

In Society

Credit Suisse is convinced that corporate responsibility toward the environment and society at large is a key factor for economic success.

Overview 56_Partnership with the ICRC 59_Charity Notes for Education in Africa 60_Microfinance Conference



Credit Suisse has signed a long-term partnership agreement with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). This makes Credit Suisse the first globally active bank to affiliate itself with the ICRC Corporate Support Group. The members of this group are the “preferred partners” of the ICRC in special events and campaigns in support of its worldwide activities. Pictured are Jakob Kellenberger (left), president of the ICRC, and Walter B. Kielholz, chairman of the Board of Directors of Credit Suisse, immediately after signing the agreement.

Seeing the Bigger Picture

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Credit Suisse signed a strategic partnership on March 31. Bulletin invited Jakob Kellenberger, president of the ICRC, and Walter B. Kielholz, chairman of the Board of Credit Suisse, to a discussion on the common challenges facing the two organizations and the importance of the agreement.

Interview: Mandana Razavi

If one were to superimpose a world map pinpointing all the Credit Suisse locations over a world map depicting all the areas in which the ICRC is active, one would quickly realize that, in most cases, the ICRC is active wherever Credit Suisse is not represented – and vice versa.

In a world where borders are increasingly losing their importance and an eye for the bigger picture is becoming ever more important, alliances such as the one between the ICRC and Credit Suisse will help to create significant overlapping. This unique partnership will enable both entities to gain a broader perspective of global developments by sharing experiences and knowledge of the regions in which they operate.

Bulletin: The ICRC and Credit Suisse have just entered into a strategic partnership. What exactly does this mean?

Jakob Kellenberger: The word “strategic” is perhaps slightly too strong a word for this alliance. I think I can speak for both parties when I say that both Credit Suisse and the ICRC have partners in our own respective spheres of activity with whom we have greater strategic common ground than we do with one another. However, I would prefer to say that this is a privileged partnership that contains certain strategic aspects. It gives the ICRC the opportunity to conduct a

dialogue with an internationally active business enterprise. I am convinced that exchanges of views on a number of different subjects will be very fruitful for both parties. For example, we will be able to sit down and compare our expertise and our views on specific global developments and trends.

Walter B. Kielholz: Where Credit Suisse is concerned, getting acquainted with the views of the ICRC is of particular interest. For us as a globally active financial services provider, the so-called emerging markets are becoming ever more important. For example, our research units are extensively involved in assessing the situation in these countries and regions. This also extends to countries where there is a certain degree of potential for conflict.

Unfortunately, it is often the case that conflicts cannot be foreseen. But the ICRC has profound knowledge when it comes to assessing conflict-prone situations. The employees of the ICRC possess great experience when it comes to evaluating whether a situation in a given region is likely to come to a head, or whether positive developments are in the cards.

Can you tell us a bit more about the practical benefits of this alliance?

Jakob Kellenberger: Around 60 percent of our operations are conducted in Islamic countries. At the same time, we are an

organization that has its roots in the West. To a certain extent, this contradiction has forced us to come to grips with Islamic culture and politics, as well as its world view.

You will not receive acceptance for your work in these countries unless you are able to observe and understand these situations from the perspective of the population in question. I believe that by exchanging such experiences we can contribute something interesting on the topic of risk management, for example.

Walter B. Kielholz: Absolutely. The Middle East and the Gulf region are good examples of areas that have become very important to us in terms of growth. Unfortunately, they are anything but free of conflict. The in-depth knowledge of these countries possessed by ICRC delegates can help us incorporate other important insights into these markets and into our own analyses.

Another pressing issue in the modern era is the relationship between the development of a country and climate change. Credit Suisse also has its own units responsible for closely observing and analyzing the repercussions of global warming on economies and societies.

Jakob Kellenberger: But there are also valuable things that we can learn from Credit Suisse. We are particularly interested in the expertise of Credit Suisse in the areas of

staff management and training, logistics, IT technology, and communication. So you see, although we are two very different institutions, as internationally active organizations we often face quite similar challenges and problems, and in this respect mutual assistance can prove highly valuable.

As a result of this partnership, Credit Suisse will be the first globally active bank to become a member of the Corporate Support Group of the ICRC. What is the idea behind this Corporate Support Group?

Jakob Kellenberger: The original driving force was the desire to partly diversify the sources from which we obtain finance. The ICRC is currently 90 percent financed by national governments and the European Commission. The Corporate Support Group originated initially from the desire to obtain financial support from the private sector too. However, the idea of just approaching companies with a view to requesting money is not something that appeals to me.

The Corporate Support Group is designed to create a privileged partnership, whereby the focus of discussion is not just on funding alone but also on common challenges. However, the ICRC can only consider private-sector partners that meet high ethical standards.

And who initiated the partnership?

Credit Suisse or ICRC?

Walter B. Kielholz: Dialogue had been cultivated over a long period of time. But in the last 24 months – with the evolution into an integrated bank – the entire philanthropic area of Credit Suisse was restructured. The Executive Board decided to focus on certain key areas in this sphere too.

