

ADDRESSING NEEDS OF MIGRANTS, REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Interim Narrative Report

Sarajevo, May 2022

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Background

Following the deterioration of situation with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in early 2021, CARE Austria secured additional 100,000 Eur¹ while CARE Balkans secured additional 247,240 Eur through German Lottery.

The project has been designed to support migrants, refugees and asylum seekers project in Una Sana and Tuzla Canton as well as those in other crisis areas through four partners organizations: Žene s Une (Una Sana Canton), Zemlja djece u Bosni i Hercegovini (Tuzla) – hereinafter Zemlja djece, Pomozi.ba (Una Sana Canton and Tuzla Canton) and women organization “CURE” from Sarajevo. Funding was provided from 1 December 2022 until 31 July 2022. At the same time, the project funded from the German Lottery was awarded from 1 November 2021 until 1 November 2022; however, the project duration was extended until 1 March 2023.

This report covers activities conducted from 1 December until 30 April 2022.

Overall Situation in the Country

Since December 2021, the number of persons of concern were generally lower. According to figures presented at inter-agency meetings coordinated and moderated by IOM and UNHCR, BiH authorities recorded the irregular arrival of 1,664 migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees while in the first week of May there were 186 arrivals recorded. The number of arrivals presented a 12% increase over the same period in 2021. Overall, there have been 89, 244 irregular arrivals to the country since January 2018.

According to the same source, Afghanistan and Pakistan present the two top countries of origin. Namely, 17 percent of individuals reporting that they are from Afghanistan and percent from Pakistan. Thirteen percent reported India as their country of origin and five percent from Ukraine. Most refugees from Ukraine are accommodated in Hercegovina. It should be noted that countries of origins are fluctuating and many persons of concern noted Cuba as their country of origin during the month of March.

In addition to that, as of 20 March, there were 2,041 migrants and asylum-seekers are accommodated in transit reception centers and other formal accommodation while 400 persons are estimated to be squatting.²

In addition to that, there are 140 asylum seekers and 35 persons waiting for the registration of their asylum claim with the support of local NGOs.³ Fourteen persons registered their asylum claims in April. Two persons were granted subsidiary protection status in April and 123 since Jan 2018. At the same time no one was granted refugee status in 2022 and only nine persons were granted refugee status since 2018. Currently, there are 49 refugees in the country, of which 8 are from outside of the former Yugoslavia while 71 persons are under subsidiary protection in the country.

¹ Total amount granted to CARE Balkans is in the amount of 200,000 Eur from 1 February 2021 until 31 July 2022.

² Presentation from UNHCR 15 May 2022.

³ as of the end of February 2022

It is important to note that, during this period, 358 refugees from Ukraine mostly in Citluk municipality. Four have submitted an asylum request and some have already been reallocated.

Regrettably, cases of pushbacks continue to take place along the Western Balkan route. According to Danish Refugee Council, “it seems that pushbacks do not keep people on the move outside of Europe’s borders.”⁴ Danish Refugee Council citing the Frontex report between January and March of 2022, noted the 57 % increase in the number of “illegal crossings” compared to a year ago. Such high trends of arrivals have not been recorded since 2016, according to Frontex. The Western Balkan route, for instance, “accounted for nearly half of all the illegal border crossings in the first three months of this year”, and most of the pushbacks have been detected specifically on the Western Balkan route.”

In Tuzla, NGOs Emmaus withdrew its support so there are no longer showers and warm meals provided to migrants/refugees in transit and only those who are accommodated in the safe house receive meal. In Bihac area, the number of people squatting in Velika Kladusa where around 400 meals were distributed daily there were about only 120 meals distributed in April. Currently, it is difficult to estimate why the numbers have decreased.

Project Objective

Contribute to increased integration of migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina, provide protection and aid to migrants and contain the spread of COVID-19 pandemic.

