



**Center for Habitat Development**

Str. Dervish Hima, Ada Tower (behind the national stadium)

KP 2995 Tirana Albania

Tel: +355.(0)42.57809/8, Fax: +355.(0)42.57807

Celular: +355.(0)38.20.32957/34126

E-mail: [coplan@albnet.net](mailto:coplan@albnet.net)

# Annual Report 1999

Main Project:

**“ Roads to a Stronger Civic Society”**

Project no.: C-432/8004

Other projects:

**Cordaid- “improving Housing Conditions Refugees form Kosovo”**

Project no.: G-432/8030

**Novib- “Emergency assistance to Kosovar refugees”**

**Tirana, April 2000**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Co-PLAN is an Albanian non-profit non-governmental social association that has no political and religious aims. It is registered by the Court of Tirana (decision No.5284, date 17/10/1997), and emerged out of the “Breglumasi Programme” (1995-1997) that was supported by Bilance (The Netherlands) and VIS (Italy). It carried out social development and neighbourhood improvement programmes, in the low-income irregular Breglumasi neighbourhood of Tirana. This programme gained considerable experience and success in urban neighbourhood upgrading, resulting in the institutionalisation of Co-PLAN as an NGO.

Co-PLAN focuses its activities on the social changes of the living environment, aiming to support the collective welfare of people, especially to those most in need. The objective of Co-PLAN is to further develop pilot actions for neighbourhood improvement through community organisations, by acting as a kind of “service centre” for neighbourhood communities. Co-PLAN plays also the role of advocate towards the public sector, as well as providing assistance and consultancy services to local and central government agencies - including international agencies - that work in the field of urban and community development.

The main activities of Co-PLAN are: research studies; training courses and seminars; and practical support to communities, local and central authorities, as well as other actors. Co-PLAN concentrates its activities over the following objectives: (i) Analysis of social, economic, and cultural problems; (ii) Identification of strategies and suggestions to habitat improvements; (iii) Dissemination of information related to the problematique of urban life; (iv) Presentation of community problems to the Government and Parliament; (v) Establishing work relations and exchange of experience with analogue Albanian and foreign organisations.

## **BACKGROUND**

Since its establishment, the core project of Co-PLAN has been “Roads to stronger civil society”, financed by the Dutch organisation Cordaid, while another important donor during the last year has been NOVIB (The Netherlands). In addition, special support comes through the technical assistance, through COV and PSO (The Netherlands). Whereas Bilance has been committed to contribute the lion’s share of Co-PLAN’s budget, additional financing is incrementally raised from Co-PLAN’s consultancy services.

The philosophy of Co-PLAN is based on: (i) Facilitating and assisting target groups to improve their living conditions; (ii) Improving the quality of residents participation in policy processes; (iii) Providing contemporary insight to local and central authorities on how to upgrade urban communities. Co-PLAN operates on a demand driven basis, which means that beneficiaries should contribute to the works and services that Co-PLAN is providing. This can be either in cash terms or in labour assistance. The actions of Co-PLAN aim to make the contribution of beneficiaries and target groups as best visible as possible.

In this perspective the development objectives of Co-PLAN for 1999 have been:

- (i) Continuation of the contribution for social development and physical improvement in Breglumasi;
- (ii) Transferring the Breglumasi project experience to other low-income neighbourhoods through community development work, and community-based improvements;
- (iii) Contribution to the development of civil society through the institutionalising of Co-PLAN as an important actor in the field of urban and community development.

Hereunder follows a detailed description of the actions and activities undertaken by Co-PLAN for the “Roads to a stronger civil society” programme in 1999.

**CORE PROJECT:**  
**“Roads to stronger civil society”**  
(Financing by Cordaid, The Netherlands)

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**Component 1: Social Development of the Breglumasi Neighbourhood**

The main aim of the Breglumasi social component is institution building. The responsibility for this activity was intended to be fully transferred to VIS, starting from September 1998. As this did not practically happen until late 1999, Co-PLAN has been managing and executing this activity for that time. VIS mobilised its own volunteer, Mrs. Rossaria Cortellera for the first half of 1999. However, due to her involvement in other VIS activities, and her limited period of stay in Albania, Co-PLAN had to complement through its own community developers Mrs. Besa Tarazhi and Mr. Edvin Lame. The situation improved with the arrival of the new VIS volunteer Mr. Toni Montevidoni by late 1999. The new staff of Co-PLAN, Mrs. Mirela Dalipaj, compensated the leave of Rossaria and Besa from Albania during the second half of 1999.

The activities for 2000 on social intervention have been proposed by VIS, and agreed upon by Co-PLAN, based on a written project proposal. The main change is now that VIS has taken over full responsibility for the social component of the Breglumasi programme. Nowadays, Co-PLAN is gradually retreating from the Breglumasi area and playing the role of intermediary between the donor and VIS. Upon the completion of the social component, VIS will develop, together with Cordaid an independent project.

The main objectives of the Breglumasi social component 1998-2000 are:

- ? to assist in the creation of independent residents organisations for woman, youth and other initiatives
- ? to train and prepare voluntary social animators that can work independently in the social center
- ? to hand over the running of the social center and kindergarten to a sustainable entity
- ? to improve the kindergarten's staff knowledge and skills, thereby enabling them to formulate and execute differentiated school programmes for 3-6 year-old kids, and preparing them for elementary school

The practical works for 1999 have focused on:

**1. The kindergarten**

This is actually one of the most sustainable activities aiming to offer better education for children of the area, and to create free time for their mothers. A long-term training of the teachers has been finalised in June 1999, thanks to admirable voluntary work of Joke Matijssen (The Netherlands). This training introduced successfully new ideas, including the use of new didactic materials and the creation of a bookkeeping system. In addition, a concept of sustainability for activities was introduced. One of the instruments of sustainability increase was the increased collaboration with parents. They cover now certain expenses of the kindergarten, such as for heating or work materials. Collaboration between parents and teachers during 1999 also proved beneficial in solving the problems of water supply, and in the selection of the new name for the kindergarten (Lulet e jetes, or, flowers of life). Class attendance during 1999 varied between 60 -80 children, which is approximately the same as the previous year.

