



Final Project Report

**Weatherisation/Winterisation Shelter Programme of Assistance
for
Returning Internally Displaced People and Refugees
in Kosova**

**Period :
1st September 1999 – 31st January 2000**

Presented to :

**USAID
Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance**

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Table of contents

GENERAL INFORMATION.....	4
INTRODUCTION.....	4
SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS.....	5
GENERAL.....	5
URBAN PROGRAMME	5
NON-FOOD ITEMS	6
ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED.....	6
BENEFICIARY SELECTION.....	6
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS.....	7
DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED AND PROBLEMS-SOLVED	8
CATEGORY ESTIMATION	8
OFDA IN-KIND TIMBER.....	8
SELF-PROCUREMENT OF TIMBER.....	8
CASHFLOW	8
OTHER NGO'S.....	8
CONTRACTORS	9
HOUSEOWNERS.....	9
WEATHER.....	9
OCCUPATION	9
SPECIAL POINTS OF ATTENTION	10
OFDA ROOFING PLASTIC.....	10
LOCAL PREFECTURA.....	10
SUCCESS OF DISTRIBUTIONS	10
COLLABORATION WITH OTHER NGOS AND OFDA.....	11
OFDA	11
IRC.....	11
<i>IN-KIND Timber</i>	11
<i>Sanitation Kits</i>	11
<i>IRC trucks</i>	11
<i>IRC Warehouse</i>	11
GOAL IRELAND.....	11
HOPE FOR ALBANIA.....	12
CONCLUSION.....	12
AHMET'S DEATH:	12
ANNEX A.....	14

General Information

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- Project:** Weatherisation / Winterisation Shelter Programme of Assistance for Displaced People and Refugees in Kosova
- Duration:** 13th September 1999 to 18th February 2000
- Problem addressed:** People returning to their homes face the daunting challenge of constructing a secure, warm and dry living space that will adequately sustain them for the winter and form a sustainable basis for permanent reconstruction of the family home.

Introduction

MEDAIR was one of the four partners funded by OFDA to implement a shelter relief project in the town of Peje, Kosova. For better co-ordination between the four partners the town was split in several areas of responsibility. MEDAIR was working in the area called Sahat Kulla, around the Catholic Church and the Hospital.

MEDAIR's aim was to build 100 permanent timber roof structures covered with plastic. These roof structures should be strong enough to carry tiles and the snow and wind load. Every house received items for two warm dry secure rooms. One room for the host family and one room for a guest family. The room packages consisted of one door, window plastic and framing, a woodstove and household items. The families installed the doors and window plastic themselves.

MEDAIR organised professional contractors to construct the roof. Self-help was not a good option because it was believed that the people would not have the knowledge or ability to put up the roof safely and efficiently themselves.

Senior Kosovar engineers, who were well known and respected in the community, were hired to oversee the contractors and explain the design to the house owners.

MEDAIR chose to use traditional roof designs to ensure that contractors could build safely and reduce the risk of further delay in the process that may have been experienced if a new, unfamiliar design was used. It was also necessary to gain the trust from house owners, so that they would feel confident to put on tiles later. This meant that extra timber sizes needed to be added to the OFDA in-kind timber. The 25% cash grant was used for this purpose.

The emergency shelter programme carried out by MEDAIR in Peje, Kosova was completed by the 18th of February 2000. The total time for the project was extended to end of February

on request of OFDA in order to cover the maximum of beneficiaries using the remaining funds and materials. All materials and household items were distributed by the first week of February, It is our belief that the project has been a success and has had more impact than was originally anticipated. We have been delighted to witness the resilience of the Kosovar people and to see families working together to rebuild their homes and lives. The approach of using contracted labour to build the roofs has proved to be effective. The work was easy to control and went very fast, which was a necessity because of a lack of time. It has given small local contractors the opportunity to restart their businesses. The square meter price was set at 20 DM / m². This was a little higher than before the war, but would stimulate the contractors to work fast and they would include additional repairs, if needed. Other NGO's in Peje used the same price, so there was a balance in that case. Beneficiaries were assisted in the shortest possible time with good quality work.

