran Red Cross.

In El Salvador, members of the regional humanitarian principles and values office met with the humanitarian principles and values coordinator from the Salvadorean Red Cross Society (SRC) to share information regarding the prevention of youth violence, and to discuss projects already being implemented in Honduras. The goal is to begin programmes addressing youth violence in the SRC as soon as possible. In addition, a meeting was held between members of the regional office and the youth and information officers of the Salvadorean Red Cross Society to discuss the theme of youth violence.

Objective 3: Stigma and discrimination within the population of those living with HIV/AIDS has been reduced.

Progress/Achievements

A meeting was held between the Regional Delegation and the Honduran Red Cross's HIV/AIDS programme coordinator to discuss the status and progress of the National Society's anti-stigma project. In addition, the Regional Delegation and the Canadian and Italian Red Cross Societies participated in a workshop addressing the design of project proposals in the area of HIV/AIDS related stigma. The Regional Delegation also collaborated on the organization and development of the National Human Rights and HIV/AIDS Conference along with Honduran National Commission for Human Rights and representatives of the Honduran National AIDS Forum.

The Regional Delegation presented the video "Breaking the Silence," that was produced earlier this year at meetings with Central American National Societies, the Caribbean department of Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility (CARAM), and NGOs working in Central America in the area of HIV/AIDS, such as the Connecting Life Organization, UNAIDS, the German Social Cooperation Service (DED) and the Honduran National AIDS Forum. The video, which contains testimonies of people living with HIV/AIDS, was created by the Regional Delegation with the help of the Honduran Red Cross, the Association of People Living with Aids in Honduras and other international organizations. The testimonies and narratives of the video have been translated into English and the English version is currently being finalized.

Objective 4: The Project "Education for Human Rights" is being implemented in all seven of the national societies in the Central America region.

Progress/Achievements

The Regional Delegation made four field visits to the teachers working on the "Education for Human Rights" project in Honduras. The delegation also held three meetings with the Honduran Ministry of Education to evaluate the progress being made in this project. As part of the Federation's efforts to expand this project to other countries in the region, regional delegates met with representatives of the Salvadorean Ministry of Education to discuss implementing the project in El Salvador. In addition, delegates have been preparing for both a national evaluation and a training workshop, both in Honduras, and a national training workshop in El Salvador that will address this project.

Impact

- Students in the region have been introduced to the concepts of human rights as part of this project. In addition, youth volunteers have been trained in this area by the ICRC and the Federation.
- With knowledge of the principles of human rights, members of the Misquita and Garifuna communities have been empowered to improve their own social, economic and political status.
- The National Society of Honduras has begun the first pilot project for the prevention of youth violence in the communities of San Francisco and Ciudad España in the city of Tegucigalpa.
- The video "Breaking the Silence" has been used as a tool for promoting awareness regarding HIV/AIDS stigma.
- There has been increased involvement of persons living with HIV/AIDS as Red Cross volunteers to assist the National Society and the Federation in anti-stigma projects.

- New anti-stigma projects have been created and are now being considered by governmental and non-governmental agencies with a view to collaboration.

Constraints

- Coordination with the Ministries of Education has been complicated by a need to more clearly define respective roles and responsibilities. Attempts to clarify this are ongoing and progress is being made.
- There has been some confusion among the Regional Delegation and the Participating National Societies regarding the lead role in the youth violence projects. For this reason, two meetings were held so that all partners involved in the projects could discuss and establish criteria for coordination.

Coordination

There has been close coordination between the Regional Delegation and the National Societies in the region on all projects. In particular, the Regional Delegation has worked closely with the Honduran Red Cross to coordinate projects to reduce youth violence. The coordination between Red Cross staff and volunteers in the various National Societies in the region has improved, allowing for better coordination of resources and information sharing. There has also been increased coordination with Participating National Societies in the region, such as the Canadian, Italian and Netherlands Red Cross Societies. Finally, there is now a permanent communication link between the Federation and the ICRC, allowing the two organizations to share information and coordinate activities.

The Regional Delegation has worked closely with Save the Children, the Honduran Scout Movement and the Honduran Christian Youth Association on the projects to reduce youth violence. The delegation also worked with the Central American network for persons living with HIV/AIDS (REDLA+) and various national associations for persons living with HIV/AIDS to reduce HIV/AIDS stigma.

In addition, the Regional Delegation has worked closely with Honduran government, coordinating with the Honduran Ministry of Education regarding the Education for Human Rights project and with the Honduran Ministry of Health regarding reducing youth violence. Finally, the Regional Delegation has also been working with the Salvadorean Ministry of Education to initiate the "Education for Human Rights" project in El Salvador.