During 1999, negotiations with the State authorities took place for the official recognition of the activity. Several meetings have been undertaken with the representatives of the Lapraka Administrative Unit, the Department of Education, and the respective Economic Centres of Education in the Municipality of Tirana and Tirana District, including the two vice-mayors of Tirana. A plenary meeting with parents and local authorities took place in the kindergarten in June. A 30-minutes video-film was prepared to show the daily activities and qualities of the kindergarten. A concluding meeting was organised by the end of June in the Municipality of Tirana with all the actors involved in the sector of education. The kindergarten of

Breglumasi was evaluated as a very positive experience in the field of education where all agreed that the initiative must be supported in the long run.

However, before the State officially recognises the kindergarten, a license must be obtained from the Ministry of Education. To receive such license, legal documents of ownership over land and building (hipotheque) must be proved. This is not possible, as Breglumasi is an informally developed area, and the only organ able to prove ownership over land is the State. In legal aspect, the most realistic option now is to transfer the kindergarten to local authorities. In this case they must take over the ownership of the building including the financing of maintenance and staff salaries. However, given the difficulties of the Albanian State, a more pragmatic solution for this problem was seen in the transfer of the kindergarten to VIS. They show interest to continue working in the Breglumasi neighbourhood, while the authorities seem interested to take over in longer run.

### **1. The social center, consisting of:**

*The residents' association.* The work of Co-PLAN in this respect has mainly focused on the issues related to the Urban Land Management Project. Early 1999 new elections were organised by the association. This is the third time elections were held, proving the sustainability of the association. This year a new scheme was applied: every 10-15 houses formed a sub-division group and appointed their representative. All sub-division representatives meet together with the formal leadership and selected the new president of the Breglumasi CBO, Mr. Gjin Mustafa. However, still more is to be done for the sustainability of association and strengthening of its leadership.

*The youth group.* Include the social animators and children groups, which are the most sustainable and organised group of the Breglumasi social center. The technique of animation is based on direct contacts with youth/children, and orientation towards positive social actions including strengthening their personalities/capacities. Mrs. Rossaria Cortellessa (VIS) reorganised and trained new groups, while Mr. Edvin Lame (Co-PLAN), organised a valuable bridging between the "old" and "new" animators. Between May-July 1999, an intensive summer programme was organised by Edvin Lame for 300 youngsters and children, including refugees from Kosovo. In addition periodically sport activities were organised.

*The women group* has been practically transferred to VIS. Mrs. Rossaria Cortellessa (VIS) with the assistance of Mrs. Besa Tarazhi (Co-PLAN), prepared with the women group a project proposal for income generation (handicrafts), that was financed by the Commune of Milano (Italy). Critical issues remaining are how to maintain a good membership, the dependency from foreign markets, and the focus on income generation rather than on social work.

*The neighborhood' newspaper "Fjala Jonë"* (Our word) has been published three times this year. However, the sustainability of this activity is weak, mainly because of the decline of the local CBO contribution, and because of differences on concept and interest between the different groups. Further the leave of Mrs. Besa Tarazhi for studies abroad weakened the preparation process. The sustainability of this newspaper can be improved if it is going to be used for the purposes of the Land Management Project.

*The secretary/caretaker* have improved their performance. The secretary, Mrs. Anila Shahini, has reduced her time involvement because of her studies at the university, but the quality of her work has improved, especially in bookkeeping, giving information to visitors and the making of the newspaper. However, the collaboration between the secretary and the leadership of the residents' association is still unsatisfactory. Mr. Kole Cuni the caretaker/guard of the social centre/kindergarten has improved his initiatives on maintenance. His salary payment, which has to come from the users of the social centre, remains a problem, and the payment differences for 1999 were covered by Co-PLAN.

*The health care centre* has for the moment stopped its activities, since local doctor has emigrated (because of personal reasons), but the rooms are still available. VIS and the Salasians agreed upon restarting the activity after having an official agreement with the local authorities to do so. A possible time frame for this is unfortunately difficult to be predicted.

*Training university students* took place during 1999 by Mrs. Besa Tarazhi. An official agreement was signed for this purpose between Co-PLAN and the Faculty of Social Sciences of Tirana University.

Students were involved within the framework of the Breglumasi social component by focusing on practical issues.

### **3. Physical improvements:**

The direct physical improvements of the Breglumasi programme by Co-PLAN financing, have been relatively limited this year, and concern mainly the completion of the road network during January 1999. Nowadays, the neighbourhood has a complete system of roads that makes an intervention of the Urban Land Management Project (ULMP) possible. This project is financed by a loan of the World Bank. The efforts of Co-PLAN for 1999 focused on mediating between the Breglumasi residents and their representative associations, with local and central authorities and their municipal and ministerial project teams (PCU/PMT). It is a great achievement of the project that 85% of the residents of the pilot site have paid their first instalment in cash for building the primary and secondary power infrastructure. At present the project is collaborating with residents to build the needed final tertiary infrastructure. Upon the successful completion of the power network, the project will invest on street lighting, water and drainage connection, garbage collection and road asphaltting.