Project Implementation

1. Preparatory and Coordination Activities

In December, meetings were held with the three main partners: Pomozi.ba, Žene s Une and Zemlja djece u Bosni i Hercegovini (hereinafter Zemlja djece) to inform them about project continuation and to discuss next steps. Additionally, through a discussion with CURE Foundation it was decided to support a female asylum-seekers with hairdressers certified course and, simultaneously, to provide child care for her child.

Additionally, partners commenced preparatory procurement activities to collect offers for NFIs and vouchers for basic necessities.

2. Activities Implemented

During the reporting period, there were 1,230 persons benefitting from the project (1,102 men and 128 women). The overview per sector is the following:

⁴ PRAB report January to March 2022, p. 4, accessible at https://drc.ngo/media/3gboifyy/prab-report-january-to-march-2022_final.pdf

Activity	Female				Male				Female	Male	Grand	# grand total with disabilities
	Under 5	5 to 17	18 to 50	Over 50	Under 5	5 to 17	18 to 50	Over 50	Total	Total	Total	
WASH	2	2	5	1	3	17	104	8	10	132	142	1
SHELTER	-	-	3	1	2	10	54	-	4	66	70	-
FOOD	7	6	49	1	4	62	537	25	63	628	691	-
PROTECTION	7	11	40	1	6	79	355	-	59	440	499	2
INTERGRATION	-	-	2	1	1	4	22	-	3	27	30	-
Total number of unique beneficiaries (no double counting)									128	1,102	1,230	

In Bihac area, Zene s Une distributed 25 persons (19 men and 6 women) who received non-food items, 59 (51 men and 8 women) with hygiene packages and 105 (98 men and 7 women) persons who received vouchers for food.

In total, 198 beneficiaries (19 women and 171 men), who received non-food items, hygienic packages, vouchers for food and integrated living.

Psychological first assistance was organized in unofficial locations where migrants stay without proper accommodation and basic needs. Assistance was provided to 125 beneficiaries (14 women and 111 men). Additionally, during the reporting period, there were 18,975⁵ meals distributed on almost daily basis to 394 (356 men and 38 women) persons in Velika Pljesevica. The meals were provided by organization Pomozi.ba while. CARE supports them with payment of the rent and provision of fuel as the place is in a remote location. There were also 70 NFIs distributed to men who were squatting. Finally, CARE provided support through assisted- living to five families with nine members, who are all asylum seekers.

In Tuzla, Zemlja Djece reported 568 participants. (498 male and 70 female). Out of this number, during the reporting period, 66 vouchers were distributed to 59 men and 7 women. Additionally, 51 lunch packages were distributed to 40 men and 11 women. Three men received sports shoes, while five received blankets. Five baby food packages were distributed for two girls and three boys under the age of five. In addition to that, 25 men received sleeping bags, while 19 men and one woman received blankets. Three persons were referred for medical assistance while 469 persons benefitted from psychological aid (413 men and 56 women). Finally, 13 young men took part in three workshops based on the CARE handbook - "Engaging Young Men and Boys in Emergencies."

In Sarajevo, CARE worked primarily with asylum-seekers. Pomozi.ba accommodated eight persons (seven men and one woman) through language course and assisted living activities. Additionally, CURE Foundation supported one woman whose asylum claim was approved by authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

⁵ Additional 6.669 meals from DE414 were provided. Hence, 25.664 meals in total while the number of participants remained the same.

