



THE INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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The **INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE (IRC)** began assisting victims of the Bosnian war in 1992 with emergency services, transitioning in 1995 to post-war rehabilitation and reconstruction. Throughout this post-conflict period, the IRC's Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) program has been committed to furthering the sustainable return and reintegration of refugees and displaced persons by rebuilding and revitalizing destroyed communities. IRC's diverse programs throughout the country have ranged from reconstruction of houses and infrastructure to economic and civil society development, legal assistance, and health services. As IRC's work in B&H draws to a close, with a scheduled departure in Spring 2006, programs are now focusing solely on the key areas of shelter and infrastructure rehabilitation and economic development in targeted municipalities of need in eastern, north-eastern, and western Bosnia, and in Herzegovina. All programs highlight critical capacity building, skill transfer, and strengthening social cohesion during this phase-down period.

SHELTER AND INFRASTRUCTURE REHABILITATION As the country program's largest sector, the IRC continues to reconstruct destroyed homes, apartment buildings, schools, health clinics, and public infrastructure for minority returnees in the Srebrenica, Mostar, and Gorazde regions. IRC B&H's shelter and infrastructure rehabilitation projects involve close cooperation and partnership with local return officials and returnee representatives in order to transfer skills in managing such activities, as well as to build trust between the local authorities and their minority constituents. The projects also predominantly utilize self-help strategies, through which beneficiaries are provided with building materials to rebuild their homes or jointly-selected community buildings themselves. Furthermore, with a strong emphasis on cost-share principles, the IRC has received considerable monetary and in-kind support from local or national sources to carry out these projects. More than 700 minority returnees will benefit from IRC's current programming in this sector, significantly improving the sustainability of their return.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IRC B&H's second major area of support is economic development, through which comprehensive programs that address the capacity building needs of a variety of stakeholders are being implemented in 15 municipalities throughout the country. These programs seek to foster both the growth of individual returnee farms, as well as to promote improved and sustainable service provision to them by local cooperatives, governments, and schools. Activities include:

- the distribution of partially-recoverable grants to returnees (as well as a limited number of non-recoverable grants to the extremely vulnerable) in the form of livestock, agricultural machinery or equipment, seeds, or specialized handicraft equipment and tools;
- repayment into the revolving funds of local cooperatives, who will continue to target returnees with favorable loans in the future;
- technical training and educational excursions for beneficiary farmers, cooperative members, local NGO partners, and local economic department officials;
- provision of needed technological equipment to local economic officials or farmers cooperatives, who in-turn will provide free training or services to minority returnees;
- assistance to local schools to establish or increase agricultural educational activities
- facilitating returnee villagers and the local government to jointly create a local development plan to organize a public market day in one community near Srebrenica.

More than 3,900 returnees, 6 farmers' cooperatives, 1 local development agency, 5 local partner NGOs, 15 governmental service providers, and 7 schools will benefit from these activities this year.

PROGRAM STRATEGY

IRC B&H's exit strategy reflects a core commitment to sustainable return community development by emphasizing the capacity building of returnees, local NGOs, farmers' cooperatives, and governmental partners. Central to this strategy is also the wide participation of relevant stakeholders and the strengthening of community linkages, trust, and cooperation in all projects. The IRC works to support durable reintegration and sustainable livelihoods, promotes self-reliance, and ensures community ownership.

OPERATIONS

STAFFING

IRC Bosnia and Herzegovina operates with 2 expatriate staff, 23 national staff, and 5 local NGO partners.

BUDGET

In the 2005 fiscal year, IRC Bosnia and Herzegovina has an operating budget of approximately 4,770,000 USD. Funding is provided by USAID, the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Sarajevo, Stichting Vluchteling (SV), DCI, UNHCR, UNFPA, the B&H Federal Ministry for Displaced Persons and Refugees, the City of Mostar, the Herzegovina-Neretva Cantonal Department for Refugees and Displaced Persons, and the Elkin Charitable Foundation.

OFFICES

IRC B&H manages its programs from 5 offices: Sarajevo, Tuzla, Mostar, Gorazde, and Bihac.

CONTACT INFORMATION

IRC B&H is pleased to share any additional information about its current programming.

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