

# RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

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**All Europe shall live!  
The rural people of Europe assert their rights**





1

# Activities of the Artisan Association ARTI CRAFT



The following are activities defined to implement in 2015, to continue in 2016:

- Official establishment of the Network;
- A show and exhibitions;
- Bazaars;
- New Year bazaars in Tirana, Prishtina, Skopje and Tetovo;
- Design of a catalogue with pictures from workshops and addresses of artisans from the region;
- Design of a website for the Network and other promotion material to describe positive practices that would allow for exchange of knowledge and experience among artisans and associations in the region.

In the period between July and December, Arti Craft organized a large number of events, bazaars and meetings, in Macedonia as well as in Monte Negro, Turkey, Kosovo and Albania, for the purpose of promotion of craftsmanship and conservation of tradition and unique handicrafts.

The idea to establish a Balkan Artisan Network was initiated on May 15, 2015 in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the World Day of Female Entrepreneurship, and it gave positive results in the form of numerous meetings and bazaars that took place in the period between August and December 2015 at different locations such as Monte Negro (Ulcinj), Turkey (Golchuk), Kosovo (Prishtina), Albania (Tirana and Gjirokastër) and in Macedonia (Skopje, Tetovo and Gostivar).

The cooperation was initiated by signing a Memorandum of Understand-

ing, learning about cultural, historical and tourist destinations, identifying the problems in the sector of arts and crafts, including the insufficient use of national programmes for development of crafts and traditional values.



The basis of this idea is to create an organized system of organizations competent for development of arts and crafts in order to overcome exist-





ing problems and create preconditions for multiannual cooperation in implementing various initiatives for development of the craftsmanship sector. Planned activities include fairs, bazars, exhibitions, fora, joint galleries in the states the Network members come from and transfer of positive practices and knowledge.

The capacity of the civil society and the degree of preparedness to deal with crucial issues for the survival and development of craftsmanship in the region will increase by official networking of non-governmental organizations, mutual cooperation in implementation of joint ideas, transfer of positive experience and practices, as well as creating mechanisms for development and promotion of arts and crafts.

Therefore, a group of enthusiasts joint forces to create an organized system for promotion and use of traditional and cultural values, by unifying artisans who live and work in this region.





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## CeProSARD team prepared the Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF)



**R**esettlement Policy Framework (RPF) is a World Bank document – guideline for population resettlement, land acquisition, relocation of kiosks, small businesses that follow the best international practices. The document is a framework that should consider the interests of all stakeholders and contribute to solving the challenges as a result of conflicting interests in order to revise the maximalist demands of either side to a level of reasonable demands.

Presentation and public debate of the document 'Resettlement Policy Framework' for the second phase of the Municipality Service Improvement Project - MSIP 2 was held in organization of the Ministry of Finance on October 8, 2015.

Despite the representative from World Bank, representatives from the institutions (Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, City of Skopje, Ministry of Finance); non-governmental sector (Union of Civic Associations, 'Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia' – 'RDN of RM') and business sector (Trajkovski & Partners – management consulting) participated at the presentation and public debate. At the public debate, the environmental consultant of the MSIP project, prepared a presentation of Framework for assessing the environmental impact for the second phase of the Municipality Service Improvement Project - MSIP 2.

<http://www.finance.gov.mk/mk/node/1056>

[http://www.finance.gov.mk/files/u5/Resettlement\\_policy\\_framework\\_WB\\_Disclosure.pdf](http://www.finance.gov.mk/files/u5/Resettlement_policy_framework_WB_Disclosure.pdf)







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## Activities of the Women's Association 'Cvet' – Krushevo

**T**he Women's Association 'Cvet' from Krushevo, member of the Rural Development Network, has continued to work on promoting Krushevo culture and tradition by preparing specialty dishes from this town for various events organized by the local self-government, as well as on the Ethno Fair which is taking place in the period between 1 December 2015 and 30 January 2016.

This year, 'Cvet' has again participated in the traditional marking of the religious holiday Virgin Mary, as a unique tradition in Macedonia, only to be found in Krushevo.





## Catalogue of Processed Food Products

**T**he Local and IT Development Foundation from Gevgelija in partnership with the Slozuvalka – Association on education of children and youth implemented the project 'Promotion of Local Capacities in a Catalogue of Processed Food Products'. The project was supported by the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia through the USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture Project, within the framework of the Project Mechanism of the Network.

Processing of agricultural products is one of the main economic drivers in the Gevgelija-Valandovo region. This region, composed of four municipalities – Gevgelija, Bogdanci, Dojran and Valandovo – has about 10 companies situated in its borders, which work on processing of fruits and vegetables. A Catalogue of Processed Food Products was designed within the framework of the project to promote 5 companies. The goal was to unite the local offer of processed and tinned agricultural products and to emphasize the quality and the demand of products originating from this region. The catalogue was printed in 700 copies and it will be distributed to all companies and other interested parties that participated in the project.







## 'ORGANIKA' Project

The Institute for Development of the Community (IRZ – association) from Tetovo, has worked on implementation of the 'Organika' Project in line with its programme activities.

The project was part of the activities of the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, for support of project initiatives of member organizations. It lasted for 2 months.

Project partner was the Female Farmers Associations 'Moja Farma' from Gostivar.