Partnership with the ICRC was precisely such an area of focus and was selected as one of four global Corporate Citizenship Initiatives Credit Suisse developed in 2007. The other three major initiatives relate to climate protection, the promotion of micro-finance and the education of more than 45,000 children and teenagers in developing countries.

Jakob Kellenberger: Walter Kielholz and I have known each other for many years. He has always been interested in humanitarian issues, and we have had lively discussions on precisely this subject for many years. That's why it gives us all the more pleasure to have now established a formal partnership that provides a practical mechanism for the subjects we have discussed. <



A historic moment: Jakob Kellenberger (left) and Walter B. Kielholz seal the signed partnership agreement with a handshake.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

is a non-partisan, neutral and independent organization. It is entrusted with an exclusively humanitarian mission to provide assistance to and to protect the lives and the dignity of people who fall victim to war and repression. Its tasks include visiting prisoners of war and refugees, searching for missing persons, carrying messages between family members who have been separated by conflict, reuniting separated families, and procuring food, water and medical assistance for civilians who cannot meet these basic needs themselves due to their circumstances. In conflict situations it manages and coordinates the international relief activities of the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement. By promoting and strengthening international humanitarian rights and universal humanitarian principles, it also seeks to prevent suffering. The movement began with the founding of the ICRC in 1863. The ICRC's budget currently is about 1.1 billion Swiss francs. Of this amount, more than 85 percent is spent on providing relief.



Jakob Kellenberger was a Swiss diplomat for 26 years before he was named president of the ICRC in 2000.

Neutrality and Independence

Bulletin: What makes the ICRC special?

Jakob Kellenberger: One special aspect, without doubt, is the fact that a number of the tasks we undertake are mandated directly by governments. That is set out in the Geneva Conventions. But the rigor with which we adhere to our principles, for example those of neutrality and independence, is also special. We don't make any concessions here.

What exactly do those two principles mean?

We never let any outsiders have a say in our decision-making process. It's always a purely internal matter. At the same time, this feature explains why the ICRC is able to act so quickly. This also helps to ensure a rapid and effective presence on the ground. We don't just parade our intentions, we also take action.

Do you just work from Geneva?

When I joined the ICRC I knew I wanted to travel to wherever our people work, particularly in areas that are precarious from a security point of view. I like to gain an impression of the whole situation, to get a feeling for what's happening. Moreover, I believe very little of what is reported in the media or elsewhere, as it often comes from hearsay and not from first-hand experience.

If you are suffering a setback, how do you find the strength to carry on?

When colleagues are killed, this is something that rocks you to the core. You feel responsible. And yet, with every day that goes by we experience our ability to provide genuine help to hundreds of thousands of people. You see the difference that the ICRC can make. I value being able to work for an organization that has the human resources and material means (including the necessary logistics) at its disposal to make a real difference.

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Preserving the Dignity of the Human Being

The red cross on a white background, together with the red crescent and the red crystal, symbolize work on behalf of the dignity of the human being, according to the seven fundamental principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality.

When traveling through Italy on business, Henri Dunant was a witness to the Battle of Solferino on June 24, 1859, and was horrified by the totally insufficient medical provision for the wounded on both sides. The result was the founding of the Comité international de la Croix-Rouge (CICR/ICRC) in Geneva in 1863.

For its humanitarian work in two world wars, as well as to commemorate the first hundred years of its existence, the ICRC was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1917, 1944 and 1963. Back in 1901, the ICRC's founder Henri Dunant received the first Nobel Peace Prize ever to be awarded, together with Frédéric Passy.

The Geneva Convention of 1864 has now become a thick volume of 600 articles in four separate conventions and two additional protocols, yet the basic mandate remains clear: "The protection of human life and human dignity."

In raw figures, in 2007 ICRC delegates visited around 520,000 prisoners at around 2,400 locations in 77 countries. Around 500,000 Red Cross messages were passed between family members separated from one another, and 761 children were reunited with their families. Approximately 2.5 million people received assistance from the ICRC in the form of food, another 4 million were

supplied with blankets, tents or articles of hygiene. Another 2.8 million people were supported by microeconomic projects or programs to support sustainable food production. More than 14.3 million were provided with water and sanitary facilities thanks to the ICRC, and around 2.9 million benefited from its health stations.

An important aspect of its activities is the organization's preventive work: Approximately 20,000 members of military, security and police units in more than 120 countries received tuition in international human rights, which required a budget of more than one billion francs. The goal is to cover 5 percent of our budgetary needs through individual or corporate donations.

The ICRC maintains branches in around 80 countries. Globally, around 12,000 people work for the organization, of which 800 are based at the organization's headquarters in Geneva, 1,500 are expatriates – half delegates and half specialists – and approximately 10,000 members are recruited on site in the areas where assistance is being provided. The ICRC is headed by a Committee chaired by Jakob Kellenberger as president. Olivier Vodoz and Christine Beerli are vice presidents and General Director Angelo Gnädinger heads up the six-person Directorate.

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Left The ICRC distributing water in Adré, Chad. **Right** View of the Geneva headquarters of the Comité International de la Croix-Rouge (CICR/ICRC).