Federation Coordination

Goal: The Red Cross, working through enhanced coordination and strategic Red Cross and external partnerships, is implementing effective programmes in the four core areas, reaching the most vulnerable.

Objective: Effective coordination with strategic partners in planning and implementation of programmes has resulted in improving relevance and efficiency of activities, as well as impact on beneficiaries.

Progress/Achievements

The Cooperation Agreement Strategy (CAS) processes are being reviewed with the goal of completing four CAS before the end of the year. A meeting of Directors General is being planned for the month of November to review the progress being made towards the completion of the CAS and encourage ownership of the process by all National Societies. A British Red Cross delegate previously working on CAS processes at the Secretariat in Geneva and now based in the region, will bring her expertise to this meeting. The Caribbean regional CAS (RCAS) was reviewed during the eighth bi-annual meeting held in Port of Spain in early summer, and an increased amount of activities was added to an already complex Strategy. Work will be carried out in future to refine the Strategy in order to facilitate its implementation.

The Federation took part in the preparation of proposals for submission to PRRAC, ECHO and DIPECHO and is fulfilling its obligation to provide monitoring and evaluation support to the two DIPECHO funded projects currently managed by the Spanish Red Cross in El Salvador and Guatemala.

The post-Mitch reduction continues in the region. Many PNSs representatives have now left, leaving professional local staff behind to continue to search for funding opportunities. Coordination with PNSs has helped to avert a major and sudden shrinkage of staff within the National Societies in the region. The reduction has been progressive, with the National Societies absorbing certain positions that will provide them with resource mobilization through a

sustained level of services. Only in Guatemala has the reduction had an impact in the operation of the National Society. PNSs remaining in the region have benefited from the processing of visas for their delegates by the Federation's Regional Delegation.

The Guatemalan Red Cross hosted a partnership meeting to help the new board of the National Society face the challenge of a reduction of its financial base and previous inadequate management of its financial assets by the former board. The "institutional rescue plan" developed during the meeting resembles a mini-CAS with all members of the Movement having pledged their active support and participated fully in the presentations and deliberations that led to the formulation of the rescue plan. The plan is to be monitored by the Federation and finally evaluated by all donors on 16 December.

The harmonization project has benefited from the optimization of resources of both the ICRC and the Federation, Board training and orientation, communication fora, youth network meetings, and thematic meetings on reduction of violence and international humanitarian law are amongst the joint activities in which human and financial resources were pooled.

National Societies continue to implement local agreements based on the agreement with PAHO signed in May 2002. The participation of National Societies in the CCM (country coordination meeting) groups, which are determining access to global funds, continues and El Salvador has prepared and submitted proposals. As Panama is not participating in the 2004 global fund proposals, the National Society is in a good position to submit proposals to major donors for its HIV/AIDS strategic plan.

The Federation has continued promoting the sharing of knowledge and the coordination of proposals and projects, including working with a Nicaraguan Red Cross staff member in the development of a database to compile all projects and proposals developed by members of the Movement. The database will be expanded in 2004 to provide links to funding sources and information on the dates for submission of proposals to major donors and government aid agencies.

The Regional Delegation rolled out the "building better planning process" in September. The plan of action (PoA) for 2004 was developed with an agreement to continue to work on the PoA through 2007 as of the beginning of February of next year.

Impact

- The most vulnerable stand to gain better access to Red Cross services as the National Societies increase their reach and secure resources from different sources to extend services in their jurisdictions.
- National Societies are recognizing and identifying their vulnerable populations and increasing ownership of projects and programmes currently run by Movement partners.
- The National Societies have improved their visibility by participating in strategic partnerships and alliances. The National Societies see a unified Movement and receive integrated and well planned support from the Federation and the ICRC. PNSs have become more interested in contributing to the implementation of National Society national development plans (NDP) and have begun to coordinate their resources through CAS and consortia initiatives.

Constraints

It continues to be a challenge to plan and implement projects as funding is often made available during the last two to three months of the year. In addition, major PNSs have completed their projects and have been unable to secure the funding to maintain a presence in the region. This reduces the resources available to National Societies in the region, making it difficult to maintain programmes.

PNS headquarters still drive their field staff to seek funding, without sufficiently taking into consideration the National Societies' national development plans. Greater transparency is required from all members of the Movement.

International Representation

Goal: A wider range of international support will be mobilized to further Federation aims at the national, regional and international level.

Objective: The Federation will have raised the awareness of Red Cross aims and activities, and will have mobilized support for Red Cross activities at national and regional levels in core areas of *Strategy 2010*.

