

Newsletter

PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

From the beginning of the last year's floods in our country, Caritas has provided assistance to flood-affected households in the municipalities: Krupanj, Ub, Valjevo, Osecina, Lajkovac, Mionica, Sabac, Obrenovac, Lazarevac (Veliki Crljeni), Svilajnac, Jagodina, Paracn, Topola, Smederevska Palanka and Despotovac.

EXPERIENCE OF CARITAS IN PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO FLOODED HOUSEHOLDS

Author: Caritas Serbia

From the very beginning of the floods that happened to our country last year, a humanitarian organization Caritas Serbia has provided various types of assistance to flood-affected households, in order to respond to their many needs: from the distribution of food and hygiene items, clothes, furniture, animal feed, dryers for use, construction materials, briquettes and firewood, stoves, household appliances, vouchers to purchase food during the winter period, the vouchers for the purchase of furniture, laundry services, psycho-social and medical assistance. During the spring, Caritas implemented a program to help the flooded farmers, with which they donated greenhouses, seeds, animals (sheep, goats, hens, fingerling trout), feed and equipment for work. Caritas was one of the few organizations that provided assistance to flood victims after the first few months of emergency, because the needs are still significant. This variety of programs assisted flooded households from the municipalities: Krupanj, Ub, Valjevo, Osečina, Lajkovac, Mionica, Sabac, Obrenovac, Lazarevac (Veliki Crljeni), Svilajnac, Jagodina, Paracin, Topola, Smederevska Palanka and Despotovac.

Work with the local community

Caritas has coordinated its activities with national and local authorities, primarily with the crisis headquarters and centers for social work. Efficiency of the work of Caritas is increased with participation of representatives of local authorities and local volunteers, who provided great assistance

in logistics: finding hardly accessible locations, communication with users and distribution of assistance.

In addition, Caritas has participated in numerous bilateral meetings with international and local organizations that were active in the humanitarian field in flooded areas. These meetings were essential to co-ordinate activities and avoid overlap in the provision of assistance.

Door-to-door work

In order to know better the needs of households affected by the floods, Caritas has developed the needs assessment system to be based on: the official report on the damage prepared by the state commission for each municipality, the information obtained from municipal crisis staff and their commissions and direct visits by Caritas staff and volunteers to households affected by floods in selected municipalities. The needs assessment system led to the development of Caritas database of flood-affected households, with more than 6,000 households. This database is used to provide assistance on the basis of certain criteria, primarily to the most vulnerable households, such as families living in remote rural areas whose main source of income comes from agriculture, families with low income, elderly, single-person, multi-member households (with five or more members), persons with disabilities, single parents and families who have children with special needs. Database with the needs assessment is

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constantly updated during the project, in order to avoid overlapping with the assistance they shared with other organizations. Caritas was one of the few organizations which carried out a needs assessment through visits and interviews with people affected by the floods, and this process has started during the emergency phase and the distribution of food parcels and hygiene items. Field visits and interviews with beneficiaries proved to be the necessary way to gain a real insight into the status of each household.

The users were very satisfied with this approach and the type of assistance they received, noting that they did not have to ask for assistance themselves, but Caritas came to them. Benefit of direct assistance was a direct contact with beneficiaries and monitoring of the condition of each household.

Before the flood, Rajko Nikolic lived in his house in the village near Krupanj, along with his wife, son and daughter in law. The main source of income for these families was farming, and they cultivated plums, raspberries, blackberries, strawberries, tomatoes, peppers and aronia to some extent. Last year, their house, land, stables and additional buildings were completely destroyed by floods.

A new house was built from the state aid, and UN-OPS donated the furniture. Since they could no longer grow fruit and vegetables on their land, a neighbor donated a part of her land. They received a greenhouse of high quality from Caritas (with irrigation and spraying systems, dimensions 5x2, 6x21 meters and a 10-year warranty), solid fuel stove and a voucher for the purchase of food and hygiene items at the local supermarket.

