

DRAFT REPORT OF ANNUAL OPERATIONS

POLISH HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATION

January - December 1999

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ASSISTANCE ABROAD

I. Humanitarian aid convoys

L.p	Date	Country	Number of vehicles	Weight	Value in USD
1.	8.03.99	Lithuania	1	1,0	7.800
2.	14.04.99	Albania	6	77,0	132.951
3.	29.04.99	Albania	5	60,5	252.545
4.	09.06.99	Albania	4	69,0	94.977
5.	10.06.99	Lithuania	4	4,0	11.228
6.	02.07.99	Albania	3	37,0	164.161
7.	19.07.99	Lithuania	1	1,0	5.743
8.	25.08.99	Turkey	2	17,0	53.000
9.	15.09.99	Romania	1	1,1	1.885
10.	04.11.99	Romania	2	1,8	7.386
12.	16.11.99	Serbia/Belgrad	1	0,7	7.167
13.	06.12.99	Kosovo	2	25,5	84.563
14.	07.12.99	Lithuania	1	0,7	6.228
	Total		33	296,3	829.634

1. Assistance to Children in Lithuania

In 1999 we have been continuing to feed 496 children in 11 Polish schools in Lithuania, in two regions: święciański and solecznicki. These children come from the poorest families and the meal at school is often the only one during a day. Cost of monthly feeding is \$8 on average. We also provide these schools with educational aids, computers, books, and kitchen utensils.

2. Aid for Kosovo Refugees

The Polish Humanitarian Organization had begun to organize assistance for Kosovo prior to NATO bombings. On March 24th 1999, we appealed to the media for aid for the Kosovo refugees, fleeing to Macedonia and Albania.

Gift and Money Collections We announced a collection of goods and funds. Many people responded to our appeal. Several dozen schools and universities applied to the Foundation. We have been supported by collections organized by *gminas* (boroughs), cultural centres, scouts, political parties, by different organisations at concerts, discos, sports events, fashion shows. Painted eggs and books were auctioned; theatres donated performance ticket income. The *Gazeta Wyborcza* daily newspaper organized funds and donations collection for us, and published an insert on Kosovo; all income from the sales of that insert was allocated for support for the refugees. The *Radio Zet* and *Radio RMF FM* radio stations collected with us; they had also helped to organize the first convoy. The first channel of the Polish TV organised a huge collection as well.

Altogether during the collections in 103 points throughout Poland we collected \$391 thousands dollars and approx. \$500 thousands of in - kinds contributions.

Convoys to Albania

Polish Humanitarian Organization **sent four emergency convoys** for the Kosovo refugees in Albania, **delivering in total 243,5 tones of in kind donations worth \$644.634,00**. The convoys were jointly organized with the Operation Rainbow, a support provided to the Kosovo refugees by the European Community.

I: departure – April 14th 1999

goods were unloaded:

- at a centre run by Salesianer sisters and at a Caritas warehouse taking care of five refugee camps in Shkoder
- at a camp in Tirana, housed in a disabled children's' school for about 500 refugees from the Pristina area
- at a camp for 2,500 Kosovo refugees in Kavaje
- at Operation Rainbow warehouses in Durres

II: departure – April 29th 1999

goods were unloaded:

- at the camps in Kukes and Shkoder, with the assistance of the Italian army.
- at a camp in Kavaje, a home to 6,500 refugees
- at a centre run by Salesianer monks in Tirana for mothers with children

III: departure June 9th 1999

goods were unloaded:

- at Operation Rainbow warehouses in Durres
- camp in Vlore, town in the South of Albania, next to Greek border

IV: departure July 2nd 1999

Donations were unloaded:

- at Operation Rainbow warehouse in Durres

Convoy to Kosovo

Convoy left on the 6th December, we delivered 25.5 tones of total value \$84.563 thousands; the goods (winter clothes, shoes, blankets, food, baby formula, school articles, hygiene items, stoves) were signed for the inhabitants of the two communities: Kacanik and Strpce. They were unloaded in the warehouses of the Yugoslav Red Cross and Mother Theresa Society and further distributed by their representatives among those in need.

3. Romania

Since April 1999 PHO has run a new assistance program for Romania. The Foundation "PRO VITA" run by the Orthodox priest Nicolae Tanase in Valenia de Munte is our Romanian partner - the recipient of the assistance.

The Foundation runs an orphanage and a shelter for women who, despite of encountering many hardships, make their minds to deliver a baby up. Around 160 persons are being taken care of by the Foundation. These are most of all children of pathological families, children of the families who are not able to support them, street children, pregnant women, girls of age (18) who were not allowed to stay in orphanages any more. Some of the children were placed in surrogate families, being at the same time still taken care of by the Foundation. Others live in houses built or bought for that purpose.

