

Annual Report

Polish Humanitarian Organization

January - December 2000



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I. Humanitarian Aid

I.1 Emergency Program

PHO sends aid convoys to countries ravaged by wars, devastated by natural disasters or experiencing particularly severe poverty. This is the first stage of PHO's assistance. The next is the implementation of development programs.

The emergency assistance has been so far provided to hospitals, orphanages, schools, refugee camps and non-governmental organisations in **Kosovo** (Kacanik, Strpce), **Kazakhstan** (Kokczetaw, Karaganda), **Ingushetia** (Slepcoevskaya, Karabulag, Plijevo, Troickaya), **Chechnya** (Grozny, Gudermes, Argun, Katyrjurt), **Bosnia** (Sarajevo), to **Lithuania** (Soleczniki, Podbrodzie, Ejszyszki, Kowno), **Romania** (Valenia de Munte).

This aid, amounting to almost 1 milion USD was entirely financed with fund-raising and gifts collected among the polish society. It is also an expression of trust for the Polish Humanitarian Organisation. Thus, Poland became a country that not only expects assistance but also provides help to those in greater need.

Convoys organized by PHO between January and December 2000

	Country	No of convoys	No of trucks	No of tones	Value USD
1.	Kosovo	3	5	73,7	334 133,00
2.	Lithuania	3	4	1,8	9 038,00
3.	Ingushetia/Chechnya	3	8	103,8	632 940,13
4.	Romania	4	5	21,1	19 356,00
5.	Bosnia - Sarajevo	1	1	0,2	10 568,00
6.	Hungary- flooding	1	by air	16,4	10 179,00
7.	Kazakhstan	1	3	20,0	292 201,00
TOTAL		17	26	237,0	1 308 415,13

I.2. Long term programs

In late 1999, PHO established the first permanent Humanitarian Mission in Kosovo, followed by those set up in Ingushetia and Chechnya in April 2000. These have come up as instances of PHO's forerunning activity among Polish non-governmental organizations, and have proved of great significance to Poland's sector III as a whole. PHO missions have become a base allowing for presence of Polish NGO's in international humanitarian aid. The Mission program and activities have been described in more detail in II.2.1.

The above stands for yet another stage of aid offered by PHO to societies and communities suffering because of wars, internal conflicts, or natural disasters. It is also the organization's first step taken outside the confines of relief or 'first aid' activities, toward sustainable development of areas and societies which have not had the lucky opportunity of a successful transition to freedom and democracy. Through its involvement in long-term assistance, PHO expresses its solidarity with the others. This is due also to an awareness of moral commitment made by the Polish nation which in the eighties received humanitarian aid on a mass scale.

I.2.1. PHO aid programs in Kosovo - PHO Field Mission in Kosovo

December 1999 saw the establishment, in Kosovo, of the first permanent Humanitarian Mission in the history of Polish NGO's. The Mission's activity has covered two communal areas of the southern part of Kosovo: **Kacanik (populated by Albanians) and Strptce (one of Kosovo's largest Serbian enclaves)**. The location was selected, among other factors, due to the fact that a Polish battalion being part of KFOR International Forces had been stationed there, the other incentive being a willingness to serve and provide aid to both parties of the ongoing conflict. The Mission program concerns assisting local communities in the shaping of a civil society, and in satisfying their social needs regarding education and culture.

The key projects referring to the Mission include:

1. Revival of operation of the House of Culture (i.e. culture and entertainment centre) in Kacanik.

PHO has funded a renovation of the said 'House of Culture', at which it then established the 'Centre for Local Activities'. As part of the latter, PHO has started up an information-technology workshop with a WWW-access facility. The library and magazine reading-room have been equipped and a motion-picture theatre opened, furnished with a modern cine-projector. The new Centre's infrastructure is due to provide an excellent basis for activities embarked on by other Polish organizations as well as it will be a tangible and well-visible trace of Polish aid. In the long run, these activities will contribute to reduced tension and reconciliation between the local Serbian minority and the Albanian majority.