The goal of the project was to increase the interest of farmers in production of organic food, upgrading their knowledge and skills for better production of organic food through consultations, advice, information and education. The activities were aimed at improving their work to affect the family income, and to contribute to rural development.

Several project activities were planned and implemented within the framework of the 'Organika' Project:

1. Preparatory stage
2. Workshops with farmers
3. Design of a website
4. Conference



The conference was the final project event and it was held on August 10, 2015.

The following are the results of the conference:

- Participants were informed about experience from activities implemented within the 'Organika' Project;
- Participants acquired more knowledge in the field of organic production through panel discussions;
- Participants were presented the varieties of organic products by producers who exhibited at the conference;
- Contacts were made and directions

were proposed for further cooperation among farmers;

- The idea and the global trend of having organic food as prerequisite for rural development were promoted.

Encouraging farmers to associate and identifying the prospects and common interests will have a direct impact on strengthening farm businesses, transfer of knowledge and experience on production of healthy food. This will strengthen the capacities of farmers for further work and activities and will improve life and development of the community.

For more information, please visit [www.irz.org.mk](http://www.irz.org.mk)





## 6 Activities of Eco Logic

### Workshops at Brainobrain

In November, the Eco Logic team organized workshops at the offices of Brainobrain International Macedonia and Brainobrain Abacus Aerodrom. The target group at the workshops were children aged between 5 and 10.

In accordance with the mission of this educational institution to stimulate ingenuity in children, renewable and non-renewable energy at the workshops.

The workshops included an experiment to allow the little geniuses to use water energy as leverage.



### Education on Energy

The Eco Logic team as part of the project 'Education on the Significance of Energy, Methods of Production and Use through Theory and Practice' carried out workshops in the primary schools in the municipalities of Ilinden, Karposh and Centar. The workshops were successful and positive results were demonstrated by the participants, pupils from the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

This project carried out by Eco Logic is supported by the Swiss agency on development and cooperation (SDC). The project started in January 2015 and will continue until March 2016.





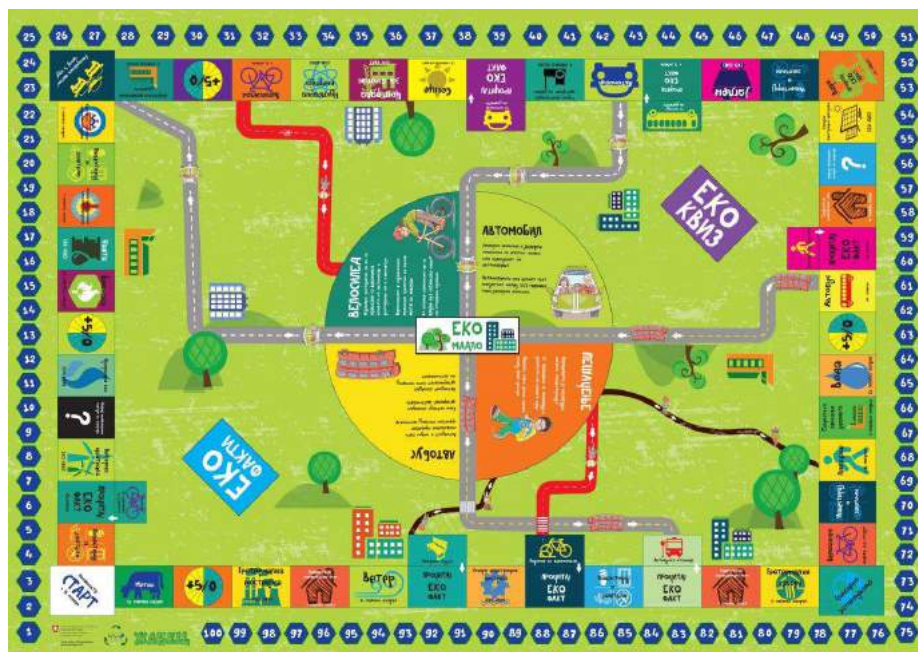


## Eco-Neighbourhood

In the last quarter of the year, simultaneously with other activities, the Eco Logic team was working to develop the first social game on energy efficiency in Macedonia – ‘Eco-Neighbourhood’. The goal is to present the significance of application of practices on energy efficiency and environmental protection in a creative and fun way.

Players over 8 years old will be able to learn and to become more aware about the significance of environmental protection from several aspects through interactivity, quiz questions and theoretic application of energy efficiency practices. The concept and the layout of the game are similar to already known social games of this kind, for the sole reason of being easily acceptable.

The ‘Eco-Neighbourhood’ game is a result of the current project of Eco Logic – Education on the Significance of Energy, Production Method and Use through Theory and Practice’.



## High quality life and sustainability – Workshops in ‘Nikola Karev’ State Secondary School

Eco Logic held two information workshops in the Skopje secondary school ‘Nikola Karev’, in the framework of the project ‘High-quality Life and Sustainability’, supported by the City of Skopje.

The goal of the workshops was to raise the awareness of secondary school students regarding sustainability and environmental protection. The first workshop was on the significance and the influence a healthy diet has on the human organism. The second workshop was about bicycles and the opportunity for them to become main transportation means for secondary school students.





## Panel discussion on partnerships in traffic

**E**co Logic organized a panel discussion on safety in traffic on 17 September, 2015. Participants at the discussion were representatives of the municipalities of Gjorche Petrov and Centar, of the public enterprise of the Municipality of Centar, members of the informal group NaTochak (on bike), traffic police and the National Council of Road and Traffic Safety.

