



**EMERGENCY SHELTER ASSISTANCE TO THE GJILAN/GNJILANE AOR AND THE
KLINA MUNICIPALITY FOR MINORITY POPULATIONS, KOSOVAR RETURNEES AND
PRESEVO REFUGEES**

Final Report

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Region: Gjilan/Gnjilane AOR and the Klina Municipality, Kosovo

Disaster/Hazard: Complex Post-Conflict

Time Period of Grant (including extensions): November 1, 2000 to March 31, 2001

Program Overview:

It had been anticipated that the reconstruction program of the year 2000 could significantly solve the housing problem in Kosovo, but due to the late start of the program and relatively slow progress of the reconstruction work, the housing (shelter) crisis remained unresolved. Many houses destroyed in different regions during the war remained in the same conditions they were in just after the war. This caused thousands of families to remain without appropriately winterized houses (dry and warm rooms) for the winter season of 2000/2001.

This OFDA sponsored winterization project proposed to improve housing conditions in the Klina Municipality and Gjilan/Gnjilane AOR by maximizing the use of existing resources in a cost-effective and timely manner for the winter of 2000 – 2001. The project involved the provision of shelter materials to encourage families to construct a winterized room or rooms in their properly owned war-damaged house in order to prevent displacement of families.

The objective of the project was the following: To provide adequate, weatherproof shelter to the most vulnerable Albanian and minority families living in unbearable conditions in the Klina Municipality and Gjilan/Gnjilane AOR.

The primary beneficiaries in the Gjilan AOR were existing shelter vulnerable people in both ethnic Albanian and minority Serb and Roma communities. ARC focused on dealing with the immediate needs of the beneficiaries with consideration for shelter vulnerable Albanians from the Presevo area.

The targeted population in the Klina Municipality was the majority Albanian population as well as minority groups, mostly Roma, who were living in sub-standard living conditions during the winter months.

The program activity accomplishments were as follows:

Activity 1:

To assess the shelter needs of the target communities and identify available housing adaptable to the winter shelter needs of the population of Klina and the Gjilan/Gnjilane AOR via locally recognized leadership structures.

ARC assessed the following for both regions:

ARC conducted an assessment of families starting from the lists obtained from the municipal administration of Klina, UNHCR Gjilan/Gnjilane and the six municipal administrations in Gjilan/Gnjilane, village leaders and committee members of the reconstruction commission of each village. This process helped identify the most needy families in the two regions. ARC had 3 priority types:

- Priority 1: most shelter vulnerable populations -- people in tents, category 3, 4 and 5 housing;

- Priority 2: very shelter vulnerable population -- category 2 and 3 houses; and
- Priority 3: Medium degree of shelter vulnerability -- category 2 houses and host family housing volunteers.

The first step taken in the process of assessment and identification of beneficiaries was to introduce the program to village leaders, members of the reconstruction commission of each village and the community as a whole.

For **Klina**, the next action was to get as much information as possible from the local UNMIK office and local village leaders from their previously available database. In the beginning, the local village leaders and officials of the reconstruction commission were enthusiastic in having the program in their villages. After securing the list of beneficiaries prepared by local leaders, the engineering teams visited each family on the list and found out that some of the beneficiaries did not qualify for the assistance as per the criteria established by ARC and OFDA. They had relatively better conditions to survive the cold season than the targeted families. This brought misunderstandings between our engineering teams and some of the local leaders who insisted that every family on the list should be given our assistance. Some of the local leaders stopped cooperating with our teams once they were told that some of the families did not qualify for assistance and should fulfill the preconditions before they are entitled for any assistance.

All villages, including Klina town, were visited to identify the most vulnerable families in the entire municipality. A total of **990** families were visited from which **553** vulnerable families were identified for assistance. The breakdown by priority is as follows:

- Priority 1, 341 cases;
- Priority 2, 333 cases; and
- Priority 3: 114 cases.

For **Gjilan/Gnjilane** **813** families were visited. A total of 553 families that were visited were Priority 1 cases, 81 were Priority 2 cases and 23 were Priority 3 cases, the remaining were special requests for assessments made by many organizations: UNHCR, CRIC, UNMIK, IRC, CARE, and others.

These shelter vulnerable families for both regions included handicapped people, women-headed families, families who lived in tents prior to our assistance, families who lived in sub-standard living conditions, elderly families and families who shared rooms with other families, who unable to cope up with the cold winter season either in tents or otherwise.

Activity 2:

To provide shelter materials to the residents of these homes to improve at least one room to a minimum level of comfort. ARC focused on upgrading damaged space to habitable standards. In the cases where space could not be adequately rehabilitated, ARC implemented the host family housing program.