The Foundation "PRO VITA" has ambitious education and rehabilitation goals, but hard financial and social conditions make the realisation of those goals impossible.

PHO supports the Foundation financially for the time being, however there are plans to open an ambulatory there in 2000.

4. Turkey

After the earthquake in Turkey PHO started the collection of donations for the victims which resulted in sending two trucks in join convoy of Polish NGOs. The convoy with supplies for the earthquake victims left on 25th August.

PHO delivered 17 tons of goods (food, bandage, clothes, disposable medical appliances, sleeping bags, blankets, hygienic articles, baby formulas) of total worth \$ 53.000.

Between 28 August - 5 September PHO has organised an action called "The Hope", an all-Poland collection of school accessories for children assisted by our Foundation (in Poland, Lithuania, Kazakhstan, Serbia, Kosovo and Turkey). Some of those accessories has been sent to Turkey with the assistance of Polish Red Cross.

5. Serbia (Belgrade)

On 17 November 1999 a transport with the humanitarian assistance for Serb refugees from Kosovo has been sent. We brought winter clothing, shoes, baby formulas, hygienic articles and school accessories there worth of total \$ 7.167.

The donation was supplied to two centres on Avala Hill near Belgrade. In one of them, which used to be a guest-house, 113 persons from the region of Kosovska Mitrovica and Djakovica have been accommodated. The other one - an old mental asylum building - is inhabited by 120 persons from Suva Reka.

There are women and children, youth and elderly people among the displaced. They are in need of everything: food, clothing, medicines and interest in them. They only have secured one hot meal a day. Anything else they have to take care of by themselves.

II. Mission in Kosovo

In the end of July the representatives of the PAH led the fact-finding mission of the Polish NGOs to Serbia and Kosovo which has resulted in the concept **of establishing the Polish Balkan Aid Programme operating through a field-based permanent mission of the Polish NGOs.**

The Programme is operating in the area of two municipalities - Kacanik and Strpce which are located in the south of Kosovo, under control of the Polish KFOR. **Municipality of Kacanik inhabited by Albanians** have suffered severe destruction of houses and schools as well as damages to the infrastructure. **Municipality of Strpce is at the moment an isolated enclave whose Serbian** residents are deprived of electricity and fully depend on humanitarian assistance. Working in this area allows to help the victims on both sides of the conflict and that is facilitated by the fact that being Polish we are equally warmly welcomed by the people from two communities.

The establishment of such mission lets to utilise effectively the diverse potential of Polish NGOs. We are convinced that only by concentrating various efforts in one area, we can make the difference and ensure that Polish contribution to the international aid effort will be visible. Because the targeted area is the area of responsibility of the Polish KFOR we have also realised that the effectiveness of the military operation performed by Polish battalion will benefit from the presence of Polish civilian aid efforts and for that reason we can expect a lot of support from the Polish troops operating over there.

Programme of Mission

1. Humanitarian aid

The distribution is organised with local NGOs: Yugoslav Red Cross in Strpce and Mother Theresa Organization in Kacanik.

2. "Return to school"

The main focus of the project is to support the process of bringing schools back to normal operation. The first school to be targeted will be primary school in Firaja (before the war attended by 500 children) in a severely destroyed Albanian village.

3. "Getting warm"

Identifying heating needs of schools, kindergartens and clinics as well as private housing. Developing assistance programme involving both supplies from Poland as well as local purchase. We plan to supply 500 universal stoves adapted to a low quality fuel.

4. "House for winter"

In the first phase some construction materials will be shipped from Poland and purchased locally (roof tiles and other accessories for roofing, insulation material, windows, doors) based on the goal that each family should have secured at least one room properly protected from elements and low temperature.

5. "Keeping children busy"

Organisation of activities (sport, arts) for children and youth. Such project could become the first element of a comprehensive community centre. The activities would benefit 300 children on a weekly basis.

6. Second phase projects

Projects to be set up for Polish NGOs with a specific expertise will focus on:

- Development of democratic infrastructure (local media development, training related to local

- government election and management, NGO development, monitoring of civil rights, legal education)
- Support of the economic development in a micro scale (vocational training, job creation, development)
- Establishment of a comprehensive community centre – a natural nest for local initiatives, meetings and socialising by different age groups (cafe as a start-up, later cultural events, foreign languages classes, computer literacy courses)
- Educational programmes for children and youth with particular focus on civic education
- Mediation and reconciliation activities for the two communities

ASSISTANCE IN POLAND

Pajacyk Campaign - feeding children at schools

We continue in the present school year PAJACYK campaign which has become an umbrella action for programs for feeding children in Poland and Lithuania.

