Progress Report No 1



Shara mountain dog (Illyrian Mastif)

Reference number 35.07.07

1. Background Information on the selected project area

Immediately after receiving the money started the gathering of the background data about the selected project area Qarrishta – Letmie – Rrajce. Information such as population, agriculture, husbandry, damages in livestock caused from large carnivores, fauna, transhumance and human conflict toward large carnivores.



<u>Qarrishta</u>

Forest unit of Qarrishta belongs to Qarrishta commune. It has a total size of 6650.4 ha. Since 1996 some 318 ha of Qarrishta are protected as Managed Nature Reserve.

Main ecosystem types occurring inside this forest unit are: forests, subalpine/alpine pastures and meadows, rocks/cliffs, agriculture/arable land, and wetlands.

| Forests: | 3517 ha |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Shrubs: | 433 ha |
| Pastures and meadows: | 1730 ha |
| Arable land: | 260 ha |
| Rocky cliffs: | 710 ha |
| Wetland areas: | 0.4 ha |



Demographic Data species

Threatened and protected animal

| Commune | Number of | Population |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| or Village | families | |
| 1.Commune | 362 | 1578 |
| of Sterbleva | | |
| Sterbleva | 67 | 208 |
| village | | |
| | | |
| 2.Commune | 2221 | 11632 |
| of Qender | | |
| Qarishte | 77 | 537 |
| village | | |
| | | |
| 3.Commune | 2370 | 10665 |
| of Rrajce | | |
| Rracje | 148 | 693 |
| Skanderbej | _ | |
| village | | |
| Rracje | 105 | 889 |
| Bardhaj | 100 | 005 |
| | | |
| village | 207 | 4005 |
| Protected | 397 | 1325 |
| Area | | |

| Species | National threat status |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Dryomys nitedula | DD |
| Ursus arctos | VU |
| Canis lupus | NE |
| Meles meles | VU |
| Lutra lutra | VU |
| Lynx lynx | CR |
| Felis sylvestris | EN |
| Sus scrofa | VU |
| Capreolus capreolus | VU |
| Rupicapra rupicaora | EN |

Employment

Fortunately there is not an employment shortage at present. According to the data provided by the Communes, about ~23% are unemployed. The agricultural farm is the main source of employment. So, 74% of the working force is employed in agriculture (Full or part time), 6% is employed in non agricultural businesses (private, 2% and state sector, 4%) and about 20% in emigration.

The category of 15-35 years old has very little connections with agricultural farm and only 50% of young people work on a farm. Apart from category over 65 years old, who work on a farm, there are 2.3 persons per hectare from category 15-65 years old.

This data shows that the farms in the area of concern are still overloaded with free working forces, although the size of the farm is minimal (in average 2 ha). Under these conditions, we cannot speak about work force efficiency.

Low income from farming has made farmers look for other income sources.

Livestock production

As for livestock production, goats and sheep are predominant, while cattle play an important role. Actually the animal production is taking priority in the total agricultural production. In the future this tendency will become most important. Even now livestock has an important economic value.

Regardless of slight livestock number decrease, especially goats and sheep, there is a tendency towards livestock production increase. Livestock continues to be the most important sector of the agricultural production contributing to more than 45% of the total agricultural income.

Livestock number

| Communes or Villages | Cattle | Sheep | Goats | Poultry | Bees |
|---------------------------|--------|-------|-------|---------|------|
| 1.Commune of Sterbleva | 150 | 500 | 50 | 300 | 50 |
| Sterbleva village | | | | | |
| 2.Commune of Qender | 250 | 900 | 250 | 200 | 120 |
| Qarishte village | | | | | |
| 3.Commune of Rrajce | 480 | 1000 | 800 | 400 | 30 |
| Rracje Skanderbej village | | | | | |
| Rracje Bardhaj village | 410 | 900 | 750 | 350 | 40 |
| Total of Jabllanica- | 1290 | 3300 | 1850 | 1250 | 240 |
| Shebeniku area | | | | | |



Sheep flock in Jabllanica mountain



Sheep in Qarrishta village

2. Project implementation

The first step to fulfil the first component and to gain support for all the project implementation was a special meeting with Mr Pëllumb Gjini (Deputy Director of Education) in Tirana on 14th November 2007 (see minutes of meeting – Annex 1).

