THE ALBANIA MINE ACTION PROGRAMME

“ALBANIA MINE/UXO-SAFE BY 2005”

ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION OF MINE AND UXO VICTIMS IN NE ALBANIA

Since 1999, 27 people were killed and 220 injured by mines and UXO in NE Albania, the last in July 2003 – 39% are children

Survey process of needs and capabilities
The population of the Kukes prefecture, almost 120,000 of which 75% are rural, are the poorest in Albania, if not in Europe.

The average size of farms are less than 1 ha.

Main activities are: grazing, farming, gathering firewood, and other subsistence livelihoods.

Land pressure in 39 directly affected villages is exacerbated by mountainous terrain and mines.

Around 230 families in the Northeast had a primary breadwinner disabled or killed, and saw their livestock and farmland destroyed.

A revolving fund was set up in 2003 with US funding through the ITF, for the development of household economies among families of victims in NE Albania – the budget is approximately $90,000 per annum.

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, are allocated either 2 cows, 10 goats/sheep or 5 beehives, procured out of the revolving fund - $1500-2000 per family.

Families are also trained and assisted.

Loans (calves, lambs, beehives) have to be repaid in 2/3 years.

By the spring of 2004, 40 families would have benefited in this way.
LESSONS LEARNT

- Taking into account the poverty of victims, loans had to be interest-free, but no grants
- 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 on village, commune and prefecture level
- 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

Evaluation of activities

CONCLUSIONS

- The economic conditions on the NE border of Albania are desperate
- There is a natural tendency of urbanisation in this strategic region, which is increased by the mine and UXO contamination
- Economic intervention was critical
- In addition to economic reintegration, initial activities have already raised the morale of people in the affected areas

Beekeeping