Participants reached by project activities per partner:

Zene s Une

Partner: Zene sa Une, Bihac

Activity	Location	Female				Male				Female	Male	Grand	# grand total with disabilities
		Under 5	5 to 17	18 to 50	Over 50	Under 5	5 to 17	18 to 50	Over 50	Total	Total	Total	
NFI packages	Unformal location/ Bihać and Velika Kladuša	-	1	4	1	-	5	10	4	6	19	25	1
Hygiene packages	Unformal location/ Bihać and Velika Kladuša	-	2	5	1	-	15	28	8	8	51	59	1
Food vouchers	Unformal location/ Bihać and Velika Kladuša	-	-	6	1	-	38	110	25	7	173	180	-
Integration and assisted living	Unformal location/ Bihać, Cazin and Sanski Most	-	-	1	1	-	3	4	-	2	7	9	-
Total number of unique beneficiaries (no double counting)										19	171	190	2

Pomozi.ba

Partner: Pomozi.Ba

Activity	Location	Female				Male				Female	Male	Grand	# grand total with disabilities
		Under 5	5 to 17	18 to 50	Over 50	Under 5	5 to 17	18 to 50	Over 50	Total	Total	Total	
Daily meals for persons in move	Velika Kladuša and Plješevica	1	-	37	-	-	-	356	-	38	356	394	-
NFI distribution to persons in move	Velika Kladuša and Plješevica	-	-	-	-	-	-	70	-	-	70	70	-
Integration and assisted living	Sarajevo, House of POMOZI.BA	-	-	1	-	1	-	6	-	1	7	8	-
Total number of unique beneficiaries (no double counting)										39	433	472	-

Zemlja djece u BiH

Partner: Zemlja Djece u BiH

Zemija Djece u BiH												
Activity	Female				Male				Female	Male	Grand Total	# grand total with
	Under 5	5 to 17	18 to 50	Over 50	Under 5	5 to 17	18 to 50	Over 50	Total	Total		
Distribution of vouchers	2	1	4			14	45		7	59	66	0
Distribution of lunch-packs	4	5	2		4	10	26		11	40	51	0
Distribution of sport shoes						2	1		-	3	3	0
Distribution of winter jackets and other clothes						2	3		-	5	5	0
Distribution of hygienic packs for babies	2				3				2	3	5	0
Distribution of hygienic packs for adults (with first aid kit)						2	6					
Distribution of sleeping bags						3	22		-	25	25	0
Distribution of blankets			1		1		18		1	19	20	0
Medical assistance							3		-	3	3	0
Protection:	7	11	38		5	75	333		56	413	469	0
Integration:						1	12		-	13	13	0
Total number of unique beneficiaries (no double counting)	12	16	42		12	85	401		70	498	568	0

2.1 Distribution of Vouchers

So far, in Bihac there were 180 vouchers distributed to 105 unique users (out of whom 7 are women) while there were 155 vouchers distributed to 66 persons benefitting from vouchers (59 men and 7 women) in Tuzla area. In most cases, participants obtained food items (fresh groceries, candies), personal hygiene items and rarely some clothing items. In Tuzla, most vouchers are distributed to persons who reside there for a longer period of time either in the Safe House or in private accommodation and squats. However, there were some cases when vouchers were distributed to persons who were in transit. Distribution of vouchers is always welcomed as those residing in Tuzla do not have the opportunity to get a warm meal now and food provision is challenging for them.



2.2. Provision of Hot Meals

Meals were prepared and delivered to migrants in areas which are not covered by assistance of other NGOs. This included the area of mountain Plješevica and Velika Kladuša. Pomozi.ba provided groceries for preparation and its staff prepared the meals. During the reporting period, 18.975 hot meals were prepared on a daily basis (excluding the weekend). According to the partner reports, 394 persons benefit from the food. Out of this number there are 38 women and 356 men, including one girl under the age of five. However, these numbers have declined in April where an average number of daily distributed meals was between 130 – 140.

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Location	Month	Meals provided
Plješevica and Velika Kladuša	December	5260
Plješevica and Velika Kladuša	January	3419
Plješevica and Velika Kladuša	February	3627

Plješevica and Velika Kladuša	March	3398
Plješevica and Velika Kladuša	April	3271
TOTAL		18975



In addition to this, the team in Tuzla distributed lunch packages on the bus station. So far, 51 packages were distributed (40 men and 11 women). Out of this number, there were four girls under the age of five and five girls under the age of 17. With men, there were four boys under the age of five and ten under the age of 17. Winterization and Prevention from COVID-19 /NFIS

In line with previous agreements, distribution of NFIs continued to support persons on the move. Zene s Une distributed 25 non-food items (19 men and 6 women) while 59 persons received hygienic packages in the Bihac area. At the same time, Pomozi.ba distributed 70 non-food items in Velika Kladusa.