The first component that consisted in buying three puppies and distributing them to three shepherds started immediately after receiving the grant from Rufford Small Grant Foundation.

On 20th December 2007, I contacted the Director of Kennel Federation in Kosovo (hereinafter K.F.K) Mr Saud Kajtazi, in order to arrange a meeting with him and other members of the federation in the city of Pec (Kosovo).

On 28th December 2007, a three day meeting was organised with the main purpose of cooperation, in which to find the best dogs (from the genetic point of view) to create the genetic nucleus in the selected project area in Albania.

There was a full institutional cooperation from K.F.K not only to find the best individuals (dogs), but also in the agreement to publish a special edition " dog magazine" only for the project and other future activities (see minutes of meeting – Annex 2).





Meeting with dog breeders in Pec (Kosovo)

White individuals Shara Mountain dogs





Meeting with main members of K.F.K

3. Information material

The second component of the project is the production of information material to promote the values of Sharra Mountain dogs as livestock guarding dogs. In the frame of this component are production of 100 calendars with the beginning of the New Year (see Annex 3); 300 leaflets with information on Sharra Mountain dog values (see Annex 4), breeding conditions, dog behaviour and other precious information for breeders.

During March, a special magazine edition will be published in cooperation with K.F.K. This magazine will cover every single detail on Sharra Mountain dog breeding. A special article will be dedicated only for the project supported by Rufford Small Grants Foundation in order to raise awareness in Kosovo and Albania about the values of the dog and possible financial support in both sides of the border.

4. Overview of the situation of project implementation

Qarrishta village is situated geographically in a very remote part of Albania. During the winter roads are blocked with snow. Due to weather conditions the project implementation is stopped till late March. After this time field activities will commence again.

Meantime three puppies are taken and living in quarantine in Tirana because technically it is not possible to distribute them to the shepherds, as they are wintering livestock in lower pastures by the sea. This works well as the puppies are better suited to familiarization with the flocks at 4-5 months old.

Three other dogs will arrive in Albania in April. A huge meeting in Qarrishta village will be organised to promote the work done so far.

Minutes of Meeting

| Date: | 14.11.2007 | |
|--------|-----------------|--|
| Time: | 14.00 - 16.00 | |
| Place: | Tirana, Albania | |

Participants: Pëllumb Gjini (Deputy Director of Education, Stebleva Commune) Olsi Qazimi (Project Coordinator)

1. Basic Information

The meeting was organised in the frame of the project "Sharra Mountain Dog/Illyrian Mastiff" supported by Rufford Small Grants Foundation (Ref: No. 35.07.07).

The main aim of this meeting was to present the project to Mr Gjini and to secure his support and collaboration on implementing the project. Mr Gjini is the most important person in all areas of Stebleva commune and has been chairman of the commune for thirteen years.

2. Issues discussed

- Project presentation
- Possible collaboration on project implementation
- Identification of target groups (shepherds/farmers)
- Recent events in the commune related to attacks in livestock or domestic animals from large carnivores (especially wolfs)
- Future meetings and continuation of the project
- Financial terms

3. Conclusions

There was a full understanding and will from Mr Gjini to cooperate and to successfully implement the project. He offered himself as a field coordinator (not yet formal). He stressed that there was a real need for livestock guard dogs and that this was a good opportunity to help his community to reduce damages to livestock, especially sheep.

In the next meeting he will identify possible shepherds and proposal for the distribution of the dogs.