Past statistical data were presented at the discussion about the traffic situation and the alarming number of accidents that happen on daily basis. The traffic inspector at the Skopje Department of Internal Affairs stressed the daily concerning situation and the efforts made to deal with it.

Most of the discussion was about advantages and disadvantages, as well



as ways to increase the number of bikers and using bikes as transportation means. International examples were presented, as well as positive examples from our country, including discussions about future plans on development of bike transport in the city.

## 'SMILE' Project



**T**he S.M.I.L.E. (Soft Mobility Integrated Learning in English) project is a partnership among organizations from Italy, Macedonia, Belgium, Lithuania and Greece, and it is implemented through the ERASMUS+ Programme.

Project goals:

Promote use of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) by adopting innovative teaching approaches and informal educational practices on grounds of creativity and fun, as effective learning tools.

Support problem based learning, by developing teaching methods in order to promote active citizens and raise the awareness of pupils on issues related to sustainable mobility in urban areas.

Increase the level of digital interaction in the learning process, by supporting teachers and informal educators in acquiring and improving use of ICT for learning activities.

Promote school networks at European level and strengthen the link between schools and civil society organizations, by integrating informal educational practices in the curricula and encouraging cooperation between teachers and informal educators.

Partner organizations:

- PRO4GEO, Italy;
- RE-BIKE, Italy;
- EUROGEO, Belgium;
- ZALI, Lithuania;
- PAEPSM, Greece;
- ECO LOGIC, Macedonia.

The first working meeting within this project was held in Vilnius, Lithuania.







## Share Personal Experience – Competition

The Eco Logic team organized a competition – Share Personal Experience – within the project on 'High Quality Life and Sustainability'.

All third and fourth grade secondary school students from Skopje were entitled to participate at this competition. The goal was to share personal experience related to one of the topics – including environment, transport, diet and housing.

For this purpose a blog was designed available at <https://mladizaodrzivost.wordpress.com/>.



## Bike Rodeo – Competition

As part of the activities for the European Mobility Week, the Eco Logic team organized an educational and competitive event – Bike Rodeo – supported by the Triathlon Federation of Macedonia and sponsored by Outdoor Mk, EU InfoCentre, Vitalia, Nesquik and Nescafe. Teams were mixed (male and female) pupils aged between 10 and 14. The rodeo lasted for 90 minutes and pupils



successfully finished the challenge consisting of nine bike exercises, demonstrating a great team and competitive spirit, and earned the gifts prepared by the sponsors.





## Activities of Art Point – Gumno

### 1. 9<sup>th</sup> Traditional Event ‘CELEBRATING THE PIREJ’

Traditionally on August 28, Art Point Gumno organized the multimedia event ‘CELEBRATING THE PIREJ’ in cooperation with ‘ENOH’ production house. The ninth celebration of the bard of Macedonian literature, Petre M. Andreevski began at his grave in his birth village of Sloeshnica with an oration delivered by Professor Elizabeta Sheleva, PhD.

‘...The love of Petre M. Andreevski of his birth land and the national cultural tradition is naturally condensed, in the shape of primeval, honest emotion, worthy of the greatest and highest creative challenges. This loyalty and love towards the fatherland is not a fruit of shameless flirtation, a rhetoric pose, or conforming wooing to the current ‘authorities’ in power.

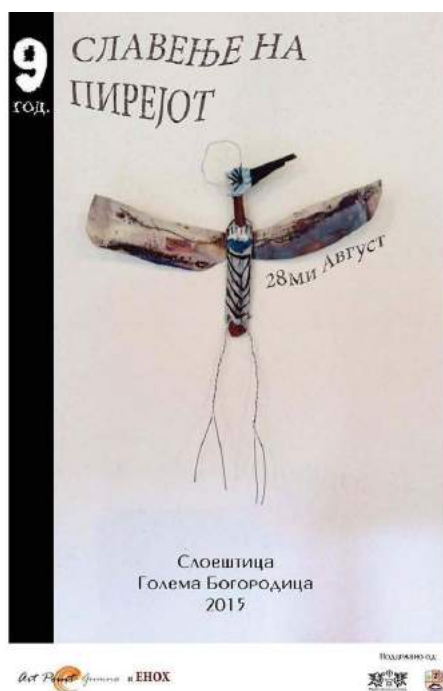
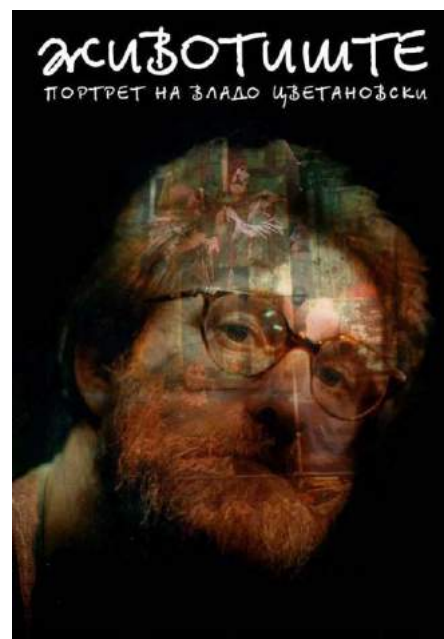
In this sense, Petre remains tirelessly sharp and critical, as is every true, unbribable author, who has virtuously kept to his personal integrity and honour – knowing that as a ‘man of the word’ – it was all he had, and could lose easily, if he would cheat upon his personal strict artistic principles and his personal incorruptibility’ – Sheleva wrote.