MEDAIR had identified and distributed the first 100 houses by the second week of January 2000. Due to over-capacity in funds and in-kind timber it was decided in co-operation with UNHCR, OFDA and some NGO's to move into other parts of town and four villages in the Peje municipality. These villages had received non-or only partial assistance.

Summary of achievements

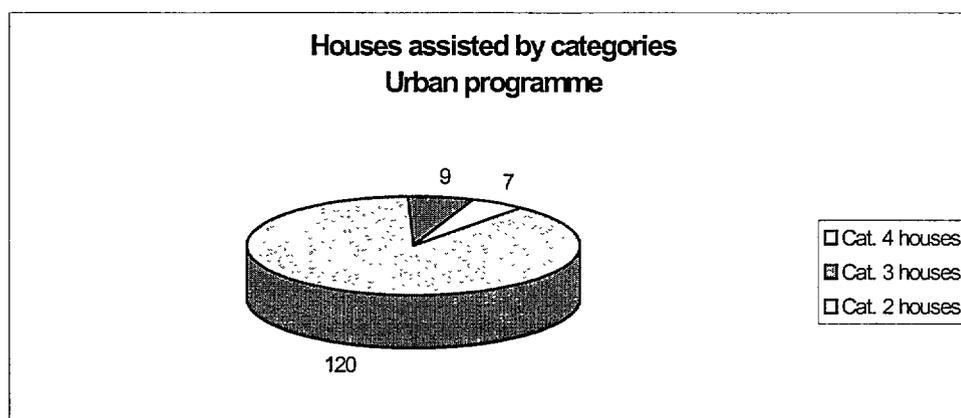
General

- MEDAIR has surveyed nearly 188 houses in the Peje town and four villages in the Peje municipality of Western Kosova. Of these, 130 families have been identified as requiring assistance
- MEDAIR has formed good relationships with the Sahat Kulla inhabitants and the Peje municipality authorities
- Please refer to annex A for statistics by area

Urban programme

MEDAIR has been working in the Sahat Kulla area of Peje town and the villages Llabjane, Poterg I Eperm, Zabergj and Dubove.

- 120 roofs have been built on houses in category 4
- 9 roofs have been repaired on houses in category 3
- 7 families whose houses were in category 2 have received additional assistance
- 1 family in Zabergj, whose house was category 5, received the mobile home that was used as guardhouse on the distribution site. An extension was built to increase living space with one more room.
- 207 MEDAIR 'warm dry room kits' have been distributed (1 door plus frame, 4 clear-plastic self-make windows)
- 5 OFDA 'ERI' warm dry room kits have been distributed
- 82 sanitation kits have been distributed



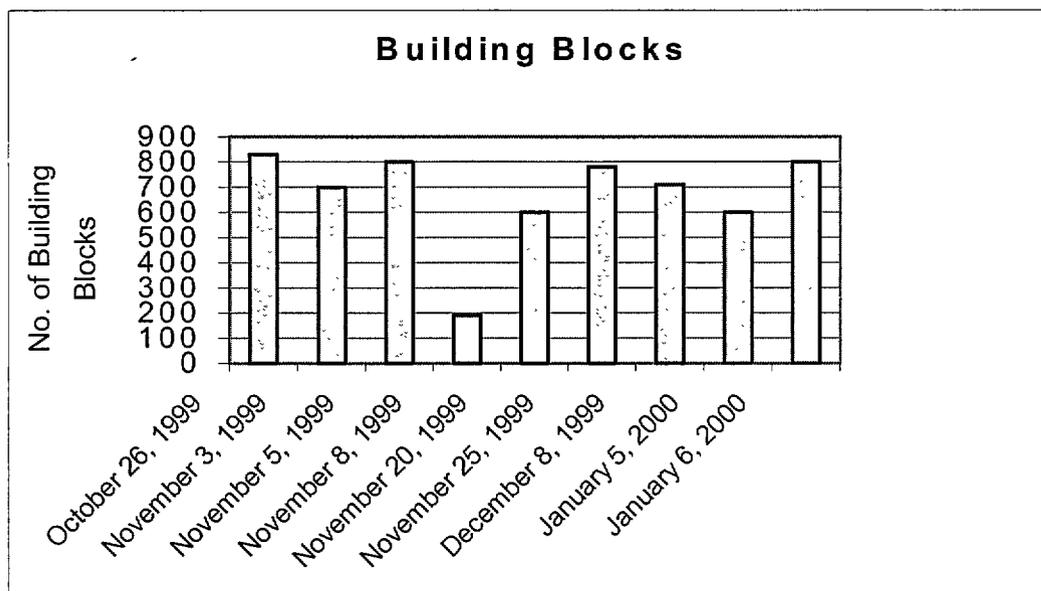
Non-food items

The following non-food items (NFI) have also been distributed:

