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### National Rural Parliament as a voice of rural citizens

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### Implementing organisations







# Civil Society will take active part in rural development policy making

**R**epresentatives from more than 40 civil society organizations from western and eastern Macedonia, all covering different topics related to rural development, took active part in the rural development capacity building, policy analysis and policymaking processes, undertaken within the framework of the "National Rural Parliament as a voice of rural citizens" project. In order to achieve this objective three cycles of training in Ohrid and Pehčevo were implemented under the project, in the February-June period of 2018.

The first of the series of three two-day training sessions was held in Ohrid, from 31 January to 2 of February, aimed at the organizations based in the west of the country and the second (7-9 February) in Pehčevo for the civil organizations from the east of the country. The training provided the participants an opportunity to attain knowledge about rural development policies at national and EU levels and learn skills how to read, interpret and elaborate such policies.

The second series of training covering the topic "Research-based advocacy," were also held in Ohrid (9-11 May) and Pehčevo (16-18 May). This training covered different methodologies for implementing research (studies) which will be in the interest of rural civil society organizations, methodology for processing and analyzing the collected data from surveys, as well as how to correctly use the results in the process of advocating for the interests of the rural population with local/national authorities.







The third and the last in the series of training in this cycle, relating to the “Achievement of sustainable dialogue between the rural civil organizations and local/national authorities in the area of rural development” were held in Pehčevo (6-8 June) and Ohrid (26-28 June). This provided the representatives of civil organizations and other stakeholders/decision makers, ways how to establish partnerships, how to implement networking activities and how to undertake lobbying and advocacy activities.

“Without having a united and strong civil sector we cannot expect to have developed communities, since the civil society sector is the leading force for mobilizing resources in the rural communities – both human and natural.” – said the President of the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, Petar Gjorgiveski, an organization which unites more than 83 civil organizations from throughout Macedonia. He also added that more work will be done in order to increase the participation of the local public in the process of drafting different strategies and programs because that is the single most sustainable way to introduce functional rural development measures.



Following such a process for building the capacities in the civil sector, the National Rural Parliament as a voice of rural citizens strives to introduce a participatory approach in the process of rural development policymaking and to make partnerships between the civil and the governmental sectors for joint decision making for improving the life in the rural communities.



# Selected Projects for the Support of the Small Grant Program within the framework of the project "National Rural Parliament as a voice of rural citizens"

**U**nder the sub-granting scheme for provision of financial assistance within the framework of the National Rural Parliament as a voice of rural citizens, a call for support for projects implemented by civil society organizations active in the rural communities was announced on 15 March 2018. The objective of such sub-granting scheme is to strengthen the cooperation between different civil society organizations and improve the dialogue the conduct with their stakeholders, such as the local governments and the private sector involved in the rural development of Macedonia.

All interested organizations received information meetings in order to fully inform them regarding the application criteria and conditions related to this call. Civil society organizations had an opportunity to take part in a number of information meetings held during the following dates:

- 21 March at 11, Hotel KAPRI, Bitola
- 23 March at 11 GRACIJA Restaurant, Kumanovo
- 26 March at 11 PRINCE Restaurant, Tetovo
- 28 March at 11 ESPERANTO Hotel, Strumica.

The call to participate in the Program for Small Grants published



within the framework of the National Rural Parliament as a voice of rural citizens ended on 15 April 2018. A total of 44 applications were duly received thus far with the involvement of some 88 civil

society organizations working the area of rural development.

After completing the administrative and qualitative assessment of the project applications, the Evaluation Team selected the 10 top





ranked projects which received funding from the Small Grant Program. The activities foreseen under these project initiatives will be implemented no later than January

2019. For the implementation of the 10 selected project initiatives some 3,684,000 MKD were set aside from the Budget of the National Rural Parliament Project – A voice of the rural population.

On May 14 at the premises of the EU Info Centre in Skopje 10 grant agreements were signed with the selected applicants. The applicants already commenced some of their planned activities.

