



**Project: Aid to Roma people – IDPs
settled in collective centre "Old airport" in Kraljevo**

Background

In the Municipality of Kraljevo, inhabited by 123,000 people (of which 70,000 in the town of Kraljevo), the overall situation is extremely difficult due to economic collapse and significant decrease of municipal financial funds, the consequence of which is very low living standard of the citizens. There are presently 12,000 unemployed persons (25% of the working age population), and 10,000 on forced leaves from their work at the territory of the municipality. According to UNHCR FO Kraljevo evidence, there are officially 22,860 refugees and internally displaced persons at the territory of Kraljevo Municipality. The figure comprises 3,000 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia and 19,860 displaced persons from Kosovo, who have started arriving since the middle of June 1999. The unofficial number is 25,000 which is about 25% of the entire municipality population and the highest percentage in the whole of Serbia.

Of 19,860 displaced persons from Kosovo registered with UNHCR, 19,000 are accommodated privately (in rented apartments, with relatives, etc.). About 860 people (350 children) are settled in the 11 collective centres situated at Kraljevo suburbs and surrounding villages.

Living conditions in the collective centres are extremely hard due to lack of toilets, running and potable water, heating of any kind, beds, mattresses, blankets, water clothing, personal hygiene items, medicines and proper nutrition, with provision of only one hot meal a day. However, the number of applications for this kind of accommodation has been increasing, indicating the exhaustion of private savings for renting accommodation and for food.

The most difficult situation is with 165 Roma people settled in the collective centre "Stari aerodrom" (Old airport). When they arrived from Kosovo in June 1999 they found "shelter" in a park and in a public WC at the railway station. Fifteen days later, as nobody of the officials reacted, they themselves moved to the atomic shelter by the Memorial Park. Living conditions at this shelter were startling. They had no day light at all, aerating did not function, the air was humid and impure as the consequence of neglected sewerage. They had stayed there until April 2000 and then moved to the camp having insufficient number of tents called Old airport. In January 2001, MSF Humanitarian Organization provided them with 19 metal containers (instead of tents) of 18m² each. In each of these containers from 7 to 12 people had to be packed.

All families, men and women, the old and the children spend their time in the containers where they eat, sleep and keep their small possessions which they had managed to bring with themselves. They spend days sitting on their mattresses (there are no beds), aware of the fact that they have no chance to go back to their homes, that their children are traumatized for the life and they themselves (the adults) treated from local population and authorities as creatures with no human dignity.

Of 165 people settled in this collective centre, 52 are children under 15. None of the children attends a primary school. (The explanation of some primary schools' directors is that they "were late to be enrolled".) Seven of these children are admitted to a special school for the retarded in development, although they are not retarded. There are 14 babies from two months to two years of age in this "centre". In the collective centre "Old airport" lives a twelve year old girl ill with tuberculosis (her name: Camilje Gasin) and about ten elderly persons ill with asthma and angina pectoris. They get aid from the local Red Cross consisting of one meal a day (beans or macaroni and half a loaf of bread) per person. Except for MSF who realized the project of purchasing and mounting the containers and provided aid with hygienic items (detergents, shampoos, soups), humanitarian organizations have provided no aid at all for the people in this centre.

Up to two months ago, in spite of awful conditions they live in, these people did not show signs of depression and took realistically the situation they had found themselves in. However, during the last month or two, the situation has been changing. Three old ones died. It is evident that with each new day hopelessness and despair reach deeper and there are neither signs for hope, nor encouragement.

Project Objectives

The aims of this project are providing aid in self-organizing of IDPs settled in the collective centre "Old airport" through the programme of keeping eggs laying hens.

By realization of this project the Roma people settled in this collective centre would provide additional food for themselves and improve their health. Surpluses of eggs they would sell at the nearby market place get money to buy the most necessary items (clothing and footwear for the children and medicines for the sick...).

Forum NGOs activists are convinced that by realization of this project the following would be achieved:

- IDPs settled in the collective centre "Old airport" would become less dependent on aids of the local Red Cross and humanitarian organizations
- The users of this programme would be in a position to re-invest the money they get from selling eggs and also use it for some other needs apart from basic food
- They would provide financial means for continuation of the programme upon realisation of the project
- The program would help in more active socialisation and integration of the users with surroundings
- Beside self-organising and economic advantages, the users would get a chance to derive some positive psychological effects

Target group

The users of this project would be 165 Roma people – IDPs settled in the collective centre "Old airport" in Kraljevo.

Duration of the project

The project would be realised within 12 months (from March 1st 2001 till March 1st 2002). Upon realisation of the project, the users of the project would be in a position to continue independently with further realisation of the programme.

Activities

During the first phase of this project at the location of "Old airport" an object would be made of wooden construction where cages with eggs laying hens would be placed and a concentrate food for the hens. The object would be over a base 12 x 5 m and 2.5 m high, covered with asbestos-cement corrugated sheets, surrounded with a wire fence. The wire fence and the attic space would be covered with plastic foil. As boxes are foreseen, each of them would contain cages for eggs laying hens, 10 hens per each cage. The cages (66 of them) would be arranged in three rows, at three levels.

Dividing in three boxes is necessary as there are IDP families in the collective centre that may, in accordance to their relations as relatives, be divided into three groups. For each box, one chief, chosen by his relatives, would be responsible to look after (and prevent theft) eggs, hens and food concentrate.

The object would be made in ten days. A sub-contractor who would be doing the job would get help of all the adults from this centre.

Upon construction of such a chicken coop, hen cages would be bought (capacity 10 hens each) and eggs laying hens also (three months old, ready to lay eggs). To make the project profitable and to realize the aims stated in the project, it is necessary that each member of the centre gets four hens, meaning that the total number of hens has to be 660.

Construction of a coop, purchase of cages, hens and concentrate food for the first month would be organized and finalized during the period 1st to 10th March 2001.

During the second phase, concentrate food would be purchased and delivered to the centre once a month.

The *Forum* NGOs – Kraljevo activists would do monitoring of the program realization, by regular weekly rounds to the centre. They would also help IDPs in finding market (grocery shops, market places) for selling eggs.

Professional assistance in project realization would be provided by a veterinarian who would be engaged to monthly or more frequently if needed (upon suggestion of *Forum* activists) visit the coop within the centre and take care of hens' health. The veterinarian would be responsible for preventive activities and treatment if it should be needed.

Upon realisation of the project, the users would - from yearly surplus eggs selling and from worn out hens selling - have sufficient money to purchase new hens and new quantities of concentrate food to continue the programme.

Realisation of the program would also leave them the necessary infrastructure (the coop and 66 cages) for further continuation of the program.

Continuation of the programme by the users would be further monitored by the *Forum* activists.