## **Component 2: Transferring the experience of Breglumasi to the neighbourhood of Bathore (Kamza Municipality, District of Tirana)**

Bathore is an informally developed area of about 400 hectares in the Northern Tirana periphery, from which only 250 hectares are considered as urban land. During 1999, Co-PLAN focused its activities over the 155 hectares of the urban area of Bathore. Here are living close to 1,200 families with approximately 8,000 people. The residents come mostly from the northern regions. Since 1995 the authorities were "forced" to recognise the existence of Bathore, but hardly undertook any improvement action. However, a general urban plan has been designed where the agricultural status of land was converted into urban, and a 13-hectare pilot site was selected for improvement within the framework of the ULMP. Co-PLAN was in 1997 invited by the Albanian authorities to assist with the project mobilisation of this project, and to transfer the experience of Breglumasi to the pilot site of Bathore. From that time on Co-PLAN has been closely working with the local residents of Bathore, including local and central authorities, in order to prepare the project implementation in this pilot site.

During 1999, Co-PLAN aimed to extend its intervention beyond the ULMP pilot site, through the funds of the project: Roads to stronger civil society.

### **1. Social intervention in Bathore**

*The promotion of the CBOs* in the pilot site during 1998 has been followed by the identification of key local leaders in the rest of Bathore, including the local aldermen appointed by local government. A combination of the CBO of the officially registered pilot site leaders, and local leaders and aldermen created space for local actions, as a balance and understanding between the "official" and "informal" leadership was established. Furthermore, the improvement actions involve widely the local leaders thereby aiming to reach a kind of on-job training to them.

*Working with vulnerable groups* has been another important priority of Co-PLAN for 1999. A child and a youth group are nowadays active in the Bathore elementary school. Animating tools like the English language course, sport activities, visits to historical and recreational places, have been combined with actions of garbage cleaning, tree planting, and school playground improvement. These activities are directly supporting the educational institutions, and create more space for parents to focus on income-generation activities. Door-to-door visits were undertaken in order to organise women groups, but this process has been hindered mainly due to the lack of a neutral place for social gatherings. The establishment of a health care centre created the basis to work with the community, especially on issues like hygiene and health, and it offers also the possibilities to work in collaboration with other organisations. For 2000, Co-PLAN aims to establish a community centre as a focal point for social activities.

Youth group in Bathore cleaning up the elementary school's play ground



Women group in Bathore discussing for the garbage collection system in the area.



## **2. Physical improvements in Bathore**

The intensity of the social intervention of Co-PLAN in Bathore has been initially limited in order to leave space for the *sustainability of the ULMP*. In fact, Co-PLAN considers the success of ULMP crucial for the improvement of the local living conditions, as well as the sustainability of its own projects. As authorities have been bureaucratic and often caused delay, Co-PLAN decided to intervene also outside the pilot area (with Cordaid funds). This is done in order to introduce the logic of resident's contribution for infrastructure development, and at the same time speeding-up the process of the ULMP extension in the rest of the neighbourhood. This creates a typical win-win situation. In practical terms, a concept urban plan has been prepared in collaboration with the community and approved by local authorities. The project is now explained to the community, and adjusted after their comments. Also various social and economic surveys have been undertaken.

In practice *almost 1.2 kilometres public space (roads)* of 12-meters wide, have been marked out, opened and gravelled thanks to the financing of Cordaid. Door-to-door visits and public meetings were organised early 1999, including a participatory assessment for community action. A close collaboration with the Municipality of Kamza, especially the Mayor, the urban planning department, and local aldermen was ensured. A partnership-agreement was signed between Co-PLAN, the Municipality of Kamza and Bathore representatives. For the road construction, barracks, fences and walls were removed in order to create the necessary and agreed public spaces. The alderman and local leaders hired Labour and specialised machinery locally. The construction of this road created an income for about 140 people of whom a driver had about 330 USD, a labourer 44 USD, and a machine operator 710 USD (including the hiring of the machine).

The main road of Bathore before the improvements.....



And after !



For 2000, Co-PLAN will focus to finalise certain strategic segments of road in order to maximise the functional use of the improved access.

By *planting trees* the open public spaces were marked. The tree planting action was implemented by involving youngsters and local residents who live along the opened public space. The planting of trees took also place on the playground of the Bathore elementary school, and was combined with garbage cleaning.

A *garbage collection system* has been initiated during 1999 in four sub-areas of Bathore. The intervention was designed with local residents whom decided on the garbage standpoint's location, and prepared their spaces. Concrete bins were provided by Co-PLAN. This action was combined with the cleaning of the big drainage channel (by NOVIB funds). Residents have now agreed to remove garbage once per month.

Co-PLAN is working in 2000 with the local authorities in order to promote a municipal service provision, through introducing the tax collection concept. Still, more work should be done on sustainability building of the interventions, and resident's education.

Garbage collection bins are distributed along the main road in Bathore.



Residents in Bathore working to preparing space for the garbage collection bins.



### **3. Researches in Bathore**

Two surveys were undertaken during 1999 by Co-PLAN: (i) A social-economic survey with a questionnaire for 225 households of Bathore. Executed in collaboration with a researcher of the Tokyo University, Mr. Agim Reci, and students of the urban planning department of the Polytechnic University of Tirana; (ii) A social survey with a questionnaire on vulnerable groups, with 250 individuals from children, youth and women. These surveys helped to understand better the social-economic behaviour of the local population. They especially addressed the identification of problems, needs and priorities, and include the design of the direction for Co-PLAN intervention. Their results were presented in the urban forum, which is the annual public event of Co-PLAN.

### **4. Emergency intervention in Bathore, co-financed by NOVIB**

Affected by the *emergency situation due to the Kosovo crisis* in Albania, Co-PLAN decided to adjust its strategies, given the newly grown situation. Such changes called for flexibility, extra efforts and financing. For this purpose emergency interventions were combined with development measures, aiming to support not only the Kosovar refugees, but also local Albanians. The existing financing by Cordaid was complemented by another Dutch organisation NOVIB.

