

NICARAGUA: HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

20 December
2000

*appeal no. 01.20/2000
situation report no. 3; Revised budget
period covered: 1 July - 30 September 2000*

Progress has been made during the reporting period in the areas of community based disaster preparedness aimed at strengthening local capacities, in community based health care, especially through the Gulf of Fonseca project and in institutional development. Branch development has been given particular emphasis. Strategy 2010 has now been integrated more fully into the National Society's work. The budget for appeal 01.20/2000 has been revised in line with the levels of funding received for the programmes.

The context

Due to its geographic location and the high concentration of active volcanoes and faults, natural disasters are a common phenomenon in Nicaragua. Hurricanes, tsunamis, and minor volcanic eruptions occurred over the last decade, but the disaster with the highest impact on the country's recent history was hurricane Mitch in 1998 which had devastating effects. For the population, still vulnerable after the civil war which ended a few years before, the hurricane represented yet another obstacle on their way to post-war recovery.

Hurricane Mitch has heightened the incidence of abject poverty. Nicaragua's population of 4.35 million suffers from 60% unemployment and with 1.7 persons living in extreme poverty, Nicaragua is the second poorest country in the Americas.

The social and economic impacts of hurricane Mitch will take decades to overcome in spite of massive foreign aid to the country, as will the social effect of the disappearance of family members and friends and the uprooting of entire communities, forced to abandon high-risk areas.

Latest events

The activities of the Nicaraguan Red Cross (NRC), the participating National Societies (PNSs) and the Federation delegation are ongoing. The current stable situation facilitates uninterrupted activities in the field of rehabilitation and institutional development. Confronting the hurricane season, disaster response and training has been one of the main activities. In early July, the NRC assisted in the aftermath of the earthquake in the Lagoon of Masaya.. Although the earthquake was moderate, it caused 7 casualties and serious damage to the city's infrastructure.

The NRC participated in search and rescue activities shortly after the earthquake, with technical advice and logistical support from the Federation. Discussions were held with members of the local branch office and with the Ministry of Health (MINSAs) participants on the technical aspects of these activities. This brought to light the fact that, although the response capacity of the National Society has been improved since the onset of Mitch, logistical and technical capacities require further strengthening. In order to build on experience, an evaluation report has been drawn up.

The nutrition deficit caused by poverty and drought has resulted in food distribution activities which are carried out by various organisations. The Federation is on alert with respect to this situation which affects large parts of Nicaragua, together with other critical problems such as dengue and local incidents of leishmaniasis, reported in specific areas of the country.

The Federation delegation in Nicaragua and the Nicaraguan Red Cross participated in the launch of the World Disaster Report, which received considerable media coverage. Besides focusing on the ongoing disasters in the region, the importance of disaster prevention was stressed, particularly in the area of preventive health care at community level.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Rehabilitation •

The Federation delegation is presently involved in several rehabilitation programmes with funds from the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and OFDA/US AID.

Temporary Housing Project:

This project is financed by OFDA/USAID and monitored and partly implemented by the Nicaraguan Red Cross. Around 4,000 families affected by hurricane Mitch are benefiting from the project.

In spite of considerable developments, difficult access, geographical disparity and lack of legal deeds in relation to land ownership, have caused delays in the implementation. The project has therefore been extended until December 2000.

Construction should be completed by the end of December and a final audit of the project will then be carried out by 15 February 2001. OFDA/USAID have approved the allocation of the balance of funds to community based disaster preparedness activities.