- 146 hygiene kits
- 88 cleaning and tool kits
- 104 woodstoves MEDAIR IN-KIND
- 100 woodstoves OFDA IN-KIND
- 952 other NFI distributions (e.g. kitchen, dining, and bedding sets)

Additional assistance provided

- The Baptist Fellowship Mission has donated building blocks. Since the beginning of November, 6010 building blocks have been collected and distributed by one of the MEDAIR distribution teams. Of these, 4610 blocks were distributed to 12 homeowners in the villages (Raushiq, Glllogjan, Kodrali, Ratish I Eperm & Sllup) where MEDAIR provided emergency shelter assistance financed by the Swiss foundation “La Chaîne du Bonheur” and the Swiss Government. The remaining 1400 blocks have most recently been distributed to 6 homeowners in Peje town itself. The blocks have been used for enclosing a barn, reinforcing walls, closing in gable ends or other essential repairs in order for a home to be eligible for the shelter programme.

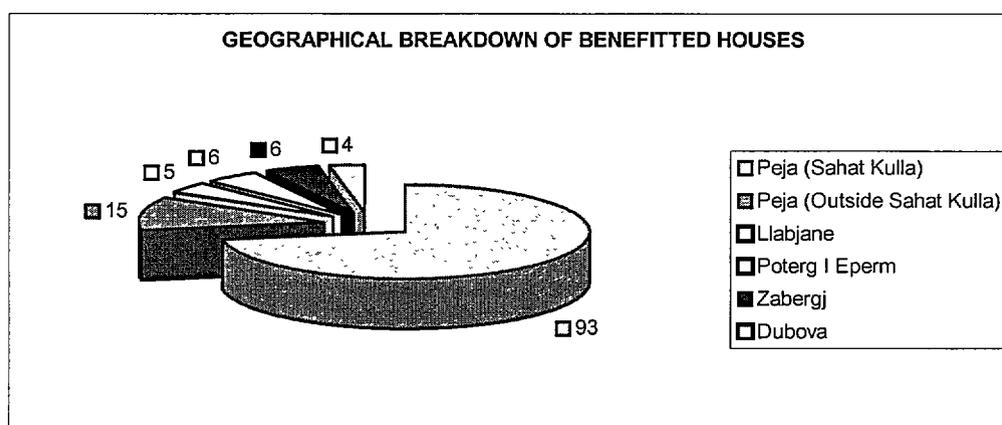


Beneficiary selection

In the rural programme, the MTS distribution system proved to be very helpful. In Peje town it was very hard to work with it though, because homeowners turned out to have more than one MTS card and were registered in several parts of town. It was decided not to continue to use the MTS system to identify beneficiaries, but to send an assessment team of two Kosovar engineers to visit each house in the neighbourhood individually. They would technically assess the house and explain the program to the house owners. The area to be assessed was geographically determined and indicated on an old town map. The borders were communicated to and agreed by the other implementing partners. Identified houses were drawn and numbered on the map by the assessment team corresponding to the lists. A small MEDAIR sticker was put on every house to show the way for the distribution teams afterwards. All category 3 & 4 houses in the neighbourhood were potential recipients of a roof. All beneficiaries indicated they would take in a guest family if

needed, but it would be a family who could relate to the host family. They would not take in strangers. The assistance for 7 Category 2 houses came out of the MEDAIR rural programme.

