

THE ALBANIAN MINE ACTION PROGRAMME

“ VICTIM ASSISTANCE IN ALBANIA ”

Presented by
Veri Dogjani - VA & MRE Officer, AMAE

Economic reintegration of mine and UXO survivors in NE Albania

- Since Kosovo crises in 1999, 34 people are killed and 238 injured in 39 directly mine affected villages
- Main economic activities in the region are: grazing, farming, gathering firewood and other subsistence livelihoods
- Around 230 families in Northeast Albania had a primary breadwinner disabled or killed, and saw their livestock and farmland destroyed

Sight Impaired mine survivor and family at home in Has district

Socio-economic reintegration through Animal Husbandry – 2003 / 2006

- A revolving fund was set up since 2003, with US funding through the ITF, for the development of household economies among families of victims in NE Albania.
- A survey was done to:
 - Identify viable household economies: agricultural activities of beekeeping and animal husbandry were identified
 - Determine the situation, needs and capabilities of each family; criteria were: degree of suffering/disability, economic situation and experience with relevant agricultural activities
- Each family, according to priorities, is allocated either 1 or 2 cows, (or 10 goats/sheep or 5 beehives), procured out of the revolving fund - \$1200-1500 per family
- Families are also trained and assisted including veterinary services for the cow
- Loans have to be repaid in 2/3 years
- To date; 67 mine survivors and their families have benefited from this support

Survey process of needs and capabilities- done by VMA Kukës

Beneficiaries of the project

Vocational training & Local Enterprise Project (VTLEP) - July 2006 / June 2007

- A detailed assessment done with all survivors
- 30 beneficiaries Identified-Assisted
- Provided access to vocational training and to business management training for 20 mine/UXO survivors
- Provided mine/UXO survivors with knowledge and expertise to work in vocational professions and increase job opportunities for them and support in finding job following the training
- Provided support to 20 trained households to establish home-based businesses by working with them, while building their management capacity
- Provided Computer & English classes to 10 youth mine survivors
- Increased access to 10 youth mine survivors to educational re-integration
- 10 survivors trained to properly use computer and internet



CHALLENGES

- ❑ Difficult operating area; a rugged terrain and unevenly spread villages with limited road accessibility bringing many operating expenses. (Mobilization of other members of other projects when visiting the field)
- ❑ High level of poverty among the mine victims and their families resulted in a failure to accept loans as repayment is considered unaffordable. (Reduced pay back to 70% of the total amount)
- ❑ Wrong perceptions of assistance, considering beneficiary only donations and grants. (Awareness campaign to explain to the beneficiaries the importance to pay back in time)



LESSONS LEARNT

- ❑ Viability of economies, situation, needs and capabilities of victim families have to be surveyed and properly analysed
- ❑ A fair system of determining priorities had to be established and approved of on village, commune and prefecture level
- ❑ Taking into account the poverty of victims and the area in general, loans had to be interest-free, but no grants
- ❑ Initial training and continued support are essential
- ❑ Needs were simple and a modest input ensured visible results
- ❑ Families to benefit from repayments have to be involved to ensure the success achieved from initial loans
- ❑ The revolving fund can benefit the needy in general, once victims' needs have been addressed
- ❑ Very positive psychological impact at the vocational training – when survivors stay/talk together



Field work



CONCLUSIONS

- ❑ The economic conditions on the NE border of Albania are very difficult
- ❑ Economic intervention was critical
- ❑ In addition to economic reintegration, initial activities have already raised the morale of people in the affected areas
- ❑ Need to explore other areas/possibilities for interventions
- ❑ There is a need for development of the are as a whole
- ❑ Small scale infrastructure development projects continued in cleared villages of Has and Tropoja districts (UNDP/KRDI)

