

The agricultural inputs project – greenhouse Vladimirci, Serbia



“A modern greenhouse and extensive training helped us acquire knowledge, increase flower assortment and extend production from 10,000 to 50,000 nursery plants”.

- **Zeljko Ugrenovic**
a refugee from Croatia

LOCATION

Vladimirci, Serbia

DURATION

12 months (from January 2007 to December 2007)

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

INTERSOS
www.intersos.org

DONOR

UNHCR

BUDGET

USD 170,000

OVERVIEW

In Serbia during the end of 2006, there were 106,478 refugees from Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina, and 207,069 IDPs from Kosovo. Although several years have passed since the end of the conflicts affecting the Former Yugoslavia, various unresolved issues still hinder the stability and prosperity of the region. The majority of displaced people were facing uncertain prospects for return and limited opportunities for local integration. They also faced serious protection risks and consequently needed to find a durable solution.

The major concerns of refugees and IDPs were:

- Very limited access to dignified housing conditions
- Poor access to sustainable livelihoods opportunities

AIM OF PROJECT

- To provide dignified solutions for refugees and IDPs living in collective or private accommodation in Serbia.

RESULTS

- 65 displaced families received various agricultural inputs such as greenhouses, livestock, bee sets, and agricultural machines to continue existing agricultural activities and to start new ones.
- They received structured training for each activity, including hands on agricultural training and open field training. Workshops were set up and professional literature was provided.
- Skilled agronomists and veterinarians were available to help the families with their training.
- The majority of the families managed to earn an income equal to the average monthly salary in Serbia, which enabled them to buy food and other necessities.

IMPACTS

- The beneficiaries of this project (refugees and IDPs from Croatia, Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo) were previously marginalized, however since partaking in this project they have become more self-confident and motivated to increase production levels, expand into new markets, and

- continue to learn about modern production methods.
- This project helped the refugees and IDPs to become entrepreneurs, self-sufficient and economically independent.
 - Indirect beneficiaries of the projects (local farmers and the local community in general) also learned new techniques of agricultural production.
 - Consequently, both the displaced population and the locals joined their farming methods to get better price at the market and faster turn over.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Every family had the necessary workforce to successfully start the project, however the financial resources, knowledge, and confidence were lacking. Constant support was consequently needed to encourage them to sell their products on the market.

STORY

“We arrived in Vladimirci, Krnule in 1997. In order to survive, we initially started working on local farms, and in exchange we received food for our families. In 2000 we producing vegetables in an open field. After two years selling our products on the local market, we learned that flowers were the most profitable product. Therefore, we decided to construct three primitive greenhouses for growing flowers.

During the first year we had produced 10,000 nursery plants. Profits from the flowers were used for basic household items, and to reinvest to expand production. INTERSOS then came on board and gave us a modern greenhouse with an irrigation system. Due to the intervention and ongoing support of INTERSOS agronomists, as well as the agricultural training we received, I was able to extend the volume and variety of flowers. Consequently we managed to increase our sales. Now we are selling our flowers at both local markets and in well known flower shops. This business has helped us to purchase a new delivery van and furnish our rented home. Hopefully we will soon be able to buy our own house”.