Teams for psychosocial support

Apart from the evident financial assistance, people from flooded areas also need psychosocial support, because of the difficult situation they have experienced, and the consequences they are still facing. For this reason, Caritas Serbia has organized teams of psychosocial support, with financial support from Caritas Germany. This kind of support is provided through four mobile teams, each consisting of a social worker, a psychologist and two nurses, who provide free counseling services (social, psychological, medical, legal, etc.) and home care for the vulnerable elderly people. Each team is active in one of the four municipalities of Obrenovac, Sabac, Valjevo and Krupanj.

In addition to psychosocial support, Caritas Germany provided funds for assistance to beneficiaries who use support services of these teams. This aid was used to purchase various items necessary for flooded households, such as building materials,

furniture and appliances, but, due to the great needs of the population, this assistance was also used for the purchase of medicines, medical supplies, water analysis for farms, water pumps, nylon for greenhouses, etc.

Flexibility in assistance

Caritas has provided various forms of assistance and they were able to cover a variety of needs, in order to somehow help as many households as possible and avoid overlapping. Assistance was provided to the most vulnerable groups of users, regardless of their religion, nationality or any other type of affiliation. One of the keys to the success of the project is a decision to use a voucher system for certain types of assistance, and thus to engage local suppliers (food and hygiene, furniture, briquettes). In this way, the project had a positive effect on the local economy, and the users themselves could choose what articles they need from these stores. Material support offered through the Caritas program of psychosocial assistance was particularly flexible in relation to other programs, covering a huge range of items: from construction materials to medical supplies. ■

Rajko Nikolić:

The greenhouse we received from Caritas means a lot to us. Last year, before the floods, we planted tomatoes and peppers, and we lost everything, we had nothing to eat. Now we planted new fruits and vegetables, and we can have enough for us and sell something as well.



Marimangat - Via Ferrata

Author: Virtyt Gacaferi, Director, Marimangat

The municipality of Peja is a home to some of the most beautiful mountains in the Balkan Peninsula, however, real development and tourist products, especially those that are related to the rocks are lacking. Marimangat, a local NGO from the city, has developed Rock Climbing routes, however due to specialised clientele these routes did not attract a lot of tourists.

In cooperation with the Italian Mountaineering Association SAT and Mountaineering Association from the Province of Trento in Italy, Marimangat came to the idea of building a Via Ferrata, a metallic structure, constructed in the rock that makes vertical rock walls accessible to a bigger number of people. This was rightly believed to increase the number of people who can participate in rock related outdoor activities. This will also bring income to Marimangat, and open the way to new investments in the adventure tourism, including the new ongoing project of the Zip Line.



The project of Via Ferrata started with the study visit of members of Marimangat in Italy in what is considered as the Via Ferrata heaven in Dolomite Mountains. After this visit a team of experts came from Italy to look at the terrain. Several options were looked at to finally choose the place next to a system of caves, which will add value to the trip.

The Via Ferrata was finalised in three years: First year Marimangat build a short trail, which did not create a loop. This posed a problem as descending was harder than climbing. Additionally, to get access to the Via Ferrata, one had to use boots to cross the river. In heavy rain seasons, the Via Ferrata was closed as the river levels rose and one could not cross.

However, as a new product in the region dominated by restaurant tourism the structure got a lot of media attention. This provided political gain for the Municipality that had decided to invest in the first phase.

The implementation of the first phase, the media attention and good maintenance of the structure secured further funding from the municipality for the second phase. This phase created a loop and made the trip much more enjoyable both in physical experience and in views it offered. It completed the product, however there was still no bridge.

The opening event of the second phase of Via Ferrata, brought together local leaders, and members of the international community. The event was organised on a river bank on a warm sunny day, when people were lobbying to get a place in the first tours to the top of the Via Ferrata. This brought a very good vibe to the whole celebrating atmosphere. But everybody had to wear fishing boots to cross the river, which was a bit of a hassle.

During the event Marimangat had a chance to discuss with the mayor, who was congratulated for the investment. Other stakeholders were also prized. It was here that the promise for the bridge to Marimangat was made by the mayor of Peja. The promise was honoured 100 per cent.

With the pending bridge loop walk, stunning views, stories about caves and high quality installations, Via Ferrata became a real attraction. It brought 60 to 100 people a month, who paid for equipment, guide and profit for Tour Operators selling the product.

Via Ferrata on top of being sustainable started bringing income to Marimangat, which opened the way to new products.