In Sahat Kulla 93 Cat 3&4 houses have been identified. The initial number MEDAIR would do, was 100. This meant there was a spare capacity of 7 houses. Next to that the houses proved to be smaller than budgeted, so less money and material was spend per house. This left room for 30 more houses. In co-ordination with OFDA, UNHCR, and GOAL Ireland, MEDAIR moved into GOAL's urban areas and picked up 15 more roofs. During this time 'over capacity co-ordination meetings' were held by OFDA and UNHCR to direct NGO's to unserved areas. Through these meetings MEDAIR came to know about the need in the villages of Llabjane, Poterg I Eperm, Zabergj and Dubova. The geographical breakdown of the 129 roofs became as follows:



The assessments and distributions of non-food Items were also carried out on the basis of a house to house assessment. One expatriate staff speaking fluently Albanian dedicated 2 months of her time to visit the villages and urban Peje and ensured a great efficiency to these distributions. This has been an effective use of resources, enabling the widest range and largest number of beneficiaries to be assisted with the resources available. MEDAIR has minimised disputes by following a consistent policy, and by keeping beneficiaries, the authorities, OFDA, UNHCR and other NGO's informed of the selection criteria and the reasons for decisions throughout the project.

Emergency preparedness

We are confident that the design employed by MEDAIR for the application of plastic is strong enough to withstand the climatic conditions; As far as the 15th of February 2000, no problems were reported. However, we are aware that not all beneficiaries have adhered to the advice given. This Emergency Preparedness Program was initially meant for the self-help village program, but is also available for the urban roofs. MEDAIR has responded to this situation in two ways:

1. MEDAIR has set up a remedial work programme to encourage beneficiaries to upgrade their workmanship in order to minimise the risk of failure in inclement weather. Roof care information has also been distributed. Additional batons (2,500m) were distributed to those beneficiaries on an as needed basis.
2. MEDAIR has prepared an emergency preparedness programme to respond to difficulties that beneficiaries may experience with the plastic roofs during the winter months. Should a roof fail during a storm, materials are available for repairs and a team can be diverted from their normal work to assist in an emergency. Batons (7,000m) reinforced plastic (4,200m²), nails (140 pcs) and 1 ladder are set aside and ready to be used for that purpose.

So far, no problems have been reported.

Difficulties encountered and problems-solved

Category estimation

In the very beginning it was estimated that the damage on category 3 and 4 houses in Peje was about 50% for each category. After detailed assessments were carried out a ratio of 15-85% was considered to be more realistic. OFDA's initial calculation for the in-kind timber contribution, was based on the first damage assumption. The actual NGO timber need was based on the second assumption. This left MEDAIR with a shortfall of timber. The solution found was to calculate the shortfall in advance and hand in a request for extra timber from the stockpile in Ferzaj.

OFDA in-kind timber

The in-kind timber was expected to arrive at the end of September. It only started arriving on the 16th of November due to procurement problems by IRC Macedonia. As a result of this late arrival a cash infusion of US\$ 25'750 was made by OFDA to speed up the timber procurement. These funds were also meant to accommodate the shortfall that would come from the Ferzaj stockpile as a supplement. These extra funds gave the opportunity to procure the shortfall on the local market, instead of drawing on the stockpile.

The OFDA in-kind timber consisted only of 8x12x600 and 10x12x600 construction timber sizes. This caused a design problem. To make it possible to make a design close to the traditional Kosova roof design, timber sizes 14x18x600 and 12x14x600 needed to be added into the design. A part of the initial 25% cash grant was used to procure these specific timber sizes. Timber sizes 10x12x600 and 8x12x600 were initially self-procured, using the extra cash infusion, so the work could start, because the in-kind timber arrived much later than expected. At October 29th 8 houses were started with this initial self-procurement

Self-procurement of timber

Our logistics team experienced difficulties in the procurement of the timber. This has been a common problem experienced by agencies working in the area. It has been difficult to procure timber of the correct sizes in the quantity and quality required for the project. Orders were placed with a series of suppliers including suppliers in Montenegro, Bosnia, Macedonia and Ukraine. Realization of these orders has been erratic and unreliable. The majority of the timber was eventually purchased on the local market, in numerous timber yards and from incoming trucks, wherever it has been found. This has been labor-intensive but all timber has been successfully procured and distributed.

Procurement on the local market proved to go faster than expected. The only problem that was encountered was the procurement of the 14x18x600 timbers. These big sizes were cut locally and the sawmills often suffered from power cuts. This obviously delayed the delivery.