The programme continued at the artistic gumno, where an exhibition was opened of works created at the 2015 international art residency of Art Point Gumno, as well as of portraits – photos of artists – by the Macedonian photographer Sasho N. Alushevski.

Results of the project ‘Greet the Birds of Ilinska and Plakenska Mountains’, implemented by the organisers in cooperation with the Macedonian environmental society and Euronatur from Germany were promoted at the gumno.

A special ‘touch’ in the programme was the original scene performance ‘Sloechki tales told by Grandpa Ilija Kochovski’, carried out by a young actors threesome (Toni Denkovski, Damjan Cvetanovski and Sergej Dimovski, all originating from the Village of Sloeshnica), directed by Andrej Cvetanovski. Cvetanovski is also the author of the documentary ‘A Humongous Life’ (dedicated to his father, too early deceased professor and director Vlado Cvetanovski) which was premiered at the White River Bridge scene.

This event was partially supported by the Macedonian Culture Ministry and the Demir Hisar Mayor, Mr Ljupcho Blazevski.







## 2. Successful finish of the project 'Greed the Birds of ILINSKA- Plakenska Mountain!'



**A**rt Point – Gumno officially finished activities related to the project 'Greet the Birds of Ilinska-Plakenska Mountain!' on September 30. This project was supported by the Macedonian Environmental Society – MED and Euronatur from Germany. Thanks to opinion polls carried out in the region of the Municipality of Demir Hisar in the period April-July 2015, some of the local residents identified almost 90 species of birds. These results were compared to results obtained by the members of the ornithology section at the Research Society of Students Biologists of Macedonia in their first detailed research of Ilinska-Plakenska Mountain in 2008 (in other existing literature no previous data could be found!). It turned out that in this region almost 120 bird species come either to nest or for temporary stay in the time of their migrations. This is more than 1/3 of the total

of 332 species of the ornithofauna registered in Macedonia – sufficient enough to stimulate new more detailed research by biologists.

Within the framework of this project, research was made for the first time at the site Jaushinci, located in the vicinity of the villages of Belche and Graishite (total 1.56 hectares, maximal depth 3 m). River sand was harvested from this site 30 years ago. Abandoned pits had filled with water and rich vegetation started appearing, including various animals. Nowadays, there are more than 40 species of birds living and hunting in the willow tree holes, on the alder branches or by the banks of the river and the reeds – data obtained in the opinion polls by local citizens or by direct monitoring. Among others, one may see white and grey heron, wild duck, the small shag, the great crested

grebe, the stork, the great wagtail and the red-backed shrike. Several fish species live in the ponds (chub, pike, carp and others), but also water snakes, turtles, otters and insects such as blue and green dragonflies, mosquitos and other insects.

These puddles are a real example of a newly established ecosystem with its rich flora and fauna, yet to be subject of biological research.

Local residents provided interesting information about the birds, including folk legends and traditions related to them. Some of these pearls of tradition were shared with pupils and students in the schools of Demir Hisar Municipality and some were integrated in the promotion materials.

10 young volunteers were recruited – some participated in the winter census of birds in Macedonia and attended training on project proposal writing.



### 3. Start of the 3rd stage of the project 'Linking People with Nature – Strengthening and Networking of Civil Associations in Macedonia'.

Following the successful implementation of the second stage of this project, Art Point – Gumno as a local partner will continue cooperation with the Macedonian Environmental Society from Skopje, Plantlife, an NGO from the UK and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The inception workshop held in Skopje on 25 and 26 November announced the

continuation into the third stage of the project 'Linking People with Nature – Strengthening and Networking of Civil Associations in Macedonia'. It is an ambitious initiative to protect wild plants in countries in South-eastern Europe, and it is focused on the Mediterranean region. By combining experience from organisations such as Plantlife and IUCN, 11 organisations from 11 countries in South-eastern Europe will try to transfer knowledge and experience

at national level related to significant species of plants and their habitats.

In Macedonia the project will last for 18 months and will include activities in the regions of Dojran, Bogdanci, Prespa and Ilinska Mountain (Demir Hisar).

In addition to Art Point Gumno, a local partner in the third stage of the project will be GZ 'Polimat' from Bogdanci, a member of the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia.

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## Days of Macedonian Beekeeping



The Beekeepers Association 'Nektar' from Bitola organized the traditional event 'Days of Macedonian Beekeeping' for the eighteenth time between 15 and 18 October 2015 at Shirok Sokak in Bitola. 30 exhibitors from the country

participated at the event. Visitors had an opportunity to personally meet producers and have a discussion, as well as to taste or purchase all sorts of bee products, and also to exchange contacts for further cooperation.

At this event, the Beekeepers Association 'Nektar' organized a competition for 'beekeeping' themed art and literature works by primary school pupils. Expert jury selected several works (out of more than 300 that arrived) and the authors were awarded special awards, certificates and acknowledgments.