No.	Applicant	Partner	Title as in application
1	Rural Coalition of Kumanovo	Association for the development, education and environmental ethics POLIMAT 13	Rural Municipalities and their inhabitants to jointly build the confidence and their livelihood in their local communities
2	NGO EKOVIDA	Association for the Production of Organic Food BIOVITA – Kavadarci	Be Fair to Nature
3	Association for the enhancement and development of adult education "Network for life-long learning Tetovo"	Association for the Rural Development LAG SKARDUS, Jegunovce	Life-long learning about rural development
4	Multiethnic and Nongovernmental female association "LINDA" Kumanovo	Foundation for the development of small and medium enterprises, Kumanovo	Act together and advocate together to make successful farming business in Lipkovo and Staro Nagoričane
5	Association for the protection of the environment, cultural and historical sites and human health IZVOR, Kratovo	Association – EKOKRATER, Kratovo	Tourist E-platform for rural areas in the north-eastern region
6	Association of gardeners and flower growers HORTI EKO, Strumica	Association for education objectives DM LANGUAGES	Strengthening the capacities of civil society organizations to achieve better sustainability and representative power
7	Centre for Sustainability and Enhanced Education	Association for sustainable development, PELISTER, Rotino village	Service provision + Financial strengthening of local rural communities via increasing their capacities to provide paid services for its members
8	Creative Center RURBANCULT – Struga	Association of Bee Keepers MATICA, 2012, Struga	ORGANIC FARM – Rural Cohesion to achieve increased potential for rural tourism and sustainable economic rural development
9	Association of Female Farmers – AGRO-VINKA, Vinica	Association RADIKA-DE, Debar	„Economic strengthening for rural women from different ethnic backgrounds living in the Eastern and Western region“
10	Association for the protection, promotion and nutrition education SLOW FOOD Bitola	1. Association for the protection and promotion paprika BUKOVKA, PREZIDIUM Bukovo, Bitola 2. Association for the protection and promotion of and nutritional education SLOW FOOD, OSOGOVO	Making an initial list of traditional products in sustainable rural communities – SILOS



## Survey for identification of themes relevant to the needs of the local communities

**D**uring the period of May and June, the project “National Rural Parliament as a voice of rural citizens”, conducted a survey in the 8 planning regions in Macedonia, in order to define themes that are relevant to the needs of the rural communities, which will further be addressed through preparation of policy briefs. For identifying the problems and needs at local level, the project team prepared a survey questionnaire which was distributed through 8 field interviewers and completed by more than 840 representatives of the civil society sector and local self-government. The collected data from the questionnaires was quantitatively and qualitatively processed and as a result 8 different themes were defined with relevance to the findings in each of the planning regions.

This activity will help the organizations that were previously involved in the trainings for developing their capacities in advocacy, lobbying and networking, to prepare policy briefs related to the needs of the rural communities in the planning regions in Macedonia. Through the implemented activities, the project strives to enhance the impact of rural CSOs and their involvement in the decision making processes and development of public policies.

## First Balkan Rural Parliament held in Vrnjačka Banja

**B**ased on the rich experience generated by its involvement in the national rural parliaments throughout Europe, the national networks for rural development of the Western Balkans (The Serbian rural development network, the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, the Rural Development Network of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Network of organizations for rural development of Kosovo, the Rural Development Network of Montenegro and the Croatian network for rural development), in co-operation with the Development Foundation of Turkey, the PREPARE and Latvian Rural Forum, for the first time in the history of rural Europe organized a regional Balkan Rural Parliament.





The First Balkan Rural Parliament which was held from 26 to 28 June 2018 was visited by approximately 60 representatives of the civil and public sectors from the Western Balkans and Turkey, representatives of the European Commission, the national rural networks from all over Europe, international networks and organizations and many other rural stakeholders.

Main objectives of the first Balkan Rural Parliament were the following:

- Support the regional and inter-sectoral cooperation of the key stakeholders working on rural development in the Balkans;
- Raise the voice of the rural population in the Western Balkans and Turkey;
- Promote self-help(support) and activism among the rural population, in partnership with the civil and public sectors;
- Define major recommendations for the sustainable development in the rural communities of the Western Balkans and Turkey;

Define major recommendations for EU institutions and national governments, in connection with the EU integration in the region based on the regional needs and specificities of the rural communities.

During the course of the event working groups were formed to discuss 5 different topics of interest:

- Young people and women working on rural development in the Balkans;
- Shorter chain of supply and the role of the networks in the Balkans;
- Social entrepreneurship as a possibility for diversification of economic activities in the rural communities in the Balkans;
- How to use LEADER/CLLD for achieving faster development in the rural communities in the Balkans;
- Cultural heritage of the Balkans bringing possibilities to rural development.