The chart below records progress to date:

ORGANIZATION	Temporary Homes	Percentage Achieved
Netherlands Red Cross	299	100 %
French Red Cross	60	100 %
Spanish Red Cross	1000	57 %
Austrian Red Cross / CHICA	300	100 %
Subtotal:	1,659	
Jubilee House Community	400	100%
CARE	358	100 %
HABITAR	109	100 %
Rubén Darío Foundation	82	50 %
MOVIMONDO	160	100 %
PNUD/INIFOM	941	84 %
Ayuda en Acción	18	100 %
Maranatha	6	100%
Entrepueblos	54	100%
Subtotal:	2,128	
TOTAL	3,787	

Disaster Preparedness •

Community-based Disaster Preparedness:

The regional programme financed by DIPECHO was finalised in March 2000. Funding from OFDA which has been provided until February 2001 will ensure continuation of the community based disaster preparedness work. The project targets four departments: Estelí, Chinandega, León and Matagalpa.

The Japanese Red Cross, through its Cocibolca Project, will finance communal disaster preparedness education activities in Boaco and Chontales for a one year period. The practical methodologies and activities are still to be defined and will be clarified before the end of the year.

The above mentioned regions cover two geographical areas: the area of the pacific coast, which was seriously damaged by Mitch, is receiving funding from AID/OFDA and the regions of the Department of Boaco and Chontales, are receiving funding contributions from the Japanese Red Cross. In both cases, the NRC is implementing the projects and will make available the necessary human resources and experience in order to ensure successful implementation in vulnerable communities.

The project aims at reducing the impact of a disaster and at building and strengthening local organization and structures. The importance of the participation of women has been stressed. Through micro-projects, preventive health information and local contingency plans, women actively participate in reducing the effects and risk of a disaster in their communities.

These projects illustrate that well organised projects targeting the most vulnerable which build capacity at community level also work to improve the image of the National Society.

The NRC has also generated a strategic alliance with the Civil Defence authorities to work in 100 communities and, at the end of this process, the communities involved should have developed emergency plans and simulation exercises.

Health •

The Federation health delegate gives support to NRC health projects, organises activities and coordinates health initiatives with the PNSs. Formal and informal meetings with the PNSs took place during the trimester with regard to technical issues.

In connection with the Masaya earthquake, the Federation health delegate visited the affected area. The Federation participated in various training activities over this period. The health delegate participated in the health care necessity identification workshop for the Managua area, together with the Nicaraguan Red Cross, the Spanish Red Cross and local organisations. The Federation was also present during the volunteers' workshop sponsored by the Canadian Red Cross. Both of these events took place during the month of August.

During the trimester, visits were paid to the different geographical areas where the Federation is working. The Boaco and Chontales Departments were visited on the occasion of the initiation of the Japanese Red Cross financed Cocibolca project.

Once the American Red Cross financed rehabilitation of the blood bank has been completed, the health delegate will support the NRC in carrying out the blood quality programme which focuses on voluntary blood donor recruitment.

The Gulf of Fonseca Project:

The Gulf of Fonseca Project covers areas in El Salvador and Nicaragua and seeks close coordination with the Swiss Red Cross which is implementing a similar bilateral project in the Fonseca area in Honduras. The project is being implemented with British Red Cross funding. The project manager visited the regions concerned for a one month period. The visit was also utilised to contact leaders of the National Societies and present and future stakeholders such as governmental and non governmental organizations.

The Federation is confident that this project will prove fruitful, firstly as a result of its regional character, involving countries from the same region which, in spite of common features, have specific differences. Secondly, the project will demonstrate the potential of multilateral co-operation with respect to inter-institutional collaboration between the Red Cross Movement and governmental and non-governmental organisations. Thirdly, the project will demonstrate the capacity of the National Society to implement community health care programmes - a non traditional activity in the region. This will also result in the National Society working more closely in accordance with the four core areas of Strategy 2010.

Humanitarian Values •

Given the turnover rate of volunteers in the National Society, there is a weakness in knowledge and understanding of the humanitarian values of the Red Cross Movement. The Federation therefore emphasises, through workshops or personal contact, the essence of the Red Cross mission and humanitarian values.