## Regional Consultation on Beekeeping

**T**he 'Via Ignatia' Regional Union of Beekeepers Associations from Bitola is an umbrella organization of all beekeepers associations from the southwestern region of Macedonia, including beekeepers associations from eight towns in this region.

This Union strives to fully implement its programme goals for the interest of its members.

In this context, the Union organized a traditional October regional consultation – expert presentation (theory and practice) in close cooperation with 'Nektar' Beekeepers Association from Bitola. The consultation was visited by over 100 beekeepers from all over the region, a fact that proved again the need and the use of continuous upgrading and education both for beginners as well as for experienced beekeepers.

New experience, new method implementation, as well as new technologies and methods of treatment with organic preparations are an unavoidable factor in the process of correct and high quality beekeeping, as well as in improving and increasing honey production and other bee products.





## Honey Fair in Struga

On August 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Square of Revolution in Struga, the association of bee keepers 'Matica' with the support of the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia and the Municipality of Struga, organized the first Honey Fair. The general goal of the organizers was to promote apiculture products and contribute to this economic sector's development in the region. At the fair many bee keepers from Skopje, Shtip, Radovich, Kochani, Bitola, Prilep, Ohrid, Debar and Struga presented their products.

A representative of the Municipality of Struga, the president of the association of bee keepers 'Matica', Shefit Shemshedini and the president of the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, Petar Gjorgievski, spoke to the audience.

The honey production is a significant sector in the agricultural production in general, because it offers a wide range of products. Besides the honey, also the wax, the pollen and the royal jelly are very important...Mixing them with honey gives products which can contribute to the overall income of the bee keepers. The honey has great significance in the diet, but also in the pharmacology and cosmetic industry, said Petar Gjorgievski.

The organizers tend to make this manifestation traditional.







## International Rural Women Day

**T**raditionally, again this year, the Federation of Farmers of Republic of Macedonia in cooperation with the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, celebrated October 15<sup>th</sup> – the International Rural Women's Day. The event was held in village of Josifovo, near Valandovo and gathered around 150 women from rural areas around the country. Besides the perfectly made traditional handcrafts, the skilled women brought delicious food traditionally prepared and typical for their home regions.



The President of Managing Board of RDN, Vesela Lambevaska-Domazetova and the President of Federation of Farmers, Nikola Stamenov, addressed the audience and emphasized the important role of women in the agriculture and rural development and gave acknowledgement to their hard work and contribution in preserving the traditional values and customs. After the performance of the Folk Group 'Cyril and Methodius' from village of Ilovica, 6 honorable mentions were awarded to women members of RDN and Federation of Farmers, for their special contribution and active participation in achieving the organization's objectives and organizational development.





## Lifelong learning about Rural Development

**W**ithin the framework of the event Days of Lifelong Learning in the Republic of Macedonia, the Union on Development of Adult Education in Macedonia ([www.srov.mk](http://www.srov.mk)), supported by DVV International Germany, organized a workshop on 'Lifelong Learning about Rural Development' in Feni Hotel, Kavadarci, between 23 and 25 November 2015.

The main goal of the workshop was to encourage discussion and to develop recommendations on further development of rural areas, taking into account past achievements, including possibilities to apply informal education methods.

The Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia as a particularly significant actor in rural development in the country was called to share its experience and past practice before the attendees, members of various organizations.







## The First LEADER Fest Held in Delchevo

**F**rom July 2<sup>nd</sup> until July 4<sup>th</sup>, in Delchevo, a three-day 'LEADER Fest 2015' was organized by the Regional Center for Advocacy in Delchevo, in cooperation with the association Ambrosia, both members of the Rural Development Network. The attendants had the opportunity to gain knowledge and share experiences regarding LEADER, as an innovative approach within EU rural development policy. The LEADER approach stimulates equality and unity of all stakeholders in the processes of policy building, decision making and implementation of activities related to rural development. It is a tool for encouraging entities living in rural areas to investigate new ways for joint efforts for improving their basic livelihoods.

LEADER Fest was enriched with cultural and artistic program, as well as field visits of good practices and projects realized in the region. The Festival of rural areas was visited by many associations, municipalities, local institutions, interested inhabitants of Pelagonija, Strumica and Bregalnica region, and representatives of one Czech foundation and two Local Action Groups (LAGs) from Czech Republic.

The event helped to promote the work of the subjects engaged in rural development and local economy and stimulated better networking and multi-sectorial cooperation. As a result, many opportunities for cooperation towards capacity building and joint projects implementation with the Czech LAGs emerged.

Following the example of LEADER festivals organized around EU countries, the Regional Center for Advocacy and



the association Ambrosia, decided to continue organizing this event in the micro region Pijanec - Malesh, every year in a different municipality and with new interesting contents.

The Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, as a leading actor in the process of affirmation and capacity building within LEADER approach in Macedonia, supported this initiative through USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture Project.





## Promoting the Attractiveness of Rural Areas



**P**romotion of the Potentials for Development of Rural Tourism - RURAL STRUGA' is a project initiative implemented by Creative Center 'Rurbankult' in cooperation with the association for equal opportunities 'Ezerka'. Their main objective was to support the promotion and development of rural tourism in Struga region, through developing video materials where the natural resources and beauties, the tradition and existing accommodation capacities in 5 villages near Struga (Vevchani v., Vishni v., Gorna Belica v., Radozda v. and Jablanica v.) were presented. The promotional event held on September 19<sup>th</sup> in Struga, was attended by a huge number of foreign tourists which confirms their interest for this kind of tourism and the attractions of the villages around Struga.

