

Summary

The Croatian Red Cross, supported by the Netherlands Red Cross and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is assisting some 6.400 vulnerable beneficiaries on a monthly basis in Croatia's areas of special state concern: Banovina, Kordun, Lika and Dalmatian Hinterland.

Evaluated is the "Community Support Programme", a programme which consists of several project components: Grassroot Information Volunteer Network; Food parcels; Welcome parcels; Hygienic parcels; Other relief supplies; Logistical services.

Of indispensable importance, funded by UNHCR, are 18 Mobile Teams which the participating branches of the Community Support programme have operative in their committees. The Mobile Teams make the services happen, on a daily basis, often to beneficiaries in remote hamlets.

The activity is complimentary to the Croatian Government's Social Programme, which is operative in the target region since April 2001, using the Croatian Red Cross distribution network.

The input of the Netherlands Red Cross in the programme has been to procure and ship bulk food items from the Netherlands to Croatia, provide funding and logistical support, and monitor the implementation.

The Croatian Red Cross programme complements humanitarian assistance projects carried out by other agencies in the region. The added value to each of the NGOs' projects of reconstruction, income generation, distributing humanitarian aid and services clearly contributes to a better quality of life for those who did return, and for those who remained in the area of special state concern.

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Evaluating the achievement of the programme **objective**, which was set in the project proposal in mid 2000, it can be concluded that the objective has been met, realising the difficulty in quantifying this. The objective has been set to get an "*improved humanitarian situation for extremely vulnerable persons (EVI) in the regions Banovina, Kordun, Lika and Dalmatian Hinterland (also referred to as "areas of special state concern")*".

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From cost effectiveness point of view, the total expenditure per beneficiary is an estimated 9.80 euro p/month.

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Considerable importance is given to the presence of the Croatian Red Cross volunteers in the field. Beside cherishing reconciliation between remainees and returnees on the spot, the role of the volunteers is described by beneficiaries as vital.

The distribution of a welcome (food) parcel to newly arrived returnees is well received by the beneficiaries, and it is a good tool for the Red Cross volunteers to make the first contact, bridge a gap in communication, and makes further contact much easier.

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The Netherlands Red Cross support covered an intermediate moment for the Croatian Government to settle the procurement procedures with the Ministry of Emergencies and Supplies. The Netherlands Red Cross food support can be regarded as the trigger for the Croatian Government to take over the food distribution part of the Netherlands Red Cross. The Croatian Red Cross remains the distributor in humanitarian supplies, thanks to its existing delivery network.

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Expected results as to lower the reluctance of refugees to voluntary return to Croatia is less evidently proven. Refugees' reluctance to return is due to some other significant and complex impediments such as extremely poor economic situation or pending reconstruction. Future Red Cross projects might contribute to this effect, in particular when a Red Cross regional exchange of information on returns will take place.

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The Croatian Red Cross will advocate to the Government of Croatia to give high priority to continue humanitarian aid and services distribution to vulnerable persons [in four categories, see page 22] who the Croatian Red Cross considers as beneficiaries.

The Croatian Red Cross estimates that at least 3'000 beneficiaries can be regarded for the categories, who are in the areas of special state concern, after 2001.