2. Start-up of an IT/WWW centre at Strpce.

PHO has opened an Information-Technology and Internet Centre at Strpce. This has provided the only opportunity of contact with the outside world, particularly to the local young generation. For them, the only possibility of getting outside the enclave is a military-force convoyed trip. Thanks to innovative applications such as tele-work or remote teaching, the centre will overcome the results of isolation and no access to labour markets.

3. Supporting educational/cultural activities.

As part of the project, PHO has furnished the libraries in Strpce and Kacanik with volumes of most recent popular-science literature and specialist publications. Similarly, secondary-school laboratories and the 'University for the Employed' at Strpce have been provided with scientific-research equipment. Following PHO's initiative, a theatrical ensemble was formed in Kacanik which after only an eight-week rehearsal period won the First Prize at the Kosovo Theatre Festival in December 2000. Today, the team animates the local community by drawing Kacanik people into its own cultural activities.

4. Study visit of representatives of 'Polish NGO's Consortium for Kosovo'

In July 2000, **following PHO's initiative, a consortium grouping seven Polish non-governmental organizations was set up**, their members willing to provide knowledge and experience from various fields to Kacanik and Strprce commune locals. The purpose behind any project undertaken by the Consortium is to assist the transition from a post-conflict community being dependent on humanitarian aid into a community being aware of its own needs and capable of providing solutions to its problems on its own. The said projects comprise: observance of human rights, basic health care, education, development of human resources on the local level, supporting local administration and local governments, rural areas development and upgrade, as well as animating social and cultural activities.

5. Organisation of leisure and other structured activity forms for children (international volunteers' action).

In parallel with the International Mission Program development, PHO is building the **Polish International Voluntary Aid Organization** which has been devised to provide a development basis for subsequent Polish missions operating in other countries. In July 2000, out of one-hundred volunteer applicants, a total of twenty-three persons were selected and then received a training rendering them prepared to support PHO's foreign actions. The training was designed to get the volunteers ready, in terms of both practice and theory, to work in tough conditions of humanitarian missions. The skills developed in the course of that eight-day training session were employed in practice last August while in Kosovo. A group of eight PHO volunteers have organised and conducted an action headed 'Summer in Kacanik' for

two-hundred local children, whereas the youth and adult communities could benefit from intensive English-language courses held at Strpce in collaboration with OSCE.

More information in appendix 1

I.2.2. PHO aid programmes in Chechnya and Ingushetia

Since April 2000 a Permanent Mission of PHO has been operating in Chechnya and Ingushetia, with the head office in Nazran and a liaison office in Grozny.

The main programmes of the Mission are:

1. Kindergartens in refugee camps in Ingushetia – Day Care Centre (DCC)
2. Safe zones programme in Grozny (Chechnya)
3. Heaters for Grozny
4. Emergency program

1. The first kindergarten in the Chechen refugee camp in Ingushetia

PHO has opened the first kindergarten for the children of Chechen refugees in Sleptsovskaya "Rassviet Camp", Ingushetia on June 2000. Pre-school children in refugee camps are deprived of any care. **160 children aged between 3 and 6 are attending the kindergarten**, which is situated in tents. Children of pre-school age are the most vulnerable and subject to the psychological effects of war. All workers are members of local staff drawn from the refugees staying at the camp. PHO plans to open another DCC's in Karabulag and Grozny.

2. Safe Zones Programme in Grozny (Chechnya)

PHO decided to develop the Safe Zone Programme in Grozny as the most appropriate assistance for children. The program is adresed to the hospitals and schools.

The components of the safe zone are:

2.1. Drinking water for Grozny

Polish Humanitarian Organisation as the first and only organisation is providing clean potable water owing to a new filter installation at the Water Station no. 1 in Zawadzkoje district. The filter is capable of purifying 15 m³ of water per hour and removes mechanical, chemical and biological impurities, as well as radiation effects from the water. Additionally, the water is chlorinated. **We are supplying daily 120 m³ (120 000 liters) of water.** Thanks to this activities PHO gives the work to 25 people in Grozny, which will raise in the nearest future up to 60.