In the Tuzla region, three men received sports shoes, while five received blankets. In addition to that, 25 men received sleeping bags, while 19 men and 1 woman received blankets. Distribution was aligned with the identified needs of the individual in the field. Some received only, for example, a sleeping bag, or only hygiene package, or some other NFIs from the humanitarian reserves of the implementation organization, while others were in need of several different items.





2.3. Medical Assistance

Three individuals required medical assistance during the reporting period. There was a case of a young man 28-year old man from Pakistan, who jumped from a bridge in the border area in Zvornik, injured his spine and broke both leg along with other serious injuries from that jump. He was taken to the hospital in Tuzla. Following the treatment in the hospital, he was supposed to be transferred to the Transit Reception Center in Lipa near Bihac since he required 24-hour medical supervision which is unavailable in other TRCs. No local authorities nor non-governmental organizations had funding provided so the cost of transportation with the special medical ambulance was covered by CARE. One member of the mobile team from Tuzla accompanied this young man during a six-hour drive.⁶

⁶ [\(20+\) Centar za pružanje usluga u zajednici Tuzla - Posts | Facebook](#)



Two other cases involved ophthalmological examinations and purchase of glasses. The initial case.. the second case involved a young Moroccan man who has major vision problems along with an eye disease. He needed very expensive glasses for his condition. At the initiative of a local volunteer, the young man was additionally examined by an ophthalmologist who confirmed the condition of his eyesight and initial findings. The second case involved a young Pakistani man who was located in the safe accommodation of the Baptist church.



2.4 Protection

Through its partners working in camps or daily centers, and particularly in squats, CARE offers psychosocial support to migrants and will work on helping them cope with daily challenges.

Shelter and the Safe House

Žene s Une provided shelter in Safe House and services for the most vulnerable individuals. In December, 19 persons benefitted from services (10 men, four women and five children out of whom two were boys and three girls). These individuals were referred to medical services in case of need.

During the project implementation, 19 persons from Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and India had access to shelter while following activities were implemented: Tailor-made psychosocial support activities specially designed for transiting population aiming at: (1) enabling families with children to enjoy recreational and creative activities like playing and learning; (2) enabling families to reflect on their experiences from the journey, to think of their plans for the future, helping them identify some of the risks they are facing and to recognize their strengths; (3) enabling the sharing of information about registration procedures and possible accommodation.

Also, during the reporting period some specific assistances to beneficiaries were provided: dental intervention, medical therapy, medical examination, gynecological examination, vaccination, and PCR testing on COVID 19.

Workshops for psychological recovery

Žene s Une provided psychological recovery workshops to reduce the symptoms of depression, anxiety, and to help beneficiaries to identify their specific needs. In a safe and supportive environment, individuals were able to create story cloths to depict experiences that may be hard to express in words. In December, three workshops were organized for 17 beneficiaries (10 men and seven women). In January, there were eight beneficiaries (two male, four female as well as one boy and one girl), while there were five workshops organized for six beneficiaries (two male and four female). In February, there were two men, who were accommodated in the protective shelter out of whom – one was unaccompanied child. During that time, medical assistance was provided and psychological aid provided. In April, one man was accommodated.



Provision of First Psychological Aid (PFA)

Provision of PFA involves immediate support to identify their immediate needs and to offer protection. In this process, special attention is placed on early screening for migrants in need for specialized help; providing medical care (identification of specific cases that require medical interventions in health institutions); getting migrants through the first period of high intensity and uncertainty and reducing the chance of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)

On average, project team assists 100 beneficiaries with this.