The idea of Via Ferrata partly came from making natural adventure accessible to more people.

There were climbing routes but not enough climbers. With the Via Ferrata one did not need trained climbers, a proper guide and equipment made it possible for more people to join. This principle pushed Marimangat to bid for the next adventure product. A Zip Line, for which the physical condition does not matter, but the facility is opened to almost all adult population.

With the back record of the Via Ferrata, engaging with municipality was not hard. The door was opened and the product supported. Donors felt the same, and the support was instant. Initially the project had to be finalised in spring. However, the final go ahead from the donor came only in August, which has delayed the whole project to be opened in October.

This new project of the Zip Line is closely related to Via Ferrata not only in idea but also in funding. Other than good reputation and trust, the Via Ferrata story also brought income. The Zip Line project due to the unexpected costs and delays in funding, had additional cost Marimangat participation increased.

The whole zip Line cost was planned to be 33,000, it had increased to almost 40,000 out of which Marimangat is covering 10,000 in cash and in kind, with Municipality and donors covering the rest. The Zip Line is expected to increase income and open the door to the other investments. Marimangat could participate only thanks to the income from Via Ferrata.

On this path Marimangat have to take care, to keep up the good vibe with the public, to make sure that the Municipality will have economic and political return (popular support for this kind of projects) in working with the organisation. ■



A Report developed on “Market research for finding system sustainability possibilities” within the project “Regional Model for a Smart Municipal Services Reporting System for the citizens”



Within the project “Regional Model for a Smart Municipal Services Reporting System for the citizens”, implemented by NALED in cooperation with GIZ, SDC and a group of partners from Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro, InTER developed the Report on “Market research for finding system sustainability possibilities”. InTER was contracted by NALED for the analysis aimed at identification way to ensure financial sustainability of the Smart System.

During the analysis that was implemented between March and June 2015, three round tables were organised in the region, in Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro, with the discussion about advantages and disadvantages of the existing models, previous experiences and effects, as well as recommendations for sustainability of Smart Municipal Services Reporting System for the citizens, and solutions for communal problems. ■

InTER participated at the working meeting “Countering Fear, the Security Mindset and the ‘Othering’ of Roma” in Budapest

Between June 9 and 10, 2015, InTER participated in the working meeting “Countering Fear, the Security Mindset and the ‘Othering’ of Roma”, organized by the Roma Initiatives Office and Think Tank Fund in Budapest. Discussions at the meeting were focused on the increase of socio – political tensions, apart from the higher level of xenophobic discourses and political barriers in CEE and Western Balkans, as well as on the importance of sharing experiences in preventing discrimination of Roma people in different countries in specific topics. InTER participated in the group focused on Economy and Social Enterprises. ■



Works started on the construction of Via Ferrata “Climbing to Berim - Dare to Imagine”

After determining the final route of the Via Ferrata trail on Berim rocks, the construction works on the “steel road” have started. Besides Via Ferrata, the tourist offer of Ibarski Kolasin will include a rock prepared for sports climbing in at least 10 directions.

Via Ferrata is built within the project “Climbing on Berim Rocks - Dare to Imagine”, implemented by InTER, Outdoor In and Zubin Potok Municipality, and funded by the Embassy of Finland. The project is also supported by PPSE Program Swiss-contact and Empower Private Sector Kosovo. ■



Regional Model for a Smart Municipal Services Reporting System for the citizens - Market research for finding system sustainability possibilities



Within the project “Regional Model for a Smart Municipal Services Reporting System for the citizens”, implemented by NALED in cooperation with GIZ, SDC and a group of partners from Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro, InTER developed the Report on “Market research for finding system sustainability possibilities”. The analysis was implemented between March and June 2015.

The report is written in English.

Tourism Development Strategy of the Municipality of Zubin Potok



Within the project Outdoor In - Zubin Potok Tourism Development, InTER developed a Tourism Development Strategy in the Municipality of Zubin Potok, which was adopted by the Municipality.

Get ready for the adventure!



in cooperation with



MOUNTAIN RACE

GAZIVODE - MOKRA GORA
October 10, 2015



**Opening of the new tourist attraction in Mokra Gora Mountain on the same day
VIA FERRATA - BERIM**