

Almost four years since the catastrophic floods that hit Bosnia and Herzegovina, local communities are struggling to overcome the effects of this natural disaster. New EUR 15 million worth project, financed by the European Union, in the amount of EUR 12.5, in cooperation with entity and local authorities and United Nations Development Programme in BiH, aims to help these communities.

„We had flood of epic proportions“ remembers Stanko Vincetić, Orašje Municipality Mayor. „From the whole municipal territory, only city core remained, everything else was under water“. More than 2.180 housing units were damaged in the municipality with around 21.500 inhabitants. This represented huge loss for the population that just recovered from the damages done during the 92-95 war.

„Material consequences will not be erased for another 50 to 100 years. To compensate for these material damages, people will have to work for generations. Unfortunately“ says Mayor Vincetić.

Today, Orašje is one of 44 municipalities and cities participating in the second phase of Flood Recovery: Housing Interventions Programme designed to assist recovery of flood affected communities by providing safe housing and strengthening economically the most vulnerable households. Through this Programme, more than 2.800 people will have their homes rebuilt or reconstructed, in accordance with the need, while 555 households will receive support with agricultural production, small business start-ups and employment in private sector.

Besides active participation in all Programme activities, municipalities and cities will financially contribute to the construction of new housing units. For each new housing unit, municipality or city will contribute 5.000 KM from their budget, as well as secure plot, basic communal infrastructure and construction permits.

„We believe that, though this Programme, we will be able to solve problems of people who still did not manage to repair their homes. I am grateful that this project was designed“ says Mayor Vincetić.

First phase of this Programme, implemented from 2014 to 2016, achieved great success improving quality of life for 610.000 people all over Bosnia and Herzegovina. Orašje participated in the first phase of the Programme during which roads, cantonal hospital, five schools and 299 housing units were reconstructed, while support was also given to local farmers.

Second phase of the Programme, worth EUR 15 million, started in September 2017. In October, Public Call for beneficiary selection was published to which 3.950 households from 44 municipalities and cities from both entities applied. Almost one third of applications,

1.126 of them, came from Bijeljina showing the still existing need for recovery.

„Emergency lasted the longest in Bijeljina: full two months“ says Bijeljina City Mayor, Mićo Mićić. „The damages in city were around EUR 200 million. We had around 15 thousand objects that were flooded“.

The same as Orašje, Bijeljina also participated in the first phase of the Flood Recovery Programme. Some of the reconstructions done in the city through this Programme include: 896 housing units; ten schools and one preschool and water supply system. Support was also given to small and medium businesses through financial grants.

When asked on the importance of this Programme for community, Mayor Mićić replies that it was „extremely important“. „That first after flood support was valuable: to give food to people and to save them from bigger problems. After that, support for housing reconstruction was also valuable“ says Mićić.

Flood Recovery Programme is implemented by UNDP in BiH, together with International Organisation for Migration, Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund, Hilfswerk International Austria and partner municipalities and cities. Programme is implemented in: Banja Luka, Bijeljina, Bratunac, Brod, Cazin, Doboj, Doboj Istok, Domaljevac-Šamac, Donji Žabar, Goražde, Gračanica, Gradiška, Jezero, Kakanj, Kalesija, Kostajnica, Laktaši, Lopare, Maglaj, Modriča, Novi Grad, Odžak, Orašje, Petrovo, Prijedor, Prnjavor, Sapna, Srbac, Srebrenik, Šamac, Šekovići, Šipovo, Teslić, Tešanj, Travnik, Tuzla, Ugljevik, Vareš, Vlasenica, Vogošća, Zavidovići, Zenica, Zvornik and Žepče.

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