

Project: One volunteer to another

Summary of the Project

The main problem to be hopefully solved by this project realization is poor integration (economic dependence, sense of being isolated and rejected, etc.) of IDPs and refugees into social community they have found themselves in not by their own will. Naturally, this is preceded by insufficient knowledge of local people of the problems of IDPs and therefore insufficient solidarity and good will to offer and provide assistance to vulnerable co-citizens.

Volunteering Centre could reduce the problem, contribute engagement of local people willing to help the most vulnerable fellow-citizens and so relieve their feeling of being isolated.

• **"One volunteer to another" programme**

The programme would engage IDPs and refugees from collective centers (1,500 persons of which about 800 adults). The expected number of the engaged is 80. The main aim of the programme "One volunteer to another" is to provoke free of charge reversal assistance in accordance with needs of beneficiaries engaged among IDPs and refugees. This is the way we intend to sensitize them for reversible assistance as the system institutions can not provide for adequate income resource. This type of engagement would assist them overcome some of existential difficulties (mostly connected to their accommodation conditions).

Socialisation of beneficiaries is also expected.

By watching their engagement and making a database containing information about their social standing (qualifications, work experience, etc.) we aim to collect as many information as possible that would be useful for further IGP projects, i.e. projects of short-term interest-free credits intended to (IDPs and refugees).

Long run goal of the "**Volunteering Centre**" project comprises the following:

- Economic independence of IDPs/refugees
- Affirmation of mutual assistance and including into other people's problems
- Development of the organization itself by including new people and new ideas
- Promotion of voluntary actions and provoking people to actively participate in citizens' initiatives
- Relieve of antagonism of local population towards IDPs/refugees
- By observing their engagement and forming a database containing information about their social situation (profession, skills, work experience, education, etc.)
 - to gather information relevant and useful for future IGP projects, i.e. projects of short-term loans with no interest intended to IDPs/refugees.

Problem description

In the municipality of Kraljevo, inhabited by 127,000 people (70,000 in urban town area), the overall situation is extremely difficult due to economic collapse that is the consequence of the fatal policy of the former regime that resulted in very low living standard of citizens.

According to UNHCR FO Kraljevo data, there are officially 22,000 IDPs and refugees on the territory of Kraljevo municipality (unofficial number is 25,000). The figure comprises 3,000 refugees from Bosnia and Croatia and 19,860 displaced persons from Kosovo, who started in the middle of June 1999. That makes about 25% of the entire municipality's population and the highest percentage in Serbia.

Of 19,860 displaced persons from Kosovo, 19,000 are privately accommodated (in rented apartments, with relatives, etc). Over 830 (390 children) are placed in 12 collective centers that are situated in Kraljevo suburbs and surrounding villages. About 650 refugees (160 children) are settled in 12 collective centers.

Living conditions in the collective centers are extremely difficult due to lack of toilettes, water, heating, beds, mattresses, winter clothing, personal hygiene items, medicines and proper nutrition with only one hot meal a day. The number of applications for this kind of accommodation has, however, been increasing, indicating exhaustion of private funds for rent and food. Rooms are overcrowded, with both adults and children sharing beds. People are exposed to diseases due to very poor hygienic conditions. In a center accommodating 90 people (Vitanovac) there is no running water and no bathing, washing or cooking facilities. Babies lack diapers, milk and proper food as the daily meal provided by UNHCR FO Kraljevo and distributed by the Red Cross is of very poor quality consisting of rice or noodles with a half a loaf of bread per person. From July 2001, of 24 collective centers, only beneficiaries from three of them (Norwegian House, Maricic and Morava) are still getting a daily hot meal.

Frequent stressful situations, increased fears and uncertainty are the factors influencing the above stated population, particularly children and adolescents, negatively. Growing up in such social circumstances, where children are often left to themselves, causes a permanent increase of minors' delinquency, consuming and dealing narcotics, prostitution of the young, suicidal and other negative forms of behavior.

Kraljevo takes the first place in Serbia by mortality rate and this, most probably, doe not reflect local population but IDPs because of their hard living conditions and psychological suffering.

The young and children IDPs regularly experience unpleasant situations in town streets caused by domestic people calling them names and physical fights are quite often. IDPs are not allowed to some young people gathering places. In a word, the IDPs in Kraljevo are absolutely excluded from social life of the town with no chance to bring their problems closer to other Kraljevo citizens attention. General impression is that the situation is going to be permanent, contours of Milosevic's policy to remain as the main cause of such widespread antagonism. It is almost impossible in situation like this that IDPs and refugees, particularly those settled in collective centers, find any sort of employment or make any income that would provide better life of their families.

Lingua NGO with its project proposal "**Volunteering Centre**" and its programmes offers solution to relieve the stated problems.

The program "**One volunteer to another**" will provide assistance in economic independence of IDPs/refugees by means of organized mutual (reciprocal) Realization of this program would apart from solving some problems of existential nature (related to accommodation improvement) would also enable more intensive socialization of IDPs/refugees.

Goals:

- The main aim is to provoke free of charge mutual (reciprocal) help and assistance of volunteers engaged by IDPs and refugees
- Support to economic independence and intensive socialization of IDPs and refugees
- Affirmation of mutual assistance and inclusion into problems others encounter with
- Engagement and inclusion of volunteers IDPs/refugees within assistance to most vulnerable local population, mutual antagonism would be relieved
- Development of the organization itself by introducing new people and new ideas
- By observing their engagement and forming a database containing information about their social situation (profession, skills, work experience, education, etc.)
To gather information relevant and useful for future IGP projects, i.e. projects of short-term loans with no interest, intended to IDPs/refugees.

Target Group:

The project is primarily directed to collective centers inhabitants, who would, during the program realization (5 months) be the only beneficiaries of the programme of mutual assistance "One volunteer to another". In the target group of 1,500 IDPs/ refugees settled in 24 collective centers there are 800 adults. We expect 80 of them to actively include themselves in this programme.

Activities:

The programme would comprise two phases – preparing, lasting 30 days and main project activities phase, lasting 4 months.

Preparing activities

- *Making database* – the first week of project realization
- *Preparation and training of task force to work at collective centers* - the first week of project realization
- *Preparation and printing of forms to be fulfilled by interested volunteers* - the first week of project realization
- *Preparation and printing of accompanying materials to explain the program to the interested* - the first week of project realization
- *Going to collective centers and data gathering for database; interviews with potential project participants*; the activities would be achieved in the first month of project realization. The activities would be performed by *Lingua* task force that would be involved in the programme.
- *Obtaining tools for the programme participants*; the activity would be achieved in the second month of project realization.

Major programme activities

- *Telephone service providing information to programme volunteers*; this activity to be realized to the end of the project
- *Going to collective centers*; the whole of the task force participating in the project will regularly go to collective centers and work there
- *Writing monthly financial and narrative reports*
- *Writing final financial and narrative reports*
- *Adequate demonstration on December 5th, Volunteers' Day with participation of volunteers from the programme and volunteer gust from Volunteers' Centre Belgrade*; the activity would be organized by the team participating in the project.

Evaluation

As this is a pilot project with comparatively short realization time, we expect the programme "One volunteer to another" to sensitize and include 10% of work capable inhabitants of collective centers. To derive as adequate data as possible about the programme success, polls would be prepared and organized to be answered (filled in) by the programme participants as a sort of their evaluation of the programme itself and of the Volunteering Centre.