Mobile team of Zene s Une consisting of 4 persons provided PFA once per week on several unofficial locations (Žegar I, Žegar II, Vedro polje/near Bihać and Barake, Bosanska Bojna/near Velika Kladuša where persons of concern stayed in squats without adequate accommodation or other basic equipment. During the project implementation, PFA was provided for 681 beneficiaries (65 female and 616 male) in outreach locations.



2.5. Integration efforts

For those migrants who claimed asylum, CARE supported assisted living for them and organization of language courses and other integration-related activities.

In the Bihac areas, Zene s Une continued to support five families with nine family members to support with integration and assisted living after the initial period of three months. During the reporting period, case manager continued to conduct regular weekly visits and offer psychological support along with collection and management of goods. Two persons received Bosnian passports. The countries of origin include persons from Iran, Afghanistan, Syria and Palestine (male/57 and female/57). They live in Bihac, Cazin and Sanski Most.

In the area around Sarajevo, CARE provided support to a young Irani woman with the organization of kindergarten for her daughter and organization of a vocational specialized hairdresser's training for a young woman who previously volunteered in CURE Foundation. Particular challenge in this case was the change of address of a participant who could not open the bank account until this change was registered by authorities. For that reason, CURE Foundation requested an extension of two additional months for a woman to be able to conclude her training. At the same time, Pomozi.ba continued to provide support to eight persons (one woman and seven men). All persons are working currently and are in the process of obtaining asylum.

In the Tuzla area, Zemlja djece u BiH conducted 3 workshops using CARE's manual: Be a Man to work with young men in emergencies. Thirteen men took part in these workshops and provided positive feedback. The workshops were organized in cooperation with the local organization Puz, which has a safe house and a drop-in center, so these spaces were used for the integration activities of Zemlja djece u BiH with young asylum seekers. These workshops took part in April. Workshops before April were covered by GIZ, another donor.



Changes in Project Implementation

Main change in the project implementation involved receipt of additional funding from German Lottery and the use of project funds as a match to the larger project. As German Lottery project requires 20 percent of co-funding, it was agreed that Austrian funding will be used to match the funds for the new project. Specific budget headlines for co-funding included:

- Vouchers
- Non-food items/hygiene packages
- Medical assistance
- Integrated/Assisted living

As both projects include slightly different activities, the organization and explanation of the process for partners required some additional time. Thanks to additional funding, CARE International Balkans was able to allocate one person to coordinate activities and ensure that funds from both projects are adequately utilized in accordance with CARE's rules and regulations.

Furthermore, change was requested for Zemlja djece in Tuzla so that they could re-direct costs from fuel to use them as down payment for car lease which would save them from 400 Eur for car rental on a monthly basis.

Finally, CURE Foundation requested an extension until September 2022 due to the delay in opening of a bank account for the asylum-seeker.

Lessons Learned

One of the main lessons includes challenges with reporting on projects that have started with different time frame and are treated as both independent but also interlinked. CARE International Balkans is holding regular meetings internally and with project partners to mitigate risks.

Press Coverage and Other Documents Available Online

During the reporting period, CARE Communication Officer participated in two thematic events – one titled "Media narrative and relation towards migration" (held on 9 - 10 March 2022 in Konjic) and the second one titled "Developing media narrative about migration through dialog" which was held in Budva, Montenegro on 10 – 12 May. The initial event gathered representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the second one was regional gathering representatives from Bosnia Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro. Aim of these workshops was establishment of a network and system of the information exchange that will lead to the understanding of "all sides" included in work with the emigrants. The second aim was the creation of the network that will lead to the improving coordination on the field in working with the emigration programs and topics.

This was chance to present CARE program and to contribute to strengthening cooperation between various actors included in process, especially connection with main media actors. Each workshop gathered more than 60 participants.

Annexes – available upon request

- Reports by Cure
- Report by Pomozi.ba
- Report by Zemlja djece
- Report by Zene s Une