The conclusions and the recommendations of the working groups were summed up and integrated in a Declaration of the First Balkan Rural Parliament, which as an end product of this event will be addressed to the national governments and the EU institutions.







# Activities of the Association of Artists and Handicraft Artisans “ARTI CRAFT” Skopje

**T**his year the ARTI CRAFT Association marked 5 years since its establishment and successful work by organizing Ethno Chamber in Skopje. This Ethno Chamber has on display traditional ethno products, as well as products crafted by different ethnic communities featured in Macedonia and by the members of ARTI CRAFT. The national costumes from the Skopje Blatija and Skopska Crna Gora areas attracted most of the attention, owned by Ms. Dostana Karagjozoska Stankovska from Skopje, a collector of national costumes.







"ARTI CRAFT" organized this year, yet another Spring Bazar for hand-crafts, which featured an award for the most authentic souvenir in the city of Skopje, honoring the great Slavonic Apostles Ss. Cyril and Methodius. The top three authors (Rade Stankovski – first place, Vesna Velickovic – second and Boris Popev – third) monetary awards were granted, and the awarded artwork was presented to the City of Skopje.

This three day event honoring the tradition of craftwork, held in the church of Sv. Spas in Skopje, provided the ARTI CRAFT members and other artists to display their handwork in front of a great audience. Within the framework of the Agenda, the students from the primary school Ss. Cyril and Methodius from Skopje took part and the Art Group Vera Jovic from Makedonska Kamenica, in addition to the Art Group SRMA from Kumanovo, Fashion Studio ETNO BEBA from Skopje with a fashion show, as well as the legend of Macedonian folk music Violeta Tomovska.

ARTI CRAFT takes active role in a number of seminars, workshops and round tables with its handicraft displayed in the "Denovi na tresa" event in June, held in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Music and Art Festival in Sofia, Bulgaria also in June, 2018.







## Local Action Group “BOJMIJA” Established

**O**n 7 February 2018 in the House of Culture in Bogdanci a Founding Assembly was held by the Association Local Action Group (LAG) BOJMIJA. Founders of this Association are 4 municipalities from the south of Macedonia, namely Gevgelija, Valandovo, Dojran and Bogdanci, and co-founders are a number of enterprises, nongovernmental organizations and natural persons. The membership in this LAG is voluntary and it is expected that soon natural persons and companies from the 4 municipalities will become new members.

The main objective of the LAG is to encourage and enhance the rural development by performing activities to address priority issues in marginalized and underdeveloped sectors in the rural communities. The founding members of the LAG BOJMIJA drafted a Local Rural Development Strategy covering the region in accordance with the LEADER principles for any future utilization of EU preaccession funds and other sources for funding this region.

Risto Atanasovski from Gevgelija was elected president of the Association and as Executive Board president – Mitko Vlahov from Bogdanci. President of the Oversight Board is Darko Kačakov from Dojran and as Project Evaluation Commission President – Kostadin Neveselovski from Valandovo.

On 30 May 2018 the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy authorized the registration permits for Local Action Groups for their inclusion in the Register of Associations. Among them was the registration document for the LAG BOJMIJA as established by legal and natural entities from the 4 municipalities of Gevgelija, Bogdanci, Valandovo and Dojran. The LAG President, Mr. Atanasovski when receiving the registration document stated that the implementation of the drafted strategy will enable the farmers and the population in the rural communities to have direct impact regarding their needs for shaping their rural communities, not only in terms of farming, but also in terms of enhancing the rural infrastructure, development of rural tourism and improving the conditions of the environment.



For this reason the 2018 Rural Development Program has set aside 10 mil MKD for involvement and education of the LAGs. The financial and administrative assistance will continue until receiving the accreditations for the LEADER measure via the IPARD Program.





## **“SME Knowledge Accelerator Project” (MEKA)**

In 2017 the Foundation for Local Development and Development of Information Technologies – Gevgelija (FLORIT) devised a project for increasing the competitiveness in the SMEs sector with special emphasis placed on the micro-sized companies. This need was identified since are difficulties in accessing funds and there exists a low level of absorption of EU funding which are listed as some of the greatest limitations for Macedonian SMEs. Not only is assistance needed in the start-up phase of a particular business, more importantly, assistance is needed in terms of management, development and making a particular business profitable.

The project foresees implementation of measures and activities which will enable the micro-companies (with less than 9 people on staff) to become more competitive via better absorption of the EU funds available.