In May 1999, Co-PLAN created *a team of 6 professionals* (3 urban planners and 3 community workers) to start implementation. The strategy of intervention and actions were formulated based on an objective oriented project planning (OOPP) exercise which was organised together with the local leadership of Bathore. SNV (the Netherlands Development Organisation) and GTZ (German Technical Co-operation) gave assistance in this process.

Through NOVIB financing, Co-PLAN implemented in collaboration with residents: (i) the opening and *gravelling of 1.2 kilometre public space* (ii) and cleaning of 1.5 kilometre drainage channel. This was a co-financing action between Cordaid and NOVIB and is further described under point 2.2 of this report.

Residents in Bathore working on road gravelling .



The future boulevard of Bathore!



The project was also involved in the identification of the necessary free space for *building a health care centre*, including its later construction. As a result land was offered for free by residents. The centre is already build by the local community and is handed-over to the municipal authorities. A formal agreement has been signed with the Municipality of Kamza to take care for all legal and financial consequences related to the functioning of the centre. Here has to be referred to the good collaboration between the District of Tirana and the Ministry of Health, etc. In this respect, the collaboration with other NGOs operating in Bathore was also very successful. The British NGO, Merlin is supplying basic facilities and equipment, including the training of local doctors. An Italian NGO, AiBi, is preparing to work with women, especially on hygiene.

A view of the former health care center in Bathore.



The newly constructed health care center



*A playground was also built* in the school yard of the Bathore elementary school, during 1999. This space is both used for education purposes as well as for social activities. Co-PLAN has combined the intervention with another NGO, Christian Children Fund (CCF) that is actively involved in the kindergarten of the school.

The playground of the Bathore elementary school



The new play ground at the school



For 2000, Co-PLAN aims to share its efforts with other organisations, through joint actions, like: improving access to the school, improving sport facilities, water provision, increasing the sense of ownership among teachers and children, etc.

The social components of these interventions have mainly been complemented by Cordaid funds. For more information, please see the attached final report of this project.

##### **5. Physical improvements cofinanced by the Ministry of Public Works**

Co-PLAN has been supporting continuously the implementation of the ULMP in the Bathore pilot site. The project is financed by a loan from the World Bank. The support of Co-PLAN for the Bathore ULMP is formalised through a contract, after Co-PLAN won a tender organised by the PCU (Project Co-ordination Unit) at the Ministry of Public Works. This success came thanks to Co-PLAN's experience and performance in the pilot sites, as well as to the co-financing of Cordaid. In this project the authorities pay the cost of the materials, whereas Cordaid covers the cost of Co-PLAN. The ULMP programme objectives matches the Cordaid objectives.

For this project the Co-PLAN team worked closely with local CBOs, in opening and gravelling of about 2 kilometres public space, of 5-9 meters wide (7 roads). Still some critical segments are to be opened. Another focus has been on promoting local residents to pay the development fee of ULMP. This is an essential issue for the sustainability of the project. At this moment 45% of the families have paid their first instalment.

During 2000 Co-PLAN will still be devoted to support local authorities in finalising this project

#### **6. Support to the Local Government of Kamza Municipality,**

Although this is not a separate project, it is worthwhile to describe it because its process of development is important inasmuch as donor assistance can help in creating sustainable work contacts. By working in Bathore Co-PLAN developed an interest to collaborate with municipal authorities. Furthermore, the Co-PLAN approach is geared towards assisting and strengthening local institutional capacities. Thanks to this, the Municipal Council of Kamza appointed Co-PLAN as the official assistant on urban and municipal management issues, while at the same time all donors financed this initiative. This experience inspired the Co-PLAN team to design a project proposal for empowering local governance and promotion of local initiatives. This project is designed jointly with the IHS, (Institute of Housing and Urban Development Studies, in Rotterdam the Netherlands), and Cordaid and NOVIB have expressed interest on financing this project. The Municipality of Kamza provided a local office to Co-PLAN, which in return is promoting the opening of a *municipal information office*. This office is to co-ordinate all interventions undertaken by governmental and non-governmental organisations in the area, and to transform these into healthy and complementing actions.

In order to attract the attention of public opinion and authorities for the dramatic situation of the Kamza Municipality, Co-PLAN organised - together with the Municipality of Kamza - the annual public event about this problematique. The activity served especially the promotion of a network of government and non-governmental organisations that are co-ordinated through the recently established municipal information office in Kamza. For more information about this activity see details on the urban forum.

**ADDITIONAL PROJECTS:**  
**Emergency interventions resulting from the Kosovo refugee crisis**  
(Financing by Cordaid, Aedes, SNV)  
(Various goods supplied by CRS)

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Co-PLAN is a development organisation, but it has the moral obligation to act also in emergency situations as during the war in Kosovo. The strategy of Co-PLAN in such situation is based on certain criteria:

- ? firstly, emergency and development objectives were combined
- ? second, a balance was maintained in supporting both Kosovar refugees and local Albanians
- ? third, focus was given to assist those local authorities where Co-PLAN has been already working
- ? fourth, special attention was paid to items/actions not provided by other NGOs or state institutions

**Assistance to Kruja Municipality**

Kruja is a small Municipality of 15,000 inhabitants, 45 minutes from Tirana by car. Co-PLAN has been involved in this Municipality through the “strengthening of local government by increasing citizen participation in decision making “ project of the VNG (Association of Netherlands Municipalities). During the Kosovo crisis, Kruja hosted 3,350 refugees, from which 850 in the Xaharia collective centre, and 2,500 with host families. Co-PLAN assisted local authorities to set up a crisis management team, including a co-ordination unit with local NGOs.

