

Final Report

**Emergency Winter Assistance: Central Bosnia
Award Number: AOT-G-00-96-00024-00**

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This final report covers an OFDA Emergency Winter Assistance grant of \$665,405 to Partners for Development (PFD), implemented in seven central Bosnian municipalities between 1 October 1996 - 30 April 1997. Selection of municipalities — Gornji Vakuf, Uskopje, Kupres, Jayce, Vinac, Donji Vakuf and Bugojno — was based on demonstrated need within each.

Program goal was to reduce winter-related morbidity and mortality among an anticipated nearly 17,000 vulnerable individuals, with objectives focused on provision of fuel (firewood) and hygiene assistance. Beneficiary criteria, focusing largely on age, sex, and economic status, are described in detail in Section 2 of this report. Communities contributed organizational skills in assisting in distribution and monitoring -- actively overseen by PFD itself — and also significant amounts of labor following delivery of bulk firewood: volunteers cut up the wood to manageable size for the targeted elderly and/or war invalids.

Some government assistance in fuelwood reduced targeted number of beneficiaries in this objective; simultaneously, a greater need arose in the hygiene assistance objective, with beneficiaries therein increasing. Overall, at no greater cost, the program provided direct assistance to almost 19,300 beneficiaries, or about 14% more than initially proposed.

Based on analysis of impacts and extensive discussions with program beneficiaries and municipal counterpart agencies and professionals, PFD believes that the program met its goal of reducing illness among vulnerable individuals. Also, it would appear that a somewhat earlier start-date would further improve impact by possibly reducing delays caused by poor winter weather.

With Bosnia's economy still very much weakened by the war and local government capacity insufficient to meet all key local needs, such social service type programs will likely continue to need external support. In any such programs, among other recommendations, PFD suggests that activities focus on the most vulnerable - - means-tested as appropriate — with communities and/or households providing as much self-help as possible.

2. PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES

2.1 Objective 1: Fuel Distribution To meet 50% of fuel needs of 6,307 most vulnerable households of elderly and war invalids by 28 February 1997.

Criteria for assistance: household income of less than \$320 per year; no financial support from relatives/friends working out of the country; no productive adults capable of full-time, economically viable employment in the household (incapacitated by disability) and identification by community members and municipal officials as most vulnerable.

During the reporting period, PFD completed distribution of all fuel supplies. To ensure that each recipient household met the program criteria, PFD worked closely with municipal offices and private agencies in each of the seven municipalities to identify beneficiaries. Specifically, this involved:

- ▶ obtaining indexed lists of individuals which met the program criteria from government and non-governmental agencies and charities in the target area;
- ▶ cross-checking indexed lists for accuracy and then constructing a single list for each community;
- ▶ verifying that individuals on the lists met the program criteria through household visits;
- ▶ contracting with four local forestry companies to procure and deliver firewood;
- ▶ developing and implementing a monitoring plan to parallel distribution to verify deliveries;
- ▶ conducting semi-monthly management meetings with municipal and supplier officials to discuss progress and program adjustments as necessary.

In response to problems encountered in the fuel component of the program (discussed below) and to ensure that all households which met the criteria received assistance as early as possible, PFD contracted for coal deliveries to 1,000 households located on recently repaired roads. Table 1 presents the number of households and direct beneficiaries who received fuel assistance in the program.

Table 1: Household Distribution and Direct Beneficiaries by Municipality

Municipality	Distribution to Households	# of Direct Beneficiaries
1. Gornji Vakuf	896	1,792
2. Uskopje	350	700
3. Kupres	222	444
4. Jayce	743	1,486
5. Vinac	165	330
6. Donji Vakuf	789	1,578
7. Bugojno	2,228	4,456
TOTAL	5,393	10,786

2.2 Objective 2: Hygiene Kit Distribution To ensure by 1 December 1996, 1,200 vulnerable mothers-to-be and mothers with infants receive one hygiene kit each to promote adequate care of infants under one year of age.

Criteria for assistance: household income of less than \$320 per year; no financial support from relatives/friends working out of the country; no productive adults capable of full-time, economically viable employment in the household (incapacitated by heavy childcare burdens) and identification by community members and municipal officials as most vulnerable.

PFD procured and delivered 1,700 hygiene kits, with the proposed contents, to pregnant and lactating women who met the program criteria. This involved:

- ▶ obtaining lists of individuals from government agencies, including municipal and federation social welfare departments, community based local charities which serve the target population and local physicians;
- ▶ cross-checking indexed lists for accuracy and constructing a single list for each community;
- ▶ verifying lists to ensure households meet program criteria;
- ▶ obtaining sealed bids from potential suppliers and signing necessary contract(s);
- ▶ schedule delivery dates with local hospitals and/or health clinics;
- ▶ deliver hygiene kits to beneficiaries.

As stated in the proposal, PFD staff were present for the distribution of all hygiene kits. Table 2 shows the contents of the hygiene kits.

Table 2: Hygiene Kit Contents

Description of Item	No. of Item
Diapers (for 1-9 kg baby)	22
Diaper rash cream	1
Baby powder	1
Baby soap	2 bars
Feeding bottle (big)	1
Plastic bowl for baby	1

2.3 Summary

The program served a total of 19,286 beneficiaries or 14% more than the 16,931 anticipated in this program's proposal. Table 3 presents the number of households and direct beneficiaries served in each program activity.