The president of the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, Petar Gjorgievski, considers that there are locations in this region which are unfamiliar, especially for tourists visiting during summer period, but also for those visiting throughout the whole year.

- The video material shows all natural beauties of these locations and attracts lovers of nature, extreme sports and mountain climbers, said Mr. Gjorgievski.

He expressed hope that this event will raise interest not just among tourists but also among local self-governments to work on improvement of infrastructure and accessibility and to expand the offer.



Zore Klenkoska from the association 'Rurbankult' announced other projects as well related to promotion of the natural resources in Struga region.

Another similar initiative was implemented by the association 'The Voice of the Village' and Center for Rural Development 'Bujrum'. They developed a documentary about Bislim Gorge named 'Come! See! Enjoy! And talk about the beauties of Bislim Gorge' which was promoted on September 9<sup>th</sup> in Kumanovo.

- This project is extremely important especially for the Kumanovo region, because of its potential for development of the alternative tourism. The area is relatively unfamiliar in Macedonia, particularly for those coming outside Kumanovo region, so this is a great opportunity to promote it for this type of tourism and attract potential investors in developing Bislim Gorge, said the president of the Rural Development Network, Petar Gjorgievski.





– The project should draw attention of donors in the region between the village of Pcinja and the village of Orashac where Bislim Gorge spreads. Previously, there were studies about the gorge prepared by the Center for Development of the Southeast Region which indicate that the location can be utilized for economic development, said Elizabeta Cvetkovska from the association 'The Voice of the Village'.

Bislim Gorge is a natural phenomenon, located downstream Pcinja River. It is unique because of the few caves, endemic species of plants and animals, which offer an opportunity for utilizing the potentials in development of this canyon spread on 7 kilometers territory.

The Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia (RDN of the RM) through USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture Project supported project initiatives implemented by RDN members that aimed to promote rural areas and contribute to the development of the rural tourism in the country.





## Building Capacities for Preparing Project Application

**O**n December 2<sup>nd</sup> the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia organized training for its member organizations, aiming to build their capacities and improve their skills for preparing quality project applications within the Project Mechanism as a tool for Network's project working improvement. Almost 40 representatives of RDN member organizations attended the training and had an opportunity to establish partnerships for further mutual cooperation and joint preparation and implementation of project initiatives.

So far, within the Project Mechanism, 2 calls for project proposals were announced and a total of 11 project initiatives of RDN members were supported.







## Reducing climate change negative effects on vegetables

**O**n July 8th, in the village of Dobrejci, near Strumica, USAID's Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture (ACCA) project demonstrated several agricultural climate change adaptive measures tested on vegetable farm with tomato crops. By bringing farmers and NEA (National Extension Agency) advisors at one of the project's trial plots, USAID ACCA project strived to raise the awareness of the Macedonian agricultural sector about the adverse effects of climate change and share adaptive practices which would help farmers to cope with problems that climate change is causing on vegetables.

The project team and prof. Zoran Dimov PhD, project technical expert on cover crops/mulching, addressed farmers' concerns and explained strategies for adapting the agricultural production to climate change such as: utilization of UV shading nets, application of benevolent fungus *Trichoderma Harzianum* and mulch material such as synthetic foils.

'By utilization of the new technologies and techniques such as synthetic foils, UV protection nets and application of *Trichoderma Harzianum* fungus, the yields have been increased by several times, for about 30 to 40%' - said Tome Timov to the media.

USAID Adaptation to Climate Change



in Agriculture project, implemented by the Rural Development Network, was launched in April 2012. The aim of the project is to help farmers maintain their income levels by adapting their production practices to the changing



environment. Project efforts are focused on the Mediterranean zone, including the Vardar region and parts of Strumica and Gevgelija -- agriculturally rich areas that are most affected by climate change.



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## Reducing climate change negative effects on fruits



**O**n August 18<sup>th</sup>, in the village of Mlado Nagorichane near Kumanovo, the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia demonstrated the results of a trial plot that is part of the USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture project. By bringing stakeholders to a pear orchard where several agricultural climate change adaptive measures were tested, the project is working to raise awareness in the Macedonian agricultural sector about the negative effects of climate change. The implemented adaptive practices and the results achieved at the orchard can help provide farmers and NEA (National Extension Agency) advisors with knowledge necessary to resolve problems that climate change creates for fruit.

The project team members including Professor Marjan Kiprijanovski PhD, project technical expert for orchards, and Professor Vjekoslav Tanaskovic PhD, project technical expert for water conservation and nutrition, addressed farmers' concerns and explained agricultural strategies for climate change adaptation such as: utilization of UV shading nets, mulching, application of cover crops, application of measures for protecting fruits against sun damage and deployment of a detailed program for irrigation and fertirrigation.







## Reducing Climate Change Effects in Viticulture



**O**n August 11 in the region of Negotino, the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, through the USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture Project, demonstrated several farming measures for adaptation of viticulture to climate change; the measures were tested in the previous 3 years on table grapes. The USAID project gathered farmers and NEA advisors at a trial grapevine plantation owned by Vaska Mojsovska from Negotino. Presenting the results and advantages of adaptive measures, the USAID project team is striving to raise the awareness of the Macedonian ag-

ricultural sector about the harmful effects of climate change and to help deal with problems in viticulture caused by climate change.