A very successful partnership was build with the Italian NGO, CISP (Commitatto Internazionale per Sviluppo dei Popoli) and the Municipality of Kruja. This was institutionalised through a partnership agreement. Regular daily and weekly-co-ordination meetings were hold. Structures were organised in such a way that care could be taken for both; Kosovars with host families, and those staying in the collective centre. Specific items that were not provided by other organisations were provided or financed by Co-PLAN. Food was provided at the peak of the first days, the kitchen and water supply systems were improved, a television set and a mobile phone to improve information and contacts among refugees were provided. Initiatives of a local artistic folk group that performed for the refugees was financed. The Kosovar refugees were involved in road improvements to the Zaharia collective centre. In total more than 9,000 USD were invested in Kruja for improving the refugee’s situation.



Discussion with authorities on the Kosove refugee crises management.

< The Improvement of kitchen facilities in the Xaharia center, Kruja.

**Assistance to Kamza Municipality** Kamza is a new Municipality of around 60,000 inhabitants, of whom the most informally settled since the early 90s. Local authority’s capacity is very weak and struggles with substantial financial and administrative constraints. Co-PLAN has been involved in Kamza through

the projects in the Bathore neighbourhood. At the peak of the refugee crisis the families of Kamza hosted around 4,000 Kosovar refugees.

Co-PLAN promoted the creation of a management and co-ordination unit, aiming the improvement of management problems relating to the refugee crisis. Weekly co-ordination meeting with the local administration and local NGOs were organised. Goods delivery by emergency organisations was co-ordinated. Computer facilities were provided to the municipal staff to improve storing and processing of data on Kosovar refugees, for a total of 2,200 USD. Parallel with this, upgrading improvements were intensified in the Bathore area, either by financing of Cordaid or NOVIB.

#### **Assistance to the local authorities of the Fieri Prefecture**

Co-PLAN was invited to assist the refugees in the Fieri, prefecture by SNV (The Netherlands Development Organisation), which is working in this area. A rapid identification mission evidenced that the Prefecture of Fieri hosted 20,000 Kosovar refugees, of whom 10,000 were located in the Fieri District. Fieri town hosted the biggest share, with 6,000 refugees.

Co-PLAN intervened basically in the physical improvement of the host families residences and the collective centres, in the area of: (i) water and sanitation improvement; (ii) reorganisation and division of big spaces (mainly collective centres) into smaller family-intimate spaces; (iii) improvements of windows and doors; (iv) and provision of bunk beds.

Priorities were given to: (i) host structures that were in a deteriorated situation, (ii) structures with clear ownership, (iii) and to the lesser-supported host structures. The total number of assisted refugees was 2,422 persons, whom were distributed over the 15 collective centres. The total amount invested for the refugees in Fieri was 59,660 USD, meaning almost 55 USD/refugee. The financing came mainly from Cordaid, but also SNV assisted in this.

Space organisation for the reception of refugees in the collective centers in Fier



After the peace accord was achieved for Kosovo, most refugees immediately returned to Kosovo. This sudden change in the situation needed an adjustment of Co-PLAN's strategy. This caused a change in emphasis of Co-PLAN to improving the collective buildings that were formerly used by the refugees. These were in a desperate need for renovation in order to be used by the local Albanians again. First priority was given to the schools. In collaboration with the Dutch organisation AEDES, two schools were improved in the Fieri District: the high school of Fieri that is the oldest school of this town, and the elementary school of Grecalli village. The experiences of Aedes served the Co-PLAN staff as a good on-the-job training opportunity.

The rehabilitation of the Grecalli school in Fier.



## OTHER ACTIVITIES

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### **The new office of Co-PLAN**

This has been one of the most remarkable changes for Co-PLAN during 1999. In May 1999, the organisation moved into a new accommodation that offers us much more opportunities. A lot of efforts were invested by the team to maximise the advantages of this new location, from furnishing to communication facilities as telephone, e-mail and Internet. The location ensures also easy access to the main road network of Tirana, as well as to the project sites. Actually, Co-PLAN is now also better accessible by its own partners. A special thanks goes to Cordaid for the flexibility and patience in supporting this choice.

### **The visit of World Bank President in Bathore**

This was another key moment for Co-PLAN during 1999. Mr. Wolfensson the World Bank President, and Mr. Pandeli Majko, the Albanian Prime Minister, accompanied by the highest officials of the World Bank and Albanian Government paid a special visit in July to the Bathore Project. This was the only project of the World Bank, out of a total of 34 projects running in Albania that was paid a visit. This shows clearly the importance as well as the appreciation for Co-PLAN's work. Mr. Wolfensson called the project of Bathore "a best practice to be shown to other countries of the world". The broad media coverage attracted the attention of the public, including those that have been sceptical to the Co-PLAN approach. In practical terms, the visit enriched the reputation of the organisation considerably, and it is now also of the leading organisations in the urban development discussion.

The visit of the WB president and Albanian Prime Minister in Bathore.



### **Training/conferences**

These are important tools for the exchange of international experiences:

- ? Flamur Kuci, participated in an ENHR housing conference for young researchers in Turkey;
- ? Besnik Aliaj, participated in a one-week CAFOD training on staff management;
- ? Besa Tarazhi, participated in a seminar of post-traumatic treatment of UNICEF. At present she has left for a postgraduate “Masters” studies USA;
- ? Besnik Aliaj and Flamur Kuci, participated in a two-week course for NGO management, in Bulgaria
- ? Artur Cakalli and Mirela Dalipaj, participated in an urban planning conference of the European Network of Housing Research (ENHR) in Slovenia;
- ? Dritan Shutina, Luan Deda, Besnik Aliaj and Sef Slootweg participated in a housing conference of ENHR in Hungary. The Co-PLAN team was invited to present the urban situation of Albania, and to elaborate on their NGO development. The presentation was combined with audiovisuals and was boosted as one of the special events of the conference. A Balkan Region initiative was initiated by ENHR to promote civic developments in the fields of housing and urban development;
- ? Five teachers of the Breglumasi kindergarten were trained by Co-PLAN during January-June 1999;
- ? Lectures and practical guidance were provided to students of the Faculties of Civil Engineering and Social Sciences.