Cashflow

Another problem was the actual cashflow between the several banks. It took quite some time to receive the OFDA grant in MEDAIR's Macedonian bank account. Trucks needed to be paid cash; so sometimes truck drivers had to wait, further slowing down the logistics. Also the roofing contractors required payment as soon as they had finished a roof. This was not always possible but they have been co-operative and patient.

Other NGO's

The area of Sahat Kulla is built around the Catholic Church. After the first month of the project, when the majority of the assessments were completed and approx. 90 houses were identified for assistance, three other NGO's, mainly catholic, started to deliver timber in the area. They had an agreement with the Church to assist the houses of church members and the houses around the church. Unfortunately there was little advance planning and no co-ordination with the wider NGO community. As a result some of the MEDAIR beneficiaries identified withdrew from the MEDAIR program to join the programs of the other NGO's. They

also offered a much better package regarding the warm/dry room. The package included plaster, flooring, ceilings and electricity and plumbing. A tiled roof was offered although labour was not included. From the beneficiary point-of-view this was much more attractive. As result of this 'intervention' MEDAIR 'lost' 47 beneficiary roofs to its program, (approximately 50% of our beneficiaries). It has taken considerable effort to find other roofs in the area to replace those lost. The phenomenon of 'NGO-shopping' has also occurred because of this. People would try to get the materials from the catholic NGO's and combine it with MEDAIR labour. Where other NGO's have offered only tiles or windows, (items that MEDAIR has not been able to offer) beneficiaries have been able to combine the packages, resulting in a higher quality result.

Contractors

Initially 20 contractors were signed up, but because the delay of the OFDA timber and following delay of the distributions, they would go and look for other jobs. Work was expected to start the first week of October. In theory it would have been possible to finish 100 roofs within 5 weeks, having 20 roofing teams at work at once, each taking one week per roof. This didn't work because the contractors couldn't wait 6 weeks for the in-kind timber and went looking for other jobs.

When finally the timber arrived, only 15 teams were available. Five other teams had found other projects and were no longer available.

Therefore four new teams were taken on. One team was dismissed again because of bad workmanship. The remaining 18 teams worked very fast and delivered good work.



Category 4 house before



Category 4 house after

Houseowners

Problems occurred with the houseowners as well. Some of them were able to get roof tiles. They would prefer them above the OFDA roofing plastic. MEDAIR had agreed with the contractors that if the houseowners would provide tiles on time, the contractor would put them up without extra labour costs. Sometimes houseowners could not decide between the roofing plastic and tiles and delays occurred.

Weather

Half way January the weather suddenly changed. Before this, it had been clear, dry weather. Now it suddenly snowed three days over the weekend, leaving behind half a meter of snow. This had a great impact on the program. By this time, MEDAIR was already busy in the villages and construction got delayed. IRC 4X4 trucks were needed to do the last distributions into the villages.

Occupation

During the initial assessment the houseowners were explained that they should move into their houses as soon as the roof was finished. This was a part of the contract to get a roof. They should as well take in a second family to host. All houseowners signed the contract and promised to do so.

Now that the roofs are finished the occupation rate is 31 out of the 129 roofs build.

Fortunately most of the occupied 31 houses host more than one family.

There are several reasons for the low occupation rate:

- Due to the late arrival of the in-kind timber, roofs went up in big number only half way November. This time of the year is too late to start internal plastering, which is usually done after the roof is finished.
- The damage to the houses is very big and it takes a big investment to even do only one storey.
- Most people in Peje are living in Serbian houses. For this winter they have used them as shelter, although they despised it. They have chosen to rather stay in a Serbian house this winter than to go and camp out in their own houses, with no facilities.

It is believed that in spring a big amount of work will be done on the houses. The shelter program has given people a chance to prepare themselves, covering the biggest investment they have to make namely a roof. In spring people will start work on their houses and try to move in as soon as possible. A house is very important for a Kosovar. It was his banking system. He will not leave it unoccupied, but will want to move in again as quickly as possible.