The project team and Professor Klime Beleski, PhD, addressed the concerns of farmers and explained some strategies to adapt agricultural production to climate change. Some strategies include use of UV protective nets, application of calcium carbonate and T system of pruning, used for protection of the leaves and fruits from sunburn. The process of applying calcium carbonate on vines was demonstrated in front of the audience.





## Reducing climate change negative influence on soil loss



**O**n September 17, at the Agricultural Institute located in the Municipality of Butel, Skopje, the US-AID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture Project, implemented by the Rural Development Network of RM, presented the results obtained from the trial plot established in the autumn of 2012. The goal of this presentation was to raise the awareness of farmers and NEA advisors (National Extension Agency) about the negative impact climate change has regarding soil loss and to teach them how to reduce these negative effects by improving soil structure, enhancing soil organic matter and soil moisture conservation.

The project team in cooperation with Professor Dushko Mukaetov, PhD, from the Agricultural Institute, addressed problems related to soil loss and presented measures to deal with erosion in agriculture: contour and downslope cultivation (deep tillage) on soil and cover crops utilization which prevents soil loss and increase the level of organic matter.







## Presentation on the baseline measurements in livestock

**O**n December 3<sup>rd</sup> in Bitola and December 10<sup>th</sup> in Strumica, the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia presented the baseline data of heat stress effect on daily milk yield in cows, taken through the USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture project.

Prof. Metodija Trajcev PhD from the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food, presented the baseline measurements obtained from the monitoring in 3 small dairy demonstration farms and 1 control farm, taken during summer months from June to September 2015. The presentations were attended by more than 100 representatives of National Extension Agency – NEA and dairy breeders. Through sharing project results and achievements with NEA advisors, the USAID project strives to raise the awareness of the Macedonian agricultural sector about the negative influence of climate change and help livestock breeders to deal with problems caused by climate change.





## Buffer Zones as a Measure for Soil Loss Reduction

**O**n December 15<sup>th</sup>, near Tikvesh Lake, the USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture project implemented by the Rural Development Network of the RM set up buffer zone of trees to reduce soil erosion. Around 30 students from the agricultural high school 'Gjorce Petrov' in Kavadarci, participated in planting fifty cypresses which will be a buffer zone between a vineyard and the lake. Through this field activity the USAID project strives to raise the awareness of young stakeholders in the agricultural sector about climate change negative influence to field erosion and teach them how to reduce soil loss in vineyards established at downslope terrain by setting up vegetation.

This is one of the measures promoted by the project to tackle soil erosion. The buffer zones reduce surface runoff, filter the sediment located in the drain water, and thus retain chemicals found in the sediment. They can retain more than 70% of sediment and over 50% of dissolved solids in water that runs off on inclined terrain.







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## USAID adaptation to climate change in agriculture project helps farmers reduce damages of climate change



**O**n December 21, USAID's Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture project presented a comprehensive report on the findings from three years of testing various effective yet affordable steps farmers can take to reduce their vulnerability to the negative effects of climate change. The project worked with 17 different farmers to determine which adaptive measures were most effective. The report will be made available to the wider farming community, National Extension Agency, Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Water Economy, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, and other educational and scientific institutions.

In his remarks, USAID Mission Director, noted that "Though it is an extraordinary achievement, the global climate change agreement signed in Paris earlier this month by representatives from 195 nations is just the first step

in a long journey to get the planet back on track. Even as we all pledge to cut greenhouse gas emissions dramatically, scientists say we will be dealing with these negative effects for a very long time. Becoming more resilient to them remains a top priority.'

The Minister of Agriculture and the USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture project's Chief of Party also made remarks before the presentations delivered by the professors from the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food and the Agricultural Institute.

According to the analyses provided in USAID's recent study on Climate Change Adaptation in the Agricultural Sector, Macedonia can expect extreme temperature variations, less rainfall overall but more frequent short intensive rain that leads to flooding and soil erosion, intensified solar radiation, and an increased demand for water

due to the heat. Because roughly half of Macedonia's rural population is economically dependent on agricultural production, the need for prompt action and practical adaptive methods is pressing.

Launched in April 2012, USAID's Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture project, implemented by the Rural Development Network, is helping farmers maintain their income levels by mitigating the major impediments to optimize fruit and vegetable yields caused by the changing environment. Project efforts are focused on the Mediterranean zone, including the Vardar region and parts of Strumica and Gevgelija – the agriculturally rich areas that are most heavily impacted by climate change.





## Celebrating the Day of the Local Action Group Belasica-Ograzden



**D**uring the last year the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia has implemented piloting LEADER approach activities in the Southeast Planning Region. LEADER approach, as one of the IPARD measures, promotes cooperation between the public, civil and business sector and encourages them to investigate new ways for joint efforts for improving their basic livelihoods. Hence, LEADER contributes to improving the quality of life in rural areas, both for the farming families and for the wider rural population.