During the reporting period, workshops have been organised on the humanitarian principles of the Movement: two for the boards of directors at departmental level and two at local level. In the general training of volunteers in youth and relief, humanitarian principles and IHL have been reinforced. The NRC has worked closely with the ICRC, organising workshops financed by the ICRC in IHL throughout the country, which are now concluding. Governmental commissions responsible for promoting IHL have been established, giving the NRC the possibility of influencing sectors with which they have not collaborated previously, raising public awareness of the humanitarian mandate of the Movement.

Institutional Development •

The activities carried out by the NRC during the earthquake Masaya in July raised a number of questions and motivated the transfer of personnel as well as other changes in the branches. Through its ID delegate, the Federation supported the NRC in activities aimed at reorganising the branch offices. The presence of the ID Delegate helped to minimise the negative effects of this reorganisation, ensuring a balanced and stable transition with new branch authorities.

During this trimester, the first funds from the Spanish Red Cross for the ID Program, were obtained. Funds have been transferred as an operational advance to the Nicaraguan Red Cross for the implementation of the following: strengthening of the accounting system, expansion of the planning office, strengthening of programmes and strengthening of the financial and administrative control system.

Proposals for three additional projects with SRC funds were drawn up: strengthening of the volunteer force, strengthening of the fundraising office and strengthening the fundraising programme. These projects have been formally presented to the Spanish Red Cross for approval.

An internal auditor has been appointed to the NRC since September 2000. During the trimester, the NRC has considerably improved internal financial control, with the establishment of a new internal control system. The first steps in the implementation of the new national development plan were taken. Before beginning implementation of the development plan, a national meeting was held with an external consultant present.

The Governing Board is participating more actively than previously, which can be interpreted as a positive outcome of continuous training and workshops in governance and management. The workshops have also had a positive effect at branch level and have contributed to the development of strong branches with human resources and a clear vision of their activities.

Cocibolca Project:

The Cocibolca project is an integrated branch development project, which apart from aiming at improving the management structure of the branches has a health and a disaster preparedness component. The project is financed by the Japanese Red Cross.

The project activities, separated into ID, DPP and health care necessitate a different mentality with respect to the role of the NRC, from the traditional focus on the blood bank, ambulances and rescue to a focus on capacity building, both on branch and at a community level. At the branch level, the reference point is that in order to develop a modern functional organisation able to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable, basic internal management structures must be in place, as well as trained and equipped staff and personnel.

The project aims at promoting activities in departmental branch offices which have received little or no support from “Mitch” funds, but that nevertheless share the country’s problems. One of the objectives

of the Federation is to support the NRC in trying to narrow the financial gap between the “Mitch” areas and “non-Mitch” areas.

In September, a meeting was organised in which the goals of the project were defined as well as a plan for the implementation of activities. In October, funds for the planned activities were transferred to each branch enabling them to start the activities by the beginning of November.

Apart from the benefits the NRC receives as a result of this project (training of personnel, re-equipping of the branch offices, communal prestige, attraction of volunteers with non-traditional profiles, etc.), the project aims at promoting the vision of the NRC as a deliver of community services, and as an actor in the development of local communities.

Outstanding needs

Funding of the appeal currently stands at 94.7 per cent. The balance of funding is required in order to implement disaster preparedness activities and for coordination and management support. Part of the Spanish Red Cross funds earmarked for institutional development have been transferred to appeal 01.29/2001.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

Relations are maintained with different organisations working in Nicaragua, especially ECHO partners with whom meetings once a month to co-ordinate activities are organised.

Regular contact is maintained with the media through the press office of the NRC.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

Following discussions, an administrative team has been appointed in the Federation delegation in order to ensure, in collaboration with the Nicaraguan Red Cross, the establishment of a solid foundation for the continuity of NRC programmes.

Communication between the different components of the Red Cross Movement in Nicaragua has resulted in improved coordination of initiatives. The support of the Federation and the PNSs has also been managed in a more effective manner in the implementation of NRC programmes and activities, which has had a positive outcome for the daily functioning of the National Society.