### **Financial auditing**

1999 was an important year in improving the financial and managerial capacities of Co-PLAN. The reputed auditing company KPMG undertook the auditing of Co-PLAN for the January-December 1998 period. The submitted final report evaluates Co-PLAN as a financial healthy organisation. At present Co-PLAN has initiated the financial auditing for 1999, again to be undertaken by KPMG.

### **Consultancy work**

This is another important component of Co-PLAN’s activities. During this period important donors and organisations have contracted us for executing the following works:

- ? January -February: Social Assessment for first phase of the second water irrigation project in Albania (World Bank and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture). This first phase of the project is considered as the most successful project of the World Bank in Albania. The evaluation of Co-PLAN was essential in terms of decision making for the continuation of a second phase.
- ? Assistance to SLGP project of VNG, to train the municipal staff of Kruja through project mobilisation on the renewal of old historical heritage of city’s centre.
- ? Damage Assessment survey in the agricultural sector of Kosovo on behalf of the FAO and World Bank. This was the first countrywide survey organised by any donor organisation in Kosovo. Co-PLAN used the mission in Kosovo as an opportunity to identify potential professionals that can serve in establishing a Co-PLAN branch in Kosovo, which in the long run can work independently in the field of, urban and community development.
- ? Assistance for project mobilisation to the Urban Land Management Project in Bathore, including the extension of the project to other areas.

### **Information distribution**

An important event of Co-PLAN is the annual urban forum that has created its own independent position over the last three years. This year the public debate concentrated in general on the peripheral developments of Tirana, and more specific on the Kamza region. This activity raised a lot of interest among political and professional levels, and was covered widely by the media. In practical terms it served in mobilising the network of NGOs working in Kamza, especially Bathore, on information exchange, co-ordination, and sharing their experiences in the best serving of the local population. Also the opening of the information and co-ordination office in the Kamza Municipality was introduced.

### **The Urban Forum**



The activity was joined by several foreign organisations active in Albania. A special contribution came from IHS Rotterdam and from several German research institutions within the framework of the ENHR. The forum was the first action that Co-PLAN undertook to initiate the ENHR initiative in the Balkan region, aiming to promote civic participation and democracy in the field of housing and urban development.

### **Publications**

- ? Besnik Aliaj, has published the article: Pilot actions for community based planning of irregular settlements in Tirana-Albania. In *City and Culture* (Sweden)
- ? The Breglumasi Programme has been selected as best practice in the UNCHS publication "Cities and Homes for All: The Habitat Agenda. 1999.
- ? Urban forum: New millennium, new visions. A selection of research materials about the Kamzaregion. Tirana, November 1999.
- ? Four articles about Co-PLAN's experiences are in the publication process by the ENHR housing conference in Hungary (c/o: Metropolitan Research Institute, Budapest).

### **Media coverage**

The media coverage on Co-PLAN projects continued during 1999 on the following:

- ? The kindergarten of Breglumasi was presented on national television in July 1999;
- ? The Bathore project, thanks to the visit of World Bank President and Albanian Prime-Minister, were on the front pages of the Albanian media in September 1999;
- ? The Urban forum: new millennium, new visions, was on the main headlines of the television news in November 1999.

### The development of the Co-PLAN team

The team of Co-PLAN has been expanded parallel with the increase of the volume of work. The number of staff has been between 6-12 professionals, without including the part time staff. Presently Co-PLAN counts 9 Albanian full time staff, and one expatriate.

In November 1999, Mr. Sef Slootweg finished his contract with Co-PLAN and works now for the SNV in Fieri. However, Mr. Slootweg has a special status in Co-PLAN, as he has been one of the initiators and founders of the organisation. In the summer of 1999, his wife Joke Matijssen completed also successfully the training of teachers for the Breglumasi kindergarten. Their contribution is gratefully acknowledged, and Co-PLAN wishes good luck and a long life to their family.

Farewell!



The recognition of Co-plan's work by the World Bank



The team of Co-PLAN for 1999 has been compounded by:

*(i). As Core staff:*

- ? Besnik Aliaj, director, urban planner/manager, member of the executive board
- ? Dritan Shutina, vice -director, civil engineer, hydraulics
- ? Luan Deda, programme officer infrastructure component, architect
- ? Besa Tarazhi, programme officer social component, social worker, since September in the USA for study purposes.
- ? Amalia Tola, financial accounting, economist
- ? Flamur Kuci, programme officer Bathore component, urban planner

*(ii). As Supporting staff:*

- ? Artur Cakalli, Bathore team, urban planner
- ? Mirela Dalipaj, Bathore team, psychologist
- ? Valbona Spahija, Bathore team, social worker,
- ? Floreta Pirushi, secretary and office administrator
- ? Denis Leka, Bathore team, urban planner, finalised the temporary contract in November
- ? Elma Shehu, Bathore team, social worker, finalised the temporary contract in September
- ? Edvin Lame, Breglumasi team, student sociology, finalised the temporary contract in November
- ? Elton Gjika, Fieri team, architect, finalised the temporary contract in October

*(iii). Expatriates:*

- ? Sef Slootweg, (The Netherlands), co-director and advisor of the team. Finalised the contract in October, and works now for SNV Albania
- ? Joke Matijssen, (The Netherlands), volunteer trainer, Breglumasi kindergarten finalised the contract in October
- ? Rossaria Cortellessa/Toni Montevidoni, (Italy) Italian volunteers, Breglumasi social component
- ? Ton Van Bakel, (The Netherlands) civil engineer, project manager in Fieri project on behalf of Aedes
- ? Adriaan Hartkoorn, (The Netherlands) technical and management adviser, urban manager, started working in November 1999. Adri continues the further development of the organisation as the successor

of Sef, which was a positive experience. Co-PLAN acknowledges in this respect the support of COV/PSO to make their presence in Albania possible. For this purpose a special evaluation mission was organised in May 1999 by COV, which was also considered as a useful internal brainstorming exercise for Co-PLAN.

