

THE ALBANIAN MINE ACTION PROGRAMME: VICTIM ASSISTANCE

Background:

- Mine/UXO threat focused on Northeast Albania (Kukës region) and emanated from the 1999 Kosovo conflict. Additionally, AO is scattered throughout Albania as a result of weapons looted from ammunition depots during the 1997 uprising as well as remains from WWII.
- 120 km border between Albania and Kosovo and up to 20 km inside Albania; 102 areas were identified as mined, representing 15,250,000 m².
- Plan to have Albania mine-free by 2010.
- 238 people have been injured and 34 deceased (in the mountainous and isolated region of Northeast Albania) as a result of 210 accidents.
- Approx 30% of mine victims were children at the time of their accidents and the majorities were bread winning males; only 8% were female.
- AMAE is coordinating and monitoring, while UNDP is providing support to AMAE as well as directly implementing projects for victim assistance in Albania,

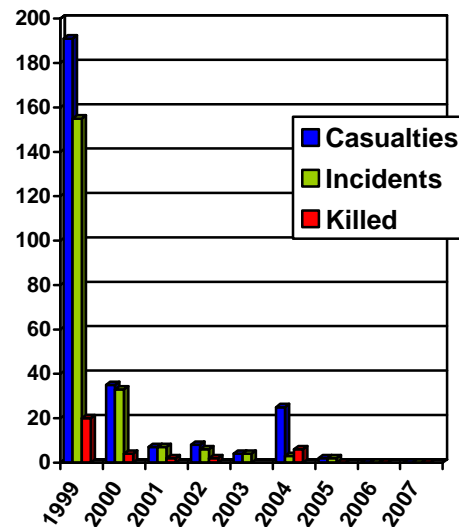


Chart: Mine/UXO incidents in Northeast Albania

Victim Assistance Programme:

Vision: Mine victims to be physically rehabilitated and socially economically reintegrated into their communities.

Goal: To build an Albanian Victim Assistance capacity.

Objectives:

- ✓ Fitment of prostheses to lower limb amputees and rehabilitation of sight impaired in Albania and upper limb amputees and difficult cases abroad.
- ✓ Building the capacity of Albanian institutions to fit all types of prostheses and orthoses in Albania by the end of 2007.
- ✓ Economic reintegration of mine victims through vocational training and a micro-financing scheme for establishing home-based economies.
- ✓ Building a capacity in Northeast Albania to surgically treat trauma and amputee victims and serve as a level three medical facility for victims of mine accidents.
- ✓ Building a capacity in Northeast Albania to improve mine victims' access to, and quality of, medical, social, and rehabilitative services.

Activities:

- **Medical Assistance-** Provided 2 trainings (2004-5) for 30 nurses residing in mine affected villages in emergency first aid and CBR by specialists from the Slovenia Institute of Rehabilitation supported by UNDP (DfID/BCPR funds). Surgical equipment provided to the Kukës Regional Hospital as well as medical training provided to 3 medical specialists (including the surgeon) from the Regional Hospital in 2003/4 funded by US DoS through ITF. With the support of the French Government 2 physiotherapists from Kukës and Tropoja Hospital and 6 nurses from mine affected villages received refresher training at the Slovenia Institute of Rehabilitation and medical supplies/equipment are being delivered for the nurses working in the mine affected villages as well as the physiotherapists at Kukes Regional Hospital.
- **Physical Rehabilitation, Prostheses, and Assistive Devices-** Building the capacity of the National Orthotic Prosthetic Centre (NOPC) through providing trainings to technicians and physiotherapists and the provision of raw materials with ICRC/SFD support. Handicap International's Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation project aims to build a sustainable capacity in developing the area of rehabilitation in Albania through inclusion of a physiotherapy programme in the Faculty of Nursing as well as training of 6 prosthetic/orthotic technicians at the NOPC.
- UNDP established a Prostheses Support Centre at Kukës Regional Hospital in March 2005 with DfID/BCPR support and provided training to the repair technician at the NOPC in Tirana and the NOPC in Prishtina; in 2005 more than 140 amputees repaired their prostheses at the Kukës Prostheses Support Centre. Since 2001, with US DoS support through ITF, 100 mine amputees classified as difficult cases have received prostheses abroad. Nurses

in the mine affected villages, as well as the physiotherapists and neurologist from Kukës Hospital, are a part of the CBR network to facilitate mine survivors' access to medical and social services.

- **Psychological and social support** – Nurses trained in CBR provide counseling as well as the neurologist from Kukes Hospital visits mine victims in their homes as a part of the CBR network. Local NGO-VMA employs a fully integrated mine survivor who regularly liaises with other mine survivors. In 2004 and 2005, VMA (with Czech Government support) organized a summer camp for 360 children mine survivors and children of mine survivors to promote their rights and raise awareness.



Prostheses repair technician in field (CBR project)



Mine victim benefiting from socio-economic reintegration

- **Socio-economic integration-** In 2003-6, 67 mine victims and their families received assistance in establishing home based economies in animal husbandry through a revolving loan fund implemented by VMA (funded by US DoS through ITF; UNICEF; and donations made by the private sector at the NIKD). In 2006-7, UNDP with EC funds is implementing a project with VMA to provide 30 mine survivors with vocational trainings in jobs such as small electronic repairs, hairdressing, computers, etc. Lastly, the EC is funding UNDP 2.5 million euros for small scale infrastructure development of the Kukës region and the needs of the mine affected villages are prioritized in this project.
- **Educational reintegration-** 8 children mine /UXO survivors are continuing their studies, with NIKD-2006 support.
- **Capacity building and sustainability-** Training to 5 medical specialists, 6 prostheses technicians, and 30 nurses; infrastructure improvements and provision of equipment to NOPC and Kukës Hospital; building capacity of medical institutions for record keeping of patients. Sustainability through close involvement of the line ministries and hospitals in all VA programme plans.
- **Legislation and public awareness-** The first Albanian National Strategy on Disability was published in June 2005 prepared by an inter-ministerial working group. A draft -law for Mine Action in Albania has been prepared, which recognizes mine survivors depending on their level of injury, as a subgroup of persons with disability.
- **Access-** Access to physical environment will improve as new strategy is implemented; AMAP is following closely and promoting this in projects; access to social and medical services for mine survivors has improved significantly through the CBR project.
- **Data Collection-** The local NGO-VMA is the main mean of data collection for new incidents in NE Albania and updating the needs assessment database for mine victims; data collected is passed to AMAE and inserted into the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database and shared amongst all relevant partners. UNDP Albania funded by DfiD with the National Demilitarization Centre (NDC) collected backdated data (IMSMA incident reports) for mine/UXO victims injured as a result of weapons looted during the 1997 uprising and WWII; this data has been analyzed for possible future expansion of the MRE programme as well as victim assistance needs. Albanian Red Cross with financial support from ICRC will continue to collect the data for mine/ERW victims, in 8 Prefectures for the year 2007.

Plans for 2006-2010:

- Construct a new NOPC premises in Tirana
- Provision of medical equipment and supplies for NOPC and hospitals/health centers in Kukës region
- Train 6 prosthetic/orthotic technicians to international standards
- Development of a sustainable physiotherapy training programme through the Nursing Faculty in Tirana
- Improved rehabilitation facilities and capacity in Kukës region
- Vocational training programme for 60 mine survivors
- Establishment of revolving loan fund
- Contribute to the fulfillment of the National Strategy for People with Disability (2005-2015)