Throughout 2014 year, RDN of RM has been supporting the stakeholders of 4 Southeast region municipalities – Strumica, Vasilevo, Bosilovo and Novo Selo, to develop their capacities for participatory planning and decision-making as foundation of LEADER methodology. The group composed of representatives of the public, civil and business sector has undergone a process of strategic planning followed with definition of mission and vision, strategic goals, priorities and defining the territory of the future Local Action Group (LAG)

Belasica – Ograzden. The activities implemented in this region enabled simulation of the entire process of rural development projects' implementation and provided a tangible, practical experience to future LAG constituents.

Within these activities, three pilot projects were realized: 'Digital tourist map of the Belasica-Ograzden territory', 'Creation of visual identity of the Belasica-Ograzden LAG' which included a website, logo, posters and leaflets and

'The LAG day event'. The Digital tourist map of the LAG Belasica – Ograzden enabled preview of this territory's tourist attractions and landmarks. This map unlike classical maps, contains many layers, has thematic division and information in Macedonian and English about natural, cultural, sacral and gastronomic resources of the whole LAG Belasica - Ograzden territory, as well as information about local tourism businesses such as restaurants, hotels, motels, vehicles, tourist agencies, tourist info centers and other similar services related to the rural tourism development.

The promotional event of the LAG Belasica-Ograzden organized on September 28<sup>th</sup> 2015, at the village of Mokri-no, was attended by nearly a hundred people from the region, including representatives of the four municipalities, the Center for Development of the Southeast Planning Region, NGOs, business sector, educational sector as well as the mayors of Vasilevo and Novo Selo. The project activities stimulate traditional food production, preservation of traditional dances, making traditional folk costumes and hand-crafts which are expected to contribute







to a wider promotion of the region's resources and opportunities, and to help rural tourism and encourage and stimulate economic development in the region.

The Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia within the USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture project's component for raising public awareness and strengthening Civil Society Organizations' capacity worked intensely on the process of building capacities of the NGO sector. This sector is an integral part of LEADER methodology which provides participatory approach and inclusion of diverse rural stakeholders in the decision making process for issues with relevance to their local community. Hence RDN recognized the necessity for introducing the LEADER approach methodology to different rural stakeholders in rural areas.



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## Climate Change, Depends on Us!

**T**oday, in Bogovinje, through a lot of fun and games, the children from six municipal schools, learned about negative influence of climate change and how to mitigate adverse effects in local communities. The event was organized within the campaign 'Climate change, it depends on us.' which is carried out by USAID Municipal Climate change Strategies Project.

The Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, as an implementer of the USAID Adaptation

to Climate Change in Agriculture Project, visited this event and shared T-shirts and brochures explaining different measures for adapting to climate change in the agricultural production.







## LEADER/CLLD Conference in Milan

On September 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> in Milan, Italy, the president of the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia (RDN of the RM), Mr. Petar Gjorgievski together with representatives of the other Balkan Rural Development Network (BRDN) members, participated at LEADER/CLLD Conference on *'Strengthening local development through cooperation'*.

The conference was organized by the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) Contact Point and DG AGRI in relation to the Expo Milano 2015. The overall objective of the event was to **improve LEADER/CLLD implementation**, with specific focus on strengthening National Rural Network (NRN) capacity to provide support and guidance to LEADER/CLLD stakeholders and to boost transnational and inter-territorial cooperation.



Petar Gjorgievski presented the work of BRDN as a regional platform of NGO-based rural development networks of Western Balkan. He explained the Network's goals, priority areas of cooperation and the general aim referring to strengthening civil society and promoting multi-national exchanges in rural development, particularly between EU Member States and accession countries. The national rural development networks from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo, as BRDN members, introduced the attendees to their activities and achievements on national as well as on regional level. BRDN platform is an added value structure to the Western Balkan networks in working more closely and articulating the mutual interests, through joint planning of projects in fulfilling the needs of the rural population.





The LEADER/CLLD Conference aimed to promote peer learning between LEADER/CLLD stakeholders on improving delivery and harmonizing rules for cooperation projects; to highlight the applicability of local development methodologies in different rural areas within and outside Europe and to offer opportunities to strengthen cooperation between local partnerships within the EU and with neighboring countries and globally.



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## All Europe shall live!

## The rural people of Europe assert their rights

**A**t the second European Rural Parliament organized from November 4th until November 6th in Schärding, Austria, gathered 240 people representing rural communities from 40 European countries, among which the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, and approved an ambitious European Rural Manifesto. It called for full recognition of the right of rural communities to a quality of life and standard of living equal to that of urban populations, and to full participation in political processes.

The Manifesto, which is advocating action on 30 key issues, resulted from national campaigns in the 40 coun-





tries, involving many thousands of rural people.

They called for a refreshed and equitable partnership between people and governments. They recognized that rural people have a responsibility to act towards their own well-being, but demanded that governments at all levels, including the European institutions, work to make this crucial partnership effective.

The European Rural Parliament called on the European Union to mount a major review of the condition of rural areas within the EU. The conclusions from this review should be reflected in enhanced focus upon rural areas within all relevant EU programmes and funds. The European Rural Parliament campaign will continue over the next two years with a view to influencing the preparation of policies for the period beyond 2020.

The participants in the European Rural Parliament were acutely conscious that the town of Schärding, in which the gathering was held, is receiving 2000 refugees a day on their way across the border between Austria and Germany. For many rural areas this offers an opportunity to integrate refugees and other newcomers, given the necessary job creation, investment in housing, services and infrastructure. The European Rural Parliament called for a warm-hearted response, based on solidarity between peoples.