Special points of attention

OFDA Roofing Plastic

The roofing plastic was excellent material and the size was very convenient. The calculated amount of 223m² per house was not enough though. To close the roofs at the eaves and sometimes at the gable ends, it has taken more plastic than allocated. Fortunately some homeowners had access to roofing tiles and blocks for their gable ends. This has reduced the need for additional materials. OFDA delivered 20 extra boxes roofing plastic that has covered the shortfall

Local Prefectura

As the project has progressed, the local authorities have been re-establishing themselves in the form of local prefectures. MEDAIR has endeavoured to keep the relevant authorities informed of the work being carried out and the progress. We have found that the Prefectura in Peje has been endeavouring to co-ordinate the activities of the NGOs working in the municipality and identifying individual cases that have not as yet been assisted. This has been a positive effort and we have fully supported the process.

Success of distributions

The distributions of Non-food items (NFI) under the OFDA grant have only been carried out in Urban Peje. The houses outside Sahat Kulla and in the four villages only benefited from the excess capacity in roofs. The only extra items they received were a hygiene bucket and an OFDA wood stove. All beneficiaries in Sahat Kulla whose houses fell in categories 2, 3 or 4 (including guest families) have received items as part of the overall MEDAIR shelter programme, according to the needs surveyed.

The items chosen for distribution (stoves, bedding, kitchen and dining sets, cleaning materials and tools) have proved to be appropriate items according to beneficiary needs and have been gratefully received by beneficiaries. As the winter approached, the cleaning kits were reinforced with warm winter gloves and hats to help the work being carried out in the colder temperatures.

Afterwards the beneficiaries indicated that although it was a plastic covered roof, the combination with the NFI made the whole package much more satisfying than in other parts of town.

Collaboration with other NGOs and OFDA

OFDA

George Devendorf was the OFDA/DART representative in Peje, throughout the project. It was a special opportunity to have a donor representative permanently based in Peje for co-ordination and information sharing. It was very helpful especially when materials needed to be obtained from the Ferizaj depot. The weekly co-ordination meetings were highly appreciated and helped a lot in the overall continuation of the project. Information sharing by the representative was accurate and helpful. OFDA took the initiative to organise co-ordination meetings with UNHCR to redirect over capacity among NGO's. In these meetings MEDAIR got to know about the needs in the four villages mentioned earlier.

IRC

The main partner-NGO MEDAIR collaborated with in the urban program, was IRC. They have been very helpful in various ways.

IN-KIND Timber

The pre-distribution of OFDA in-kind timber to the four partners was handled by IRC. IRC trucks and a forklift would bring the timber to the MEDAIR distribution site and off load it. This was always communicated in advance through satphone or at the weekly co-ordination meetings.

Sanitation Kits

Our Urban project has benefited from the additional donation from OFDA of 82 sanitary fittings (shower, sink, and toilet). MEDAIR has carried out the necessary assessments and distributed the items. IRC have arranged the installation of the items on our behalf by sending a plumbing team around.

IRC trucks

During the first two weeks of January the snow reached up to half a meter. In this period distributions were planned into Zabergj. It was not accessible by normal truck anymore. IRC was approached to make use of their 4X4 trucks to deliver the timber. This was arranged without problems and done over a period of three days.

IRC Warehouse

The IRC warehouse has served as a station for OFDA warm-dry room packages and roofing plastic allocated to MEDAIR later in the project. Between the two logistical departments of the organisations was good communication about how and when materials would be picked up. IRC had time limits on the NGO pick ups from their warehouse, but it has never been a problem if MEDAIR materials had to stay a little longer in their warehouse.

GOAL Ireland

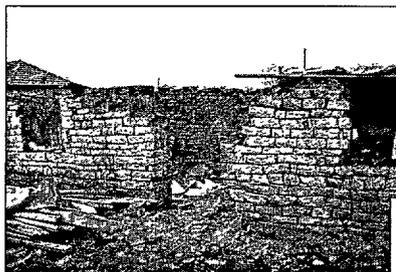
Sahat Kulla has taken 93 roofs of the total project. When it appeared that no more roofs could be found in this area, MEDAIR looked first for uncovered areas in urban Peje. GOAL was willing to share their area with out any problem and their beneficiary list was obtained to avoid duplication. 15 more roofs have been built in their area.

