THE ALBANIAN MINE ACTION PROGRAMME

“VICTIM ASSISTANCE IN ALBANIA”

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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.

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- A revolving fund was set up since 2003, with US funding through the ITP, 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
  - 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 bees), procured out of the revolving fund - $1000-1000 per family
- Families are also trained and assisted including veterinary services for the cow
- Loans have to be repaid in 3-5 years
- To date, 87 mine survivors and their families have benefited from this support

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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 reintegration
- 10 survivors trained to properly use computer and internet

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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 viable results

- Families to benefit from repayments have to be ensured to ensure the success achieved from financial support is not lost

- 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

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 area as a whole

- Small scale infrastructure development projects continued in cleared villages of Has and Tropoja districts (UNDP/KRDI)