In **Klina**, the majority of the rooms distributed to and completed went directly to the beneficiary;

few host family rooms were needed for the Klina population. The original target number for Klina was 500 rooms – 450 Majority Albanian and 50 Minority/Roma rooms. ARC distributed materials to 562 beneficiary rooms. Of the 562 beneficiary rooms distributed to, 543 were completed. Of the 543 rooms completed, 515 families occupied these rooms – often one family needs more than one room in order to provide the adequate space per person. The Albanian majority occupied 480 of the 515 rooms. ARC was able to distribute and complete 35 Roma beneficiary rooms. There were not 50 needy Roma families identified as vulnerable, the 35 assessed by ARC were the most vulnerable and thus, with the 35 completed rooms for the Roma, ARC was able to address 100% of the Roma beneficiary needs. ARC was able to surpass its goal by 62 rooms, with a 96% occupancy rate.

Distribution and Completion Summary for Klina:

1. Number of families who received material assistance	562
2. Number of host families	17
3. Number of IDP families accommodated in host families	17
4. Number of minority families assisted (Roma families)	35
5. Number of rooms rehabilitated and occupied by beneficiaries	515
6. Number of families moved from tents to repaired rooms	86

Once materials were distributed to the 500 identified families, ARC requested OFDA for additional distribution for 50 households from the outstanding materials already in stock. The identification of the fifty families started immediately after a go ahead was received from the donor. Distribution of materials to all the beneficiaries was completed on 22 February 2001.

During and after the assessment period, families were encouraged as much as possible to rehabilitate at list one warm and dry room in their properly owned war-damaged houses. In cases where there were no possibilities of repairing rooms in their own properties, the alternative of host family accommodation was introduced. The host families were willing to accommodate one or more guest or relative families for the winter season in exchange for shelter materials, which will remain properties of the host family after the agreed upon time expires.

The host family alternative was not appreciated in the Klina municipality. The reason was that most of the families whose houses were not damaged or those who were able to repair their damaged houses were already accommodating one or more families who did not have the capacity of repairing rooms in their properties. Some families with the possibility of accommodating one or more guest families were not willing to do so. Most of damaged houses have to be reconstructed starting from the foundation and very few families have had the opportunity to do so.

For **Gjilan/Gnjilane**, the majority of the rooms distributed to and completed went directly to the beneficiary, however, due to the Presevo Valley IDPs, displaced Serbians and the Macedonian refugees who began crossing into Kosovo as of February 16, 2001, there was more of a demand for the Host Family Housing Program. The original target number for Gjilan/Gnjilane was 500 rooms – 250 Majority Albanian and 250 Minority/Roma rooms. ARC distributed to 634 beneficiary rooms. Of these 634 rooms, ARC completed 611 rooms where 543 rooms were

occupied. 301 Minority rooms were completed and 297 of the rooms were occupied; 273 Serbian families received materials and 28 Roma families. 132 Host family rooms were created and of these 132 rooms 98 were occupied by IDPs from Presevo, Macedonian refugees and/or Serbians displaced since 1999. ARC surpassed its goal of 500 rooms for Gjilan/Gnjilane by 111 with an 88% occupancy rate and a 96% room completion rate. The lower rate of occupancy is due to the host family housing needs. These empty rooms have been occupied after the OFDA program completion date due to the increasing tensions in Macedonia from February through June 2001.

1. Number of families who received material assistance	634
2. Number of host families	132
3. Number of minority families assisted (Serb and Roma families)	301
4. Number of IDP/Refugee families accommodated in host families	98
5. Number of rooms rehabilitated and occupied by direct beneficiaries	445
6. Number of families moved from tents to repaired rooms	9

Similar to Klina, once ARC had achieved the 500-room goal, ARC requested to complete another 75 rooms. ARC was able to achieve the additional 75 rooms due to its collaboration with CRIC, the Italian NGO whose main objective was roof completion for more than 150 houses in the Gjilan/Gnjilane AOR. ARC was able to complete 75 warm/dry rooms within CRIC's 150 houses. This collaboration gave CRIC the ability to achieve more roofs and warm/dry rooms by diverting more of their resources to other houses as ARC completed 75 rooms.

There were few obstacles in the Gjilan/Gnjilane AOR. It is an AOR well known by the staff after working in this region for two years. The populations were very receptive and hardworking throughout the winter months.

The following types of materials were distributed to beneficiaries throughout both regions:

- doors and windows of various sizes;
- sanitary fixtures, including faucets, showers, Turkish toilets;
- electrical fixtures and electrical cables;
- carpeting;
- wood-burning stoves;
- cement, white cement, lime, and blocks for walls;
- floor and ceiling insulation materials (polystyrene); and
- ceiling boards and timber for roofing – these roof timbers were left over from the 99-2000 OFDA/ARC shelter program.

Twelve pickups and two mini-trucks were used during the distribution phase, which has been undertaken in parallel with other activities. Due to the support of the logistics department of the ARC Pristina office, the distribution of materials was completed as scheduled. Materials were procured and supplied to the site in a timely manner.

Once materials were distributed, every recipient was entered into the database along with the materials received and each beneficiary family was given an identification number in the

database for future reference.

No significant problems were observed during the distribution phase. Materials were received relatively in time and enough pickups and trucks were available to accomplish the target. It was also unnecessary to employ more engineers and assistant engineers during the distribution period. After evaluating for two weeks the rate the teams could distribute materials, it was learned that the teams already formed were able to complete the distribution of materials within the time allotted.