Among the many activities, the project aims to strengthen the managerial skills in the new micro companies with knowledge and competencies which will enable any manager to develop their companies as successful, sustainable and profitable businesses. This very topic was covered at a conference organized in Gevgelija by the project on 27 June. Gevgelija Mayor, Mr. Pockov opened the conference stating that he is proud to participate in the launch of a project of such kind, aimed at small and medium enterprises which will be stimulated with such support of this sort of economic operators which are players and contributors to the local economic development.

„As a country and as local government we give our full support to this sort of projects which aim at increasing the motivation among the small and medium enterprises to make use of the funds provided by the European Union which are not only available to the member states but also to the candidate states, such as the Republic of Macedonia”, said Pockov.

The main objective, the target groups, the activities and the expected results were described in detail by the Foundation Director Mr. Atanasovski. Dr. Alek Karaev talked about the importance of innovations as means to increasing the competitiveness.

The SME Knowledge Accelerator Project MEKA is funded by the European Union through the 2013 National Program for Transitional Assistance and Institutional Upgrade, the IPA funding, EuropeAid/138-495/ID/ACT/MK, implemented by the Foundation for Local Development and Development of Information Technologies – Gevgelija in partnership with the Organization of Women of Štip.





# Building Capacities for Sustainable Development of Local Action Groups (LAGs) in the process of EU integration – “BUILDLAG”

## Project Description:

**T**he project aims at strengthening the public-private partnership among the rural nongovernmental organizations, the business associations and the local government by transferring knowledge, best practices and experience transferred from the EU, in order to establish functional Local Action Groups. The target groups identified by the project are the Macedonian rural nongovernmental organizations, business associations, as well as local governments. The involvement of all stakeholders within this project will enable development and their promotion, it will boost creation of partnerships in joint activities and it will make a contribution towards the global processes in this area.

## Specific objectives:

- Increase knowledge and strengthen the capacities among civil society organizations and local governments for achieving sustainable functioning of the LAGs via transfer of experience and best practices from the EU.
- Establish a functional partnership among civil society organizations and local governments in the new Local Action Group and provide support for it.
- Provide recommendations for policies for promoting LAGs and benefits from such LEGs.
- Raise the public awareness regarding the contributions from LAGs and the integrated EU policy.

Within the framework of the project the following activities are foreseen:

- Training for civil organizations regarding the meaning of the LAGs;
- Study visit to a LAG in EU;
- Establishing a LAG in the Polog planning region;
- Development of an integrated strategy and action plan for the newly formed LAG;
- Provision of recommendations regarding policies;
- Development of a webpage for the project, which will continue to serve the newly established LAG for the Polog region.



## Project implementer:

- Civil Association Centre for Promotion of Sustainable Agricultural Practices and Rural Development – CEPROSARD

## Project Partners:

- Local Action Group UNA from Croatia
- Association of young farmers ASAJA GARNADA from Spain

## Project timeframe:

19 December 2017 – 19 June 2019

**Donor:** European Union

## Institutions involved:

- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
- Centre for Development of the Polog Planning Region







# Having well informed, educated and trained female farmers leads to successful agribusiness people

**T**he civil society organization "HORTI EKO" from the village of Dobrejci the Strumica region started implementing a project entitled **"Having well informed, educated and trained female farmers leads to successful agribusiness people"** funded by the Municipality of Strumica, via the program for informal education in agriculture and support for female farmers for transfer of knowledge for better use of the programs in the area of agriculture and rural development and strengthening the capacities of women participating in the agricultural sector.

The IPARD Program is a great opportunity for receiving financial support for agriculture and rural development, however it is only available for those who are well informed, educated and are in position to invest their own funds. HORTI EKO will initiate a campaign to raise the awareness about the IPARD opportunities among women farmers in rural communities, in the vicinity of the Strumica region in order for them to access IPARD funds and to use such funds effectively. At the same time, female farmers lack the opportunities to continuously upgrade their knowledge and to educate themselves, which will bring them greater opportunities for profit making and will encourage them to accept any policies which might be adopted during the course of the EU accession.



Considering these needs, HORTI EKO within the framework of the project, will implement a comprehensive model of education for female farmers to be able to build their capacities for using specific farming standards and learn how to better plan their operations, enhance their businesses and increase their profits.

