

Sarajevo Chicken Project July 2005

We have been most encouraged by your support of the appeal for support for our needy brethren in Bosnia and their plan to raise chickens. Duncan and Cindy having spent some time down there with the project, we are now going to report to you in some detail about everything. We really feel this is a really worthwhile project, giving brethren a fishing rod rather than a fish, a path to self-sustaining support, and it may be feasible to run this project elsewhere.

1. THE BACKGROUND: PROBLEMS, NEEDS, SOLUTIONS

The brethren in Sarajevo itself drew our attention to the fact that the brethren in the mountains above Sarajevo are in a really desperate situation, but didn't want to ask for direct help but rather for assistance with breeding chickens. Our brother Mustafa is a coal miner, but he earns about 100 Bosnian Marks [= 50 Euros] per month for hard and dangerous work [i.e. US\$2 / day], which has already resulted in him having a number of breakages. The coal mine fire him every month or so and then re-hire him, so that they avoid responsibility for him. 100 Marks doesn't go very far. One day we were with our brother, he returned from work with his pay envelope- you can see in the bottom right corner it is written "100". But the electric bill came the same day- for 22 Marks. And they live in a broken down, bullet riddled two room cottage, abandoned by the former Serb owners who fled the area; all they use electricity for is lighting and cooking. The Winter bill, as they use electric heaters, would be much higher.



Photos:

Br Mustafa with his pay packet of 100 Marks; his electricity bill for 22 Marks

As and when the former owner returns to where they are effectively squatting [under the Dayton accords, all Bosnians have the right of return to property abandoned during the war], then he and his 3 month pregnant wife will have nowhere to live. They gather mushrooms and live very frugally, but they've not eaten meat for a long time. One evening we bought sausages and chicken and made a surprise barbeque for them, but it's evident that Mustafa's wife gets very little protein to eat- and she's 3 months pregnant.

2. THE CHICKEN RAISING PLAN

So thanks to the initiative of brethren in Australia, a document was produced explaining in detail how to raise chickens, from buying them as day old chicks, through an intensive program of feeding, until they can be sold or slaughtered at 45 days. It was explained how hygiene was essential, how to feed them, the requirements for warmth and lighting and other conditions. Our thanks go out to brethren Joel Pickering and Peter Finnan for their massive assistance here.

3. IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

We're proud of our brethren for conscientiously following all the guidelines. Br. Mustafa constructed a shed as stipulated, insulating the wood with cardboard and then plastic sheeting. He then ran some power cables to it, and installed the electric bulbs, only a few cm. above the heads of the chicks. The bulbs are on 24 hours, providing both light and heat to the chicks.



Photos:

Construction; lighting

We had to buy 'grader' feed for the chicks, which they eat for the first 20 days, and then a more advanced feed for the final 25 days.



Photos:

With the feed ; and the home made feeding drums

Under this regime, the chicks grow at an amazing rate. Mustafa and Zehra [his wife] made some feeding drums, but they still have to re-fill them every two hours. So Zehra is going down to the chickens every two hours, and cleaning out the place twice / day. This is a major thing for her to do being pregnant, and as the chicks are located 5-10 minutes walk up the mountain from their home. Zehra and Cindy got very close with each other in our time together, walking down to the chicks.



Photo:

Cindy and Zehra walking to the chickens

They are simply SO appreciative. They have very little to give by way of appreciation, and so they gave us a cup which had been in their family for generations and had been passed on to them. It was really very touching, to see how much they valued the effort made. The very fact they are making such round-the-clock effort with the chicks indicates too how much it all means to them and how seriously they are taking it all.

4. PROGRESS REPORT

At the present moment, the chicks have been growing for 15 days, and are now weighing around 100 grams. Only 3 chicks per 100 have died, which is apparently a very good ratio. Every two hours Zehra or Mustafa check for sick or dead chicks, to get them out before they contaminate the others- chicks are very prone to disease. Of course they are eagerly looking forward to day 45 when they can sell or kill the chickens- they even have the knife sharpened and ready!



Photos:

Br Mustafa and Zehra with one of the chickens at 15 days

5. FUTURE PROSPECTS

The crucial question will be how many more chicks die during the next month, as this will affect how much they get for the chicks in total. What they are hoping is that it will provide enough to buy more chicks as well as to give a reasonable profit.

This project has been a resounding success so far. There has been a very special blessing upon this project, and the gratitude of brother Mustafa and Zehra is deep and genuine. Even if all chicks die overnight, the spiritual impetus given to all involved has been wonderful. However it is also true that there is every reason to think that this project is set to achieve what we set out to- providing protein and food to those on a pathetic diet, providing them hard cash, effective employment for Br Mustafa's wife, a way of them being able to work and get cash and food as a result of that. So again, we give thanks to our Father, the giver of all, and to all of you who supported this project. We'll keep you updated, God willing.

With love from your brothers and sisters of CCM