Hope for Albania

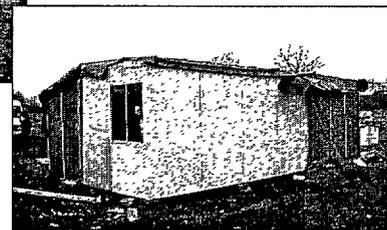
The NGO 'Hope for Albania' installed mobile homes for Category 5 houses in the Sahat Kulla area. Some category 4 houses that had received a mobile home received a MEDAIR roof after returning their mobile home to Hope for Albania.

MEDAIR was allowed to use one mobile home as a guardhouse on the Peje timber distribution site, if it would be made available to a beneficiary at the end of our project.

MEDAIR found one family in Zabergj that was about to be put out of the house that they were using, because the houseowners returned from abroad. MEDAIR made the mobile home available to them and a practical team extended it with one room, using an ERI warm/dry room package.



Category 5 house



Mobile home with extension

Conclusion

We are pleased with the success of the programme. The emergency approach pruned by the UNHCR last July 99 has shown to be very appropriate for the region as most of the returnees and displaced Kosovars have now found shelter, either in their former homes, with relatives or friends, in collective centres or in former Serbs houses. Due to the lack of co-ordination of certain NGOs and the lack of standard approach in this emergency phase, tensions were felt in some villages and Sahat Kulla when houseowners were comparing MEDAIR package to other NGO package. In spite of that, we have been able to forge strong links with the local communities by the regular presence on the field of our expatriate shelter team members and of the local engineers. The covered roofs with plastic were obviously unusual and often raised concerns and worries to the beneficiaries. What will be the resistance of such structure under the sometimes-tough winters the region can experience? Thanks to the relatively good weather conditions so far, no plastic roof damage has been reported. The combination of the OFDA in-kind sizes with local, bigger sizes, to obtain a traditional roof design, has taken away a lot of the worries as well. Senior Kosovar engineers, who were well known and respected in the community, were hired to oversee the contractors and explain the design to the houseowners. The systems and implementation approach have been successful. This can be attributed both to the experience gained during our first project in the region before the NATO intervention, and the dedicated commitment of both local and international staff. Although the wood procurement was a major concern at the beginning of the programme, MEDAIR has been able to secure the wood required for the project on time. Only a few were still being built in January 2000.

MEDAIR would very much like to continue the work in the region and to upgrade the emergency and semi-permanent structures to permanent ones. The next phase will consist of distributing windows and doors using a voucher system and roofing tiles to the most vulnerable cases of the existing beneficiary base. Active co-ordination amongst the remaining NGOs in the region should ensure further assistance to those who will not be assisted in the next phase. Our existing relationships and experience provide a firm foundation for this next project.

Ahmet's death:

Sadly, one of our local staff members suffered an accident during his employment with MEDAIR. Ahmet Sadiku, one of our night guards for the OFDA timber, was knocked from his bicycle while cycling near the Peje timber distribution site and suffered serious spinal injuries.

He was airlifted to Pristina hospital by KFOR, where he was treated, but he died there on New Year's Eve. Ahmet who was really looking forward to beginning a new life in Peje after the war, having been forced to leave Kosova many years ago and spent time as a dissident in jail in Albania. The whole team regretted the loss of this kind and dedicated man, and a memorial fund has been put in place to raise money for a house to be built for his widow.

Annex A

MEDAIR - Emergency shelter project

Summary of achievements - 18/02/2000

	Total OFDA Project	Sahat Kulla	Peje urban outside Sahat Kulla	Llabjane	Potergj / Eperm	Zabergj	Dubove		
<i>Team</i>		C	C	C	C	C	C		
<i>Project achievements</i>									
No. of surveys completed	188	152	15	5	6	6	4		
Cat. 4 houses	120	85	15	5	6	6	3		
Cat. 3 houses	9	8	0	0	0	0	1		
Cat. 2 houses	7	7	0	0	0	0	0		
Families in cat. 4	177	147	7	9	9	5			
Families in cat. 3	19	18	0	0	0	1			
Families in cat. 2	10	10	0	0	0	0			
Total m3 of wood (Self procured and OFDA in-kind)	605.93	496.0	28.4	35.0	25.9	20.6			