Female farmers from rural communities in the Municipality of Strumica were identified as a target group particularly those working in the agricultural sector. HORTI EKO via this project will try to positively impact the image of the agricultural



sector in the Strumica region, advocating in favor of female farmers as successful agro-business women and breaking the myth that farming is work for those who have not succeeded in some other line of work.

Project activities have started already and a number of training sessions have been successfully implemented covering topics such as **Good Farming Practice, Climate Change Impact on Agriculture and Business Planning**. A number of other training sessions will follow aimed at females from the rural communities in this region.



## International Farmers Fair AGROTIKA 2018, Thessaloniki, Greece

On 3 February 2018, a group of one hundred farmers, organized by HORTI EKO of Strumica took part in the 27<sup>th</sup> International Farmers Fair AGROTIKA in Thessaloniki, Greece. During the Fair the farmers had an opportunity to get acquainted with new technologies and the brand new achievements in agricultural mechanization were presented, in addition to agricultural equipment and raw materials.

The goal of the Fair visit was to exchange experience and ideas, to see the practical application of new techniques and technologies in agriculture, as well as to stimulate their application in our country, including replicating production in an innovative ways and achieving business cooperation.



## Wine Festival "ZLATEN GROZD" in Melnik, Bulgaria

HORTI EKO, by invitation from its collaborators – farmers associations from Bulgaria, to mark the festivities of vine growers Saint Tryphon Day, visited the Melnik Wine Festival "ZLATEN GROZD" in Bulgaria which was held for the seventh time in the smallest town in Bulgaria and Europe – Melnik. This is one of the most visited events on the region which shows the best wines, traditional dishes and rich folklore program and traditional Bulgarian customs.

The Macedonian farmers had an opportunity to visit the Melnik Wine Cellar which is a modern winery featuring most comprehensive equipment and highly qualified staff for winemaking. They were introduced to the entire process of production and were presented to taste excellent and renowned wines which feature the special Melnik character.





## Project “Increasing Market Employability – IME” in Macedonia

**T**he Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation Project “Increasing Market Employability – IME” in Macedonia in cooperation with Community Development Institute – CDI Tetovo, aims on market development that leads to improved access to decent employment and income opportunities for youth and young women in particular.

CDI as local consultant organized and supported the programme in delivering an info session - one day event held on April 26<sup>th</sup> in Tetovo, and organized the process of identification and selection of existing organic advisors, distributors, exporters, processors and other qualified participants to attend the training for advisers for organic planed production (capacity building programme).

IME is focused on strengthening of supply chain linkages, securing supply of organic products to interested buyers, and developing of alternative distribution channel(s) for higher production and sales of organic products.

For this purpose CDI as local consultant:

- Organized the process and supported the programme in delivering an info session for organic agriculture in Tetovo covering farmers from Polog region with a focus on women farmers from both Macedonian and Albanian ethnic groups;
- Invited participants;
- Supported the programme in identifying the best location for the event.

Target beneficiaries are the farmers from Polog region with a focus on women farmers from both Macedonian and Albanian ethnic groups, stakeholders.





## **Four day event – capacity building programme (TRAINING for advisers for organic planed production)**

**1 – 2 of June 2018**

**8 – 9 of June 2018**



IME is focused on activities aimed to increase the awareness about the organic planed production among the existing markets (local and export markets) and the distribution network, as well as to help farmers to easily access information and knowledge for growing organic food.

For this purpose, CDI as local consultant organized the process of identification and selection of existing organic production advisers, distributors, exporters, processors and other qualified participants to attend the training for advisers for organic planed production (capacity building programme). This four day event consisted of two parts: theoretical and practical part.

The theoretical part was organized in Skopje in the period from June 1<sup>st</sup> until June 2<sup>nd</sup>, while the practical part was implemented on:

- a farm in Oreshani on June 2<sup>nd</sup> - for garden crops;
- a farm in Strumica on June 8<sup>th</sup> – POKROV;
- a farm in Kumanovo on June 2<sup>nd</sup> and a farm in Rankovce, Kriva Palanka on June 9<sup>th</sup> – for fruit crops

The project improved the knowledge in organic agriculture of 21 participants, who will advise farmers on organic production, conversion and certification processes.