Table 3: Households and Direct Beneficiaries By Program Activity

Program Activity	# of Households	# of Direct Beneficiaries
Hygiene Kit Distribution	1,700	8,500
Fuel Distribution	5,393	10,786
Total	7,093	19,286

Hygiene kit beneficiaries calculated at 5 per household; Fuel beneficiaries calculated at 2 per household.

3. ISSUES ENCOUNTERED AND ADJUSTMENTS MADE

3.1 Objective 1: Fuel Distribution

Two main issues encountered in the fuel component of the program required adjustments to be made:

- ▶ *Weather Conditions:* Heavy September rains combined with earlier and unusually heavier October snows resulted in a slow start. All forest access roads were temporarily closed at different times. The Dornji Vakuf (DV) supply route was flooded and inaccessible until early January. IFOR/SFOR assisted with repairing the DV roads and the DV supplier added personnel to make up for lost time.
- ▶ *New Government Programs:* Between the time the project proposal was prepared and the supplier contracts were signed, the Federation government implemented a firewood program for war widows. Likewise, Bosniac municipalities committed firewood assistance to a portion of the war invalid population PFD had targeted. Both programs were announced during the campaign process for the national and cantonal elections.

The additional government firewood programs had three effects: a) they constrained and slowed supply until early-mid January; b) they increased the price of firewood for Bosniac suppliers as they had to harvest at higher elevations, which is more time consuming and labor intensive. The government programs were completed in early January resulting in additional supplier capacity later in the program and c) they reduced targeted number of beneficiaries for this objective by 910 households.

Adjustments in Fuel Distribution

To increase the rate of fuel delivery, PFD added one supplier. Also, as described further below, with the reduction of fuel beneficiaries, there was a simultaneous increase in need among hygiene kit beneficiaries, which PFD was able to meet.

Objective 2: Hygiene Kits

The hygiene kit component of the program was completed with few adjustments. Beneficiary lists provided by the municipalities were accurate and included only the names of women who

met the criteria. In fact, there were more households which met the criteria than the assessment conducted during the summer of 1996 suggested. PFD was able to serve an additional 500 households in the hygiene kit component of the program, through savings realized in the fuel component of the program.

As was noted in the mid-term report, an incident occurred in Bugojno, whereby seven women charged a distribution stand, prior to its opening for service, overwhelmed a PFD staff person and took one hygiene kit each. The municipality of Bugojno replaced the seven hygiene kits and the distribution was completed without further incident. PFD staff and municipal authorities both interpreted the incident as an indication of the need for this type of assistance within the community.

4. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF PROGRAM IMPACTS

4.1 Methodology

To assess the impact of the program, PFD conducted interviews with beneficiaries, municipal officials and health care providers in each municipality. To obtain an accurate understanding of how beneficiaries assessed the program, PFD constructed and interviewed a stratified sample of 325 beneficiaries with proportional representation for assistance provided in each municipality. To help interpret beneficiary responses, PFD interviewed social service and health care providers working with the target population in each community. To assess program logistics and identify possibilities for improvement in future activities, PFD interviewed representatives of each supplier used in the program.

4.2 Major Findings

4.2.1 Winter assistance reduced illness in low income households

- ▶ Beneficiaries reported the winter assistance program reduced illness within their households and enabled them to better manage total winter related costs and needs.
- ▶ Based on clinic and hospital visits, physicians reported that low income households with inadequate household heating did experience higher rates of winter related illnesses, thus they believe the program did reduce winter related illness in the target population.
- ▶ Social service providers reported that low income households which receive winter assistance experienced a noticeably lower level of illness and related health care costs, evidenced by fewer requests for assistance from their offices.

4.2.2 An earlier starting date could result in greater program impact

- ▶ Municipal officials and suppliers observed that deliveries could be completed in less time if the program were to begin in mid-summer. According to suppliers, if the program were to begin by mid-July much of the harvesting and over 70% of the deliveries could be completed by mid-October. Beneficiaries also reported that receiving fuel supplies

earlier would allow them to better manage their total winter costs. Consequently, an earlier start date could lead to greater program impact.

4.2.3 *Agreement on future needs, conflicting views on future assistance*

- ▶ Beneficiaries, physicians and municipal officials all believe that needs will be present in the future.

- ▶ There are conflicting views, however, on how these needs can be met. Based on the slow rate of economic recovery, social service and health care providers do not believe the government will be able to provide necessary assistance for the foreseeable future. In contrast, beneficiaries believe the government will soon be able to respond to social service needs, such as winter assistance; possibly, as early as 1998. Though it was difficult to determine from the interviews, beneficiary perceptions seem to be based more on the availability of pre-war social services than on current political or economic factors.

4.3 **Recommendations**

- 4.3.1 Based on the current reality of a still very war-weakened economy and insufficient local government capacity, external assistance to Bosnia's social sector will be needed.

- 4.3.2 Social service activities should target low-income households, with means-testing and verification as possible. (Records should be managed by municipalities themselves not only for their own social service programs, but for those now implemented by international NGOs).

- 4.3.3 Communities and/or households should provide as much self-help as possible.