Co-PLAN has extended its work during 1999 from within Tirana, to the Municipalities of Kamza and Kruja, the Prefecture of Fieri, and in Kosovo, etc. For practical reasons temporary local offices were opened in Prishtina, Fieri and Kamza, while the last one is the only one remaining open.

#### **The Advisory Board**

The composition of Co-PLAN's Advisory Board reshuffled this Spring, because certain members had pressing family or work obligations, the statute has provisions for this. Two former active members (Mrs. Milva Ekonomi and Mr. Agron Lufi) remained in the Board while three others resigned. Co-PLAN identified three new respectable figures from the Albanian civil society. They are: (i) Mr. Artan Hoxha, Executive Director of ISB (Institute of Contemporary Studies), (ii) Mrs. Valdete Sala, Executive Director of the "Soros" Foundation, (iii) and Mr. Gavrosh Andoni, private lawyer.

#### **Organisational Strengthening and Institutional Development**

Two staff members of Co-PLAN followed a training course on organisational strengthening and institutional development. Later their experience was used as an opportunity to transfer this knowledge to the whole staff of Co-PLAN. For this purpose an internal evaluation workshop was organised with the complete staff of Co-PLAN in December 1999, in Macedonia. The workshop's objectives were to explain and better understand the organisation, especially to the new staff members. A better view was also created on the importance of networking, coalition forming and partnerships. The outcomes of this workshop served further as support to a planning week that was to be organised in January 2000. The main objective of Co-PLAN for 2000 will be to be a more efficient organisation. An OOPP workshop was organised in January followed by a strategic orientation brainstorming, which finalised the process of reflection for 1999 and planning for 2000.

## **Activities planned for 2000**

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Some of the actions planned and foreseen by Co-PLAN during 2000 are:

1. To continue with the interventions in the Bathore neighbourhood.
2. To work with local government of Kamza to promote good governance and citizens initiative.
3. Transfer the informal area's experience into the formal inner-city areas.
4. Continue to assist the ULMP project, both at local and central government levels.
5. Institutionalise the round table (network) with all state institutions, NGOs and donor organisations that are interested in the field of urban and community development.
6. Institutionalise the tradition of having a yearly Urban Forum, including publications and knowledge dissemination
7. Continue with consultancy works, in order to improve the financial sustainability of the organisation.
8. Participation of the core staff in international meetings, conferences and other professional and civic initiatives.
9. Maintain contacts in Kosovo in order to design and prepare a potential Kosovo branch of Co-PLAN, that in the future can work independently in the field of urban and community development.
10. Maintain the ENHR initiative on Balkan regional development by organising concrete actions and initiatives.

(See for detailed planning, the attached planning sheet)

## **VI. LITERATURE**

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1. IHS, Evaluation report on the Breglumasi programme, Tirana Albania, October 1997
2. The Breglumasi Programme, Laparaka-Tirana, Albania, January 1998
3. Co-PLAN, Year report 1998: Roads to stronger civil society", Tirana Albania, January 1999
4. Project proposals and reports of all projects of Co-PLAN

## VI. FINANCES

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### *Summary of expenses and funds received during 1999*

#### Expenses 1999

##### **Investments in infrastructure**

Buildings & playfields	28,184
Roads	93,355
Solid waste disposal	5,951
Housing & shelter improvement Kosovar refugees	129,780
	<u>257,270</u>

##### **Operational costs**

General program management	61,585
Breglumasi social Program	19,659
Social Program Bathore	4,398
Legalisation and Infrastructure program	11,382
Researches	23,496
Housing & shelter improvement Kosovar refugees	26,314
Assets depreciation	23,545
General program reserve fund	33,500
	<u>203,879</u>

**Total expenses** 461,149 US\$

#### Resources

Funds remaining from 1998	145,360
Cordaid proj. no. C-432/8004 "Roads to a stronger civil society"	95,902
Cordaid proj. no. G-432/8030 "Improving housing conditions refugees from Kosovo"	130,434
World Bank	4,750
VNG	1,180
IRC	1,988
Novib	97,154
SNV	7,682

Co-PLAN, Center for Habitat Development

PCU	30,590	
FAO	36,980	
UNDP	5,790	
Miscellaneous income	<u>2,044</u>	
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>559,854</b>	<b>US\$</b>

### ***Budget and funding 2000***

#### **Remaining from 1999 to 2000**

Cordaid in US\$	92,915	
UNDP in US\$	<u>5,790</u>	
	<b>98,705</b>	

#### **Transfers during 2000**

Cordaid third installment proj. nr. C-432/8004 "Roads to a stronger civil society"	136,080	
Cordaid last installment proj. nr.G-432/8030 "Improving housing conditions refugees from Kosovo"	27,158	
Cordaid, first installment proj. "Empowering local governance&community based initiatives municip. of Kamza"	82,000	
Novib, first installmentproj. "Empowering local governance&community based initiatives municip.of Kamza"	37,500	
Novib, proj. "Tirana Inner city improvement"	138,500	
VNG last installment	700	
UNDP last installment	13,510	
PCU for "Social assesment ULMP"	<u>47,650</u>	
	<b>483,098</b>	

#### **Total funds available for 2000**

**581,803**

#### **Expenditures 2000**

**559,400**

#### **Remaining funds**

**22,403 US\$**

The last table shows the actual and foreseen funds and expenses to be received and spent during the year 2000

### **Indicators of performance**

In the following tables are shown the planned and unforeseen Co-PLAN activities for this year, together with their results. The indicators are shown in real achieved and measurable results. Finally, some additional indicators have been appended that indicate clearly that a process of civil society development has started in the areas we are working.