The capacity building project of the NRC continued during the period with technical support from the Federation delegates and the bilateral delegates from the Participating National Societies. The components of the Movement in Nicaragua have created more direct and fluent communication with their counterparts, facilitating constructive dialogue.

There is a high turnover in the management in the headquarters and the management team is not fully integrated. The National Society has accepted that steps have to be taken to improve the performance of the Society and there has been a change of attitude as regards the importance of making organisational changes which will allow the NRC to move forward on the path towards achieving the characteristics of a well functioning National Society.

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This and other reports on Federation operations are available on the Federation's website: <http://www.ifrc.org>

Nicaragua						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 01.20/2000		PLEDGES RECEIVED			12/20/00	
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				1,412,939		TOTAL COVERAGE 94.7%
Balance carried forward from 1999				484,453		
REALLOCATION OF INCOME				153,124		
CAYMAN ISLANDS - RC		4,250	USD	7,176	24.07.00	
JAPANESE - RC		25,960,000	JPY	408,299	15.08.00	CAPACITY BUILDING 4 BRANCHES, CONSTRUCTION RELIEF WAREHOUSE EXTENSION, RECONSTRUCTION OF SHCHOOL FENCE, PRUCHASE DIDACTIV MATERIAL FOR DP AND VISIBILITY EDUCATION, ID DELEGATE COSTS
NORWEGIAN - RC		163,250	NOK	31,073	26.10.00	HEALTH, FONSECA BAY
SPANISH - RC		15,481,000	ESP	150,000	07/02/99	For appeal 2000
SPANISH - RC		89,518,000	ESP		07/02/99	transferred to Appeal 2001
SWEDISH - GOVT		150,000	SEK	27,300	06.10.00	HEALTH DELEGATE COSTS
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				1,261,425	CHF	89.3%
KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
Finland	Delegate(s)			31,868		
France	Delegate(s)			44,353		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				76,221	CHF	5.4%
ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	
THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS ARE LINKED TO THIS APPEAL:						
PNI000, PNI004, PNI005, PNI160						

Nicaragua				ANNEX I
REVISED BUDGET SUMMARY		APPEAL No. 01.20/2000		
TYPE	CHF			
RELIEF NEEDS	<u>Initial Budget</u>	<u>Revised Budget</u>	<u>Variances</u>	
Shelter & constructions	30,000		30,000	
Clothing & textiles	94,920		94,920	
Food & seeds				
Water	26,250			
Medical & first aid	64,440		64,440	
Teaching materials	36,750		36,750	
Utensils & tools	522,150			
Other relief supplies	151,500	14,400	137,100	
TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS	926,010	14,400	363,210	
CAPITAL EQUIPMENT				
Vehicles	57,678		57,678	
Computers	383,850	32,300	351,550	
Telecom. equipment		26,540	(26,540)	
Other equipment	84,542		84,542	
PROGRAMME SUPPORT				
Programme management (automatic calculation)	237,402	95,274	142,128	
Technical support (automatic calculation)	71,066	28,520	42,546	
Professional services (automatic calculation)	78,811	31,629	47,182	
TRANSPORT STORAGE & VEHICLE COSTS	53,280	35,840	17,440	
PERSONNEL				
Expatriate staff		510,520	(510,520)	
National staff	383,580	248,200	135,380	
Training	660,456	22,600	637,856	
ADMINISTRATIVE & GENERAL SERVICES				
Travel & related expenses	67,200	31,575	35,625	
Information expenses	51,732	30,679	21,053	
Administrative & general expenses	384,319	141,736	242,583	
External workshops & seminars	80,850	163,125	(82,275)	
TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS	2,594,766	1,398,539	1,196,227	
TOTAL APPEAL CASH, KIND, SERVICES	3,520,776	1,412,939		
LESS AVAILABLE RESOURCES (-)		1,337,646		
NET REQUEST		75,293		