Hanna Gronkiewicz - Waltz, the president of the National Bank of Poland, assumed the patronage over the campaign. In the second phase of the action, we want to provide schools with computer equipment and other school aids. Schools located in these areas are particularly affected with poverty and are poorly equipped, which further diminishes chances of children for acquiring proper education and getting out of the circle of poverty.

We give our assistance to 1504 children in 36 schools. One meal costs \$0.5.

V Pilgrimage of Poles from Kazachstan_

In 1999, as in previous years PAH, organized a Christmas a pilgrimage for the oldest Poles from Kazachstan, who are victims of deportation in the 30s. Last Christmas we hosted 66 pilgrimage.

Guests from Kazachstan fly to Kraków. Schedule includes visiting Kraków and Warsaw, sojourn on Jasna Góra, meetings with representatives of Church, Government and the Parliament. Christmas Eve and the Holidays Pilgrims spend in different Polish cities with families, who responded to the appeal of the Foundation.

REFUGEE ASSISTANCE CENTRE

RAC has provided a social assistance, legal information and assistance in taking care of official formalities for approximately **300 asylum seekers and recognised refugees**. Within the confines of it RAC has been co-operating closely with Social Affairs Department of the Mazovian Voivodship Office, Ministry of Labour and a local administration.

Integration Program

For the latter (about 80 persons) we have been conducting an integration program which includes organising Polish language courses on different levels (35 people), assistance in finding and renting apartments (60 people), job training and finding employment, gaining new professional qualifications, organising summer holidays and other events for refugee children.

Shelter for homeless asylum

RAC has a shelter for homeless asylum seekers applying for the refugee status, which have not been allocated to refugee centres maintained by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration. Approximately 200 persons have found shelter in the Refugee Shelter.

Family reunification

RAC conducts a family reunification campaign which aims at helping refugees who were forced to part with their families while fleeing their countries. Two families have been reunificated.

A handbook for refugees

RAC published in December a handbook "Poland for You" (in English and Polish) for recognised refugees with a view to facilitate their access to legal procedures and explain the aspects of living in Poland.

HUMANITARIAN EDUCATION PROGRAM

Trainings of PAH trainers

In 1999 we organized two trainings for PHO trainers where almost 30 university students were prepared to run interactive workshops for high school pupils on tolerance, humanitarian aid, human rights, antiracism and refugees. Training scheme included skills which are not commonly used by teachers in Polish schools, especially in small towns.

Workshops in schools

Every student in PHO training network has declared to run at least one workshop in a month. We estimate that till now there were about 4000 pupils participating in our workshops in about 20 different cities and towns of Poland. Additionally there were other activities conducted, i.e. role playing game about refugees and their situation etc.

Meetings with Janina Ochojska

The chief of PHO, Janina Ochojska, as a very well known and handicapped person is regularly invited to schools around Poland to share the idea of activism and explain about humanitarian convoys and how to involve other people. Such a meetings have taken place approximately every month last year.

Youth Magazine on helping people

"We are helping!" (Pomagamy!) is the new national monthly magazine for young volunteers issued by PHO as a tool of promoting activism and a positive attitude towards people who are "different". The magazine contains ideas for activities, essays, interviews, short stories and news about humanitarian aid. In 1999 appeared 5 issues of the magazine with 2000 copies each. They were distributed among schools or youth clubs which applied and used as a background paper at PHO workshops.

Exhibitions

Two PHO exhibitions were organized in six different cities in Poland and abroad (Polish Institute in Stockholm) as a way of making youth interested in helping others. On the opening evening there are always not only pupils from local schools but also teachers and city officials.

Santa Claus for poor children

Santa Claus Day on 6th December was a special opportunity to both support our PAJACYK campaign and educational efforts. On that day we have invited pupils from elementary schools to donate just 2 zł (\$ 0.50) and go to a cinema. Cinemas in Warsaw, Cracov, Lodz and Wroclaw offered us free space and film distribution companies free film copies what made an opportunity to use all raised funds for children feeding in one poor region in Poland as well as abroad. **2116 children from 19 schools participated and over \$1.138 were collected, so that 19 children will have their hot meal free of charge till end of school year.** It was an excellent opportunity for pupils to see that everyone can contribute to humanitarian aid. Even a small donation can make a difference when lots of people support good idea.