2.2. The food distribution unit acting as a supplier of the daily hot meals to the most vulnerable population (such as patients in the hospitals as well as attendees of the Safe Zone)

2.3. The Day Care Centre for Children fulfils the function of the „child friendly space” and ensures the distribution of hot meals and the availability of professional care.

3. Heaters for Grozny

Thanks to PHO's contribution, in a part of a saved from ruins factory Transmasz in the Staropromyslovsky district the production of the heaters has been started. PHO is willing to supply with the multifunctional heaters at least 700 families, some schools and hospitals. This initiative not only helps to survive winter but also gives the opportunity of work to a dozen of people.

4. Emergency program

In the year 2000 PHO sent three emergency convoys to Ingushetia and Chechnya

More information about PHO programs in Chechnya in appendix 2

I.2.3. PHO aid programmes in 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.

More information in appendix 3

I.2.4. PHO aid programmes in Lithuania

We have been providing nutrition support to children attending Polish schools in Lithuania since March 1997. Our campaign has been targeting assistance for the poorest families, enabling them to survive the difficult system transition period in Lithuania. Concurrently, we are attempting to assist schools in their work to reconstruct the Polish educated community in the Wilno region; without the said community, the Polish minority in Lithuania shall remain a group of second-class citizens.

In 2000, nutrition support was provided to **496 children in 11 schools** (10 in the Soleczniki, and 1 in the Sviencanski counties).

I.2.5. PHO aid for the Chechen Orphanage

We have established contacts with this orphanage in May 1997 during our fact finding mission in Grozny. Orphanage is managed by Hadizhat and Malik Gatayev. Mrs and Mr. Gatayev were taking care of 47 orphans who lost their parents during the war. They were staying in two flats located in a building abandoned by the Federal Forces. The children slept on bunk beds left out by the soldiers. There were no necessary equipment, kitchen-ware and even food. Yet the atmosphere in the orphanage was warm. Children called their guardians - mummy and daddy. Despite the poor living conditions and their past suffering the children were joyful and open-minded. Apart from attending school they were taking dance classes and were taking care of small front garden.

Ms and Mrs Gatayev were calling for help for their orphanage. Thanks to generosity of sponsors, they opened a laundry in the cellar of their house in order to cover the cost of running the orphanage. They also created folk dance group, which was successful at many festivals

Unfortunately, the war that followed has taken everything. The building has been destroyed, even the laundry equipment evacuated to Katyr Yurt hasn't been saved since the town suffered from severe bombing. It is obvious that the number of children in the orphanage has increased. Currently, there are 85 orphans in Rodnaya Siemia. Mrs and Mr Gatayev have evacuated their children from Grozny in October 1999. There are staying in three places now in Pliyev, Ingushetia.

There are some children that simply cannot return. Twelve oldest children should stay in Lithuania. Caucasus is still not peaceful. The oldest boys were lucky they hadn't been taken to the filtration camps. It is likely that once they come back to Chechnya, they will join the army. Yet they should study in order to be independent in the future.

PHO continuously gives financial support to the orphanage, which allowed among others for primary, secondary and professional education.

I.3. Assistance in Poland

I.3.1. 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. **We give our assistance to 2050 children in 39 schools. One meal costs \$0.5.**

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.

More information in appendix 4

I.3.2.VI Pilgrimage of Poles from Kazachstan

In 2000, as in previous years PAH, organized a Christmas a pilgrimage for the oldest Poles from Kazachstan, who are victims of deportation in the 30s. This Christmas we hosted 73 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.