Progress/Achievements

National Society participation in the CCM, sponsored by the Inter American Development Bank, is very active in all countries where meetings are taking place. To further improve coordination, a consultant was retained to help refocus the international representation priorities for the Regional Delegation. The consultancy had two main objectives:

- To concentrate on existing fora and events in which Red Cross principles, humanitarian values and policies of the Movement can be promoted in support of the most vulnerable, and boosting an expanded role in advocacy by National Societies.
- To identify the link between the Federation's programmes and the corporate sector following the existing corporate social responsibility model promoted by the World Bank and the UN.

A report on the Regional Delegation's international representation was issued in October.

A partnership meeting in Guatemala took place during the month of July in the context of the institutional rescue plan promoted by the newly elected leadership of the Guatemalan Red Cross. A donor meeting was hosted in Haiti in the month of August to reach a tentative agreement on the areas for key support to the Haitian National Red Cross Society.

Coordination with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has led to some agreements to share educational materials as well as the possibility of coordinating joint meetings in different countries in the region. PADRU is also participating in this intra-agency group. CEPREDENAC invited the National Red Cross Societies in the region to participate in the forum Mitch +5, to be held in Honduras in early December. The aim of the forum is to review the progress that was made following Hurricane Mitch and to provide support to the declaration for disaster risk reduction that will be the aim of most governments for the next decade.

Impact

- Fora and international working groups have opened their membership to National Society participation. This will give National Societies a greater voice and better recognition for their national policies and initiatives.
- An enhanced international representation programme should facilitate the work of increasing advocacy by the National Societies, supported by the Federation in international fora and events.
- Global funding and strategic partners are more reliable long term funding sources for National Societies.

Constraints

Participation in international meetings is expensive and time consuming, and with limited resources in the Regional Delegation, the level of participation has been limited to the most important fora. A more proactive approach should be taken by National Societies in order to work in a federated way and increase participation in such events.

Resources for National Societies to participate in international fora are not yet available. More regional policies on humanitarian issues need to be developed in order to support presentations and active participation by Red Cross Societies. A set of documents containing all Federation policies should be prepared in the languages of the region as a handbook for National Society leaders.

As a result of the Regional Delegation's wide jurisdictional responsibility, there is a need for a programme coordinator. This post has been vacant for several months and there is an urgent need to fill the position.

For further information please contact:

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct and is committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Central America regional

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 01.50/2003

PLEDGES RECEIVED

17/12/2003

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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CASH

					TOTAL COVERAGE	
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				3,875,324		86.2%
CASH CARRIED FORWARD				1,961,363		
BRITISH - RC		12,000	GBP	26,910	14.02.03	PROGRAM COORDINATOR
BRITISH - GOVT/DFID (04)				19,250	24.02.03	DPP RESPONSE CAPACITY
BRITISH - GOVT/DFID (04)				38,500	24.02.03	ORGANISATIONAL DEV.
BRITISH - GOVT/DFID (04)				13,500	24.02.03	REGIONAL HEALTH
BRITISH - GOVT/DFID (04)				35,000	24.02.03	HUMANITARIAN VALUES
BRITISH - GOVT/DFID (04)				35,000	24.02.03	REGIONAL REP.
BRITISH - GOVT/DFID (04)				26,000	24.02.03	HONDURAS HIV/AIDS
BRITISH - GOVT/DFID (04)				71,500	24.02.03	INSTITUTIONAL DEV.
BRITISH - RC		17,253	GBP	38,448	02.12.03	ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DELEGATE
NORWEGIAN -GOVT/RC				214,000	14.05.03	INTEGRATED BRANCH DEV., REG. ORGANISATIONAL DEV. NETWORK, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT, REG. HV PROGRAMME
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC				66,000	21.10.03	CBDP
NORWEGIAN -GOVT/RC				257,324	21.10.03	HEALTH DELEGATE, OD DELEGATE, FINANCE DELEGATE, HIV/AIDS
SWEDISH - GOVT		700,000	SEK	112,000	21.05.03	HEALTH AND CARE
SWEDISH - GOVT		600,000	SEK	96,000	21.05.03	ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
CAPACITY BUILDING FUND ALLOCATION				103,000	03/11/2003	PCR161
CAPACITY BUILDING FUND ALLOCATION				115,000	30/04/2003	P43002
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				3,228,795	CHF	83.3%

KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
GERMANY	DELEGATE(S)			12,156		
GREAT BRITAIN	DELEGATE(S)			57,166		
NORWAY	DELEGATE(S)			42,710		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				112,032	CHF	2.9%

ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	