Please also see attached: the final statistics from the regular OFDA required reports. The ARC/OFDA final beneficiary lists and database.

Activity 3:

ARC will work with recognized local leadership structures to encourage local assistance to vulnerable groups unable to carry out these improvements themselves. This activity will address the need to create enhanced warm rooms for the most vulnerable populations who need this assistance to survive the winter of 2000-2001. In general, this will mean providing materials and when needed contractor-based shelter improvement works.

Some of the most vulnerable families, who do not have the expertise or cover the cost of labor to rehabilitate their rooms, were also provided with assistance. Skilled workers were contracted to plaster walls and floors, fix ceilings, fix doors and windows and install electrical connections. In Klina, 51 families received labor assistance while in Gjilan 15 families received labor assistance. Due to its heavy destruction and displacement, Klina required more labor assistance.

Every family that received materials was visited at least three times by the engineering teams to ensure that the rooms are completed in time and the materials are not misused for other purposes. During monitoring, the teams made sure that all beneficiaries got the required materials to complete the rooms and encouraged the beneficiaries to speed up the rehabilitation work and gave technical assistance for those who did not have the know how. They also helped in finding skilled workers to some of the vulnerable beneficiaries who were not able to do the work by themselves.

The beneficiaries were provided with additional materials during the monitoring stage after the teams made sure that more materials were required to complete the rooms. The data entry person entered all information obtained from the field about the status of the rooms and materials distributed immediately for future reference and reporting purposes.

It has been very encouraging to see some families who have been dependent on others for their basic shelter needs complete a room or rooms in their own properties and move in with satisfaction and hope. It has been found the most vulnerable families were very appreciative for the assistance rendered them.

Obstacles Encountered

The major problems encountered during the implementation period are explained below. It is important to note that the majority of the obstacles were in the Klina Municipality. We credit the difficulty due to the dire needs in Klina that had been neglected for more than 16 months. The population, although grateful for the ARC/OFDA assistance, there was a lingering attitude of, “it is not enough”. The residents of the Klina Municipality want a full reconstruction program, which is understandable given that 75% of the homes were destroyed from 1998 – 1999. Due to ARC’s reputation and long-term presence in Gjilan, the program ran smoothly.

In **Klina**, at the beginning of the project, village leaders and committee members of the reconstruction commission of some villages tried to manipulate the program and run it according to their own procedures. It took a lot of effort and communication, and therefore time to clearly explain the objectives of the OFDA winterization program. Some people were never satisfied with our program and continued to expect more. Having to deny certain beneficiaries created a tense atmosphere in Klina. Again due to the high demand for shelter and reconstruction overall, the tension is understandable.

In addition, despite the efforts of ARC and OFDA staff, many families in Klina did not want to start rehabilitation of their rooms after receiving the materials, thinking that if they repair a room, they will be denied of the reconstruction program. However, the opposite was true, those we assisted remained on the high priority list for reconstruction. Unfortunately our communication efforts failed to convince the Klina population. Efforts to repossess the materials not being used were also failed attempts – it increased the tensions amongst staff and the beneficiaries to a negative result, thus we stopped repossessing materials and offered labor assistance where appropriate. Some families also delayed repairing their rooms after they noticed that some families were assisted with labor. These families had the capacity to complete the work, but insisted that they should be provided with some money.

Timely actions were taken to solve some of the problems encountered during the implementation period of the project though some problems remained unresolved due to rigidity of some village leaders.

Finally, the project benefited from the relatively mild winter weather throughout late 2000 to early 2001.

Conclusion

On balance, the Emergency Shelter program was a success. All activities were completed according to the plan. ARC achieved more than a 96% room completion rate and more than a 90% occupancy rate for all the rooms. We exceeded our goal of 85% occupancy and completion rate. In addition, with a no cost extension we were able to complete 1154 rooms, 154 more than planned.

For Klina, it has been observed also that the need for shelter in the municipality is still a high priority since the economic situation of the population of the area is too poor to rehabilitate the

significant damage inflicted during the war.

The collaboration with and implementation of OFDA priorities has been extremely straightforward and productive due to OFDA's leadership in Kosovo. Information regarding the OFDA regulations and guidelines was easily accessible and clearly understood. OFDA field staff regularly visited our programs in Klina and Gjilan/Gnjilane. These visits only enhanced the integrity and quality of our programs. The shelter engineers appreciate the frank and constructive criticism that kept them on track.

Another reason for the smooth running of the OFDA emergency winterization programs in Kosovo for 2000-01 is due to OFDA's and ARC's persistence to get the donor and NGO community to work in concert. For example, in our programs, we were working with other ECHO and UNHCR NGO partners in order to complete our shelter assistance goals and vice versa – through winter clothing distribution, shared shelter materials and beneficiary list verifications. ARC was able to provide materials to more than 75 CRIC assisted rooms so that CRIC could complete more roofs in the Gjilan/Gnjilane AOR. In addition, the network of information provided in regards to available resources enhanced our programs and gave us greater access to materials.