### Planned Activities

Activities planned	Results
Sensibilisation campaign	? Urban forum was organised in Tirana ? Media coverage focused on WB visit to Breglumasi and Bathore ? Visits of 2 vice mayors of Tirana to Breglumasi, Chief of cabinet, and other key decision makers to the areas in order to introduce the community based urban development approach ? Distribution of Co-PLAN and other institutions research results to key decision makers
Training	? OOPP workshop for thirty representatives of residents groups and local leaders ? PACA workshop (8 sessions) for three hundred residents and local leaders ? On-the-job training of two groups of local authorities (Kruja and Kamza) during the year
Studies	? Social economic survey for Bathore neighbourhood ? Managing rapid growth of Tirana's urban fringe (in co-operation with Agim Reçi, of the Tokyo university) ? Urban forum papers, summary of social and economic findings in the Kamza region
Assessment of willingness and capacity of residents to contribute to infrastructure improvement	? 80% of Breglumasi, and 45% of Bathore residents have contributed first instalment of their required contribution
Assist residents associations to form cohesive groups	? Two resident associations are active in Breglumasi and Bathore, and out of this 28 sub-division groups in Breglumasi and 8 large neighbourhood groups in Bathore have been formed
Stimulate negotiation process between residents and local authorities	? Organised five meetings with PMT and PCU on setting priorities of infrastructure improvement in Bathore, as a follow-up to the earlier reached partnership agreement between the residents and authorities
Support City and District PMT's	? Facilitation of contacts between Breglumasi authorities and residents in order to collect the residents contribution for secondary electricity provision ? Opening and gravelling of 2 km road ? Facilitation of collection of residents fees for water and sewerage construction
Assist residents in securing right of way for urban design secondary infrastructure in Bathore and Breglumasi	? 6 km road was opened and gravelled (from mud to gravel) in Bathore.
Introduce residents supported solid waste collection system.	? Five kilometres of irrigation channel cleaned from solid waste, 16 garbage collection points installed, 16 residents groups to manage these collection points have been formed
Facilitation in water assessment studies in Bathore	? Assisted WB and Premiere Urgence in design the primary water supply line for the Bathore area
Provide topographic map	? Ensured and made available the topographic map for Bathore
Organise water and sanitation	? Will be executed in 2000

campaign in Bathore	
Research on pre-1990 residency	? Contract with the Habitat programme (MoPW) and UNDP has been prepared and signed. Project initiated and will continue in 2000
Assistance to women and children	? A research on the position of women and youth is executed, (to be published in 2000). ? One women and one youth group have been formed in Bathore ? Facilitation between VIS and local authorities on the handing over of the Breglumasi kindergarten has been done ? Sensibilisation of local authorities in Breglumasi on the importance of kindergarten activities ? Various activities between June and September have been organised for the Bathore youth
Co-PLAN training and knowledge dissemination	? Writing and design a brochure on Co-PLAN' activities, and distribution to authorities, NGO's, CBO's, the public etc. ? Two radio programs on Co-PLAN were made.
Participation in seminars	? Three staff participated in five national seminars (VNG, CAFOD, VIS(2), UNICEF) ? Nine staff participated in international conferences and seminars (Slovenia, Turkey, Hungary, and Bulgaria)
Co-PLAN training	? One staff followed a summer school on entrepreneurship in a Balkan regional training programme (US CIPE sponsored)
Two week internal evaluation programme	? One week internal evaluation and reflection workshop in Macedonia for all staff, which is completed in 2000 with an OOPP and strategic planning week
Office market research	? An office has been searched for and bought

### Unforeseen activities

Activities planned	Results
Consultancy	? Assisting local authorities in urban planning in co-operation with the VNG
Emergency programme in reaction to the Kosovo Crisis	1. <u>Kruja:</u> ? Assist local authorities in establishing co-ordination structures to manage to refugee inflow ? Direct assistance through food supply and shelter improvement through co-ordination and facilitation of local and international NGO's, and authorities. Set-up of co-ordination structures for the local authority in regard to the refugees. Assist in the improvement of a data information system on refugees. 2. <u>Fier:</u> ? Improved living conditions and shelter in private housing and former agricultural stores. ? Co-ordination and managing the rehabilitation of two local schools inn collaboration with AEDAS. 3. <u>Bathore:</u> ? Organised, built and transferred to local authorities a three room health care centre ? Designed and built a playground at the Bathore elementary school

#### **Other indicators of development**

At this moment in time we can observe in Breglumasi that some inhabitants groups are taking over the initiative in urban development actions. This can be attributed to earlier Co-PLAN interventions, which served as an example to them. Another development that is now taking place is directly the result of having the beginning of an infrastructure system in the area, and it is so-to-say the beginning of the urbanisation process.

The above can be illustrated by the fact that since the building of the road in Bathore some twenty-five new economic activities have started, mainly shops and coffee houses. Another significant finding is the fact that land and housing market prices have doubled after opening the roads. Further, three community groups asked Co-PLAN for assisting them in improvement actions for the sewage system. Another result is that Breglumasi inhabitants have invested themselves in the construction of 1.5km road, after Co-PLAN had opened their part of 4 km road. Finally, the Kamza Municipal council, office has now officially hired Co-PLAN, showing the good quality of work done, and showing a longer-term sustainability and success of the community based formula.