MINUTES OF MEETING 28-30 DECEMBER 2007, PEC, KOVOVO

| Date: | 28-30/12/07 |
|---------------|-------------|
| Location: | Pec, Kosovo |
| Reference no: | 35.07.07 |

| Name/Surname | Work/Position | Profession | Nationality | Contact/Address |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Olsi Qazimi | Rec Albania/Project | Agricultural Engineer | Albanian | olsiqazimi@yahoo.com |
| | Coordinator | | | |
| Syanhit Shkreli | ManiCard/Albania | Graphic Designer | Albanian | synishkrel@yahoo.com |
| Saud Kajtazi | Director of K.F.K | Farmer/Entrepreneur | Kosovo/Albanian | deltariilir2003@yahoo.com |
| Muhamet Nikqi | Vet/Clinic | Veterinarian | Kosovo/Albanian | |
| Aranit Nikqi | Lawyer/Studio Owner | Lawyer | Kosovo/Albanian | aranitnikqi@yahoo.com |
| Hasan Xhaferaj | Farmer/Dog Breeder | Farmer | Kosovo/Albanian | Strellce/Pej |
| Naim Taraku | Farmer/Dog Breeder | Farmer | Kosovo/Albanian | |
| Hamdi Hyska | Farmer/Dog Breeder | Farmer | Kosovo/Albanian | |
| Ahmet Elshani | Farmer/Dog Breeder | Farmer | Kosovo/Albanian | Pej |
| Isuf Muqolli | Farmer/Dog Breeder | Farmer | Kosovo/Albanian | Pej |
| Muse Muqolli | Farmer/Dog Breeder | Farmer | Kosovo/Albanian | Pej |
| Mahir Gashi | Farmer/Dog Breeder | Mechanic | Kosovo/Albanian | Pej |
| Pal Markaj | Farmer/Dog Breeder | Entrepeneur | Kosovo/Albanian | |
| Uzair Sait Smajli | Farmer/Dog Breeder | Farmer | Serbian/Kosovo | Sharr/Prizren |
| I Mushnikoves | | | | |

1. Basic information

In the frame of the project Shara Mountain Dog (hereinafter, Sh.M.D), a visit in Kosovo is organised, the aim of the visit are:

- a) To buy six puppies for the first project component and to transport them in Albania to then be distributed to Albanian shepherds.
- b) To create a bridge of collaboration with experts and colleagues from K.F.K
- c) To visit famers and dog breeders in order to gain more experience on dog breeding issues

2. Issues discussed and activities

- *a) Project presentation.* The project Sh.M.D was presented in a meeting with members of K.F.K on 28th December 2007. This was the first meeting ever between representatives of K.F.K and collaborators from Albania for dog breeding experience exchange.
- b) Dog's quality, documents, transport, customs. Six dogs were brought in Kosovo with the assistance of Mr Saud Kajtazi. Three dogs are equipped with ID and four generations pedigree. Special permission for the dogs to pass border control, which was provided by K.F.K and the lawyer.

- *c) Farm Visits.* In Kosovo we had the chance to visit 8 different farms and make contact with traditional dog breeders such as Isuf Muqolli (probably the best dog breeder in the Balkans) and Sait Mushnikova (nine generations dog breeder).
- *d) Future Cooperation.* In order to sustain and progress the work started with support from the Rufford Small Grant Foundation, we discussed the possibilities of fundraising and creating infrastructure for the continuation of future bilateral activities in the frame of Sh.M.D breeding in Albania.

3. Conclusions

- a) Six Sh.M.D are brought in Kosovo from the best farmers referenced by Saud Kajtazi (Director K.F.K). Three dogs (puppies) are transported to Albania and kept in quarantine in Tirana. Three further puppies will arrive in March.
- b) During 2008 we planned together to create the "Albanian Kennel Society" which will be the first legal institution ever created in Albania for dog breeding.
- c) A special edition dog magazine will be published in mid March.
- d) Sh.M.D breeding information was exchanged.