II. Humanitarian Education

The purpose of the Humanitarian Education Program is to build an **open society** (i.e. one whose citizens are free from intolerance, xenophobia, racism, and prejudice) and an **supportive** [or, subsidiary] **society**, i.e. able and willing to provide assistance both on a local (own town area, housing estates, schools), nation-wide, and global scale (aid provided to elemental disaster victims and war casualties in other countries). The program is primarily targeted at secondary-school students. However, some actions may be assigned specifically to younger people, or, to university or college students. **The program in question is of a particular import, in regard of a necessity to transform the Polish society's mentality.**

II.1. PHO trainers' network

PHO has established an all-Polish network of thirty-nine volunteer trainers who run workshop classes at schools and youth clubs in their local towns. So far, the network has made it possible for us to reach some 25,000 of Polish young generation.

II.2. ‘Pomagamy!’ (‘We are helping’) – a modern volunteer periodical

In 1999, PHO volunteers created a periodical entitled ‘Pomagamy!’ [‘We are helping’], targeted at young generation aged 14-25. The aim was to get the readers interested in activities pursued by charity/humanitarian organizations, inclusive of PHO, to provide incentives for developing humanitarian actions, to provide information on possibilities of aid or support, along with integrating socially active youth milieus.

‘Pomagamy!’ is a monthly, eight issues having been published so far, 2000 of copies each distributed free of charge all over Poland. The monthly acts also as a didactic means to secondary school teachers who use it in their classes on provision of aid to those in need of it. The WWW version is available at: <http://www.pah.ngo.pl/pomagamy>

II.3. Optional secondary-school subject

In order to get schools involved in the Humanitarian Education Program, **PHO has developed a component referred to as ‘Humanitarianism’, as an optional school subject** which *gimnazjums*, i.e. lower-level secondary-grade schools, may include as part of their syllabuses.

PAH conducts teacher training to render teachers prepared to running Humanitarian Education classes with the use of activating methods which have not as yet appeared in common use in Polish schooling system. Teaching methods as proposed by us in the scenarios are meant to develop self-reliant attitudes upon students and to teach them how to actually use knowledge they have won as part of their own life experience.

‘Humanitarianism’ earned throughout 2000 a series of positive references from teaching-methodology counsellors in *kuratoriums* (i.e. local departments of education) and teacher skill mastering centres, as a program proving fully compliant with programming and curriculum-related assumptions of the ongoing Polish educational system reform.

III. Refugee Counselling Centre (RCC)

The Refugee Counselling Centre (RCC) was established in 1993 with the purpose of providing help to refugees from the war stricken Bosnia seeking shelter in Poland. At that time, papers provided information on the victims of the war every day. An appeal was made in Poland for receiving families from Bosnia. Together with professor Marek Edelman, PAH initiated an action of bringing in the wounded and providing them with free of charge hospital services in Poland.

The wave of refugees fleeing to our country was increasing. Poland as a signatory of the Geneva Convention dated 1991 concerning refugees, agreed to take them in and provide them with a “normal” and peaceful life.

In 1993, a refugee assistance program was initiated in co-operation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

When the press informs that a conflict or domestic war has broken out in some place, it is obvious that refugees will soon migrate from such place. Until now, PAH has taken care of refugees from Bosnia, Kosovo, Somalia, Sudan, Rwanda, Congo, Algeria, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Guinea, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Birma, Laos, Iraq, Iran, Belarous, Tadzhikistan, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaidzhan and Moldova.

Over 2000 persons have so far been assisted by RCC.

Assistance

RCC provides social assistance, legal information and assistance in taking care of official formalities for asylum seekers and recognised refugees. For the latter (over 90 persons) we are conducting an integration program which includes organising Polish language courses, assistance in finding and renting apartments, job training and finding employment, gaining new professional qualifications within organised by us Labour Club, organising special adapting courses for refugee women, preparing summer holidays and other events for refugee children.

Shelter

RCC has a shelter – Refugee House for homeless refugees (those who are applying for the refugee status, which have not been allocated to refugee centres maintained by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration as well as for recognised refugees without place for living). Approximately 200 persons have found shelter in the Refugee House during this year.

Integration Program

RCC conducts a family reunification campaign which aims at helping refugees who were forced to part with their families while fleeing their countries.

RCC is co-operating closely with Social Affairs Department of the Mazovian Voivodship Office, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and a local administration.