# Building the capacities of civil society organizations via participation in the process of adopting public documents and policies in the area of agriculture and rural development

**D**uring the January – March 2018 period the civil society organization (CSO) “Rural Coalition” within the framework of the project “**Building the capacities of civil society organizations via participation in the process of adopting public documents and policies in the area of agriculture and rural development**” funded by the Civica Mobilitas Program, performed 8 training events (one in each of the planning regions) covering topics such as lobbying and advocating aimed at representatives of local farmers and representatives of associations, who had an opportunity to attend the training, thus stimulating the farmers to submit public initiatives, addressed both to the local, as well as the national authorities. In addition to this, the project also published Guidelines entitled “Advocacy in Agriculture!” available both electronically and in hard copy in three languages: Macedonian, Albanian and English. It is available for download at the following link:

<http://rural.mk/публикации/>

In addition to this, the project also organized 8 round tables (forums) where representatives from local institutions were also included, as well as farmers and municipal representatives, in order to review the 2018-2022 National Program on Agriculture and Rural Development, as well as the 2018 Rural Development Program and to provide guidelines for its better and more effective implementation, since, at present, only 35% of the resources available from it have been utilized. The propositions and the amendments to the program in a form of public initiative supported by the farmers, will be submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy by the end of July 2018.





## Strategic Development of Rural Tourism – A Basis for Complementary Linkage and Supplementation of the Industrial Policy and Sustainable Development of Macedonia

The project entitled **“Strategic Development of Rural Tourism – A Basis for Complementary Linkage and Supplementation of the Industrial Policy and Sustainable Development of Macedonia”** funded by the YES NETWORK+ Foundation as an entrepreneurial service for young people, tasked the “Rural Coalition” to implement field survey to identify the needs of the owners of tourist facilities in the rural communities. More than 120 owners of rural tourist businesses were covered, 4 round tables were held, and one of them took place during the Week of Civil Society Organizations which was supported by the USAID campaign for strengthening civil society. A comparative analysis was drafted as a result of this, including the strategic documents for the development of rural tourism in Macedonia, Bulgaria and Croatia, available at the organizations website [www.rural.mk](http://www.rural.mk), while this website also features a map of tourist facilities which were covered with the project.



## Including a Gender Perspective in Major Agricultural and Rural Development Policies

The “Rural Coalition” in partnership with the National Council on Gender Equality and the Association of Local and Rural Development within the framework of the project entitled **“Including a Gender Perspective in Major Agricultural and Rural Development Policies”** funded by the European Union, performed a field survey including some 600 responders (500 female and 100 male) responding to questions covering all the aspects of female action in the rural communities, such as female economic power, social position, position in the household, as well as access and availability of social, health-care, cultural and other services, which serve to measure the quality of life of each individual. This survey (poll) aims to establish the real picture and the position of women in the rural communities in our society, but also to provide some recommendations how should such position be enhanced. The survey took place in 5 pilot municipalities: Kumanovo, Prilep, Strumica, Gostivar and Struga, covering more than 60 villages, featuring 5 meetings with the local representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, APRZ, the Employment Agency, the Pension Fund, the Center for Social Protection, as well as the representatives from the 5 local governments covered with the







project activities. The survey was facilitated by 5 local moderators, as well as 30 questioner handlers which were trained how to perform the survey and debriefed after they completed their work. In the forthcoming period the results from this survey will be presented at a conference, while additional training and info events will be implemented, all aiming at boosting women from rural communities to submit a greater number of applications when open calls for available funding for rural development become available, especially the support from IPARD.

## Local Communities and Local Governments working together to draft the local economic development strategies

The “Rural Coalition” started the process for drafting the Strategy for Local Economic Development jointly with the Municipality of Staro Nagoričane as part of the project entitled **“Local Communities and Local Governments working together to draft the local economic development strategies”** funded by ALDA. Meetings were held with Mayor Jovanovska, the representatives of the local state institutions, as well as the citizens of this municipality in order to form a local platform of stakeholders which will be tasked to draft the Strategy for Local Economic Development, with the assistance from experts.





# Project “Rural youth assisting Macedonia in EU integration”

## Project “Rural youth assisting Macedonia in EU integration” partners



Connecting Natural Values &  
People Foundation (CNVP)



Rural Development Network of  
Republic of Macedonia



Rural Development Network of  
Croatia



Rural Development Network of  
Serbia

This project is designed to encourage young people from rural areas and civil society organisations from the Eastern and the South-eastern planning regions of Macedonia to contribute to the democratic processes of governing, including all stakeholders, as well as to stimulate civil participation and adaptation towards challenges regarding EU integration.

The EU Youth Report 2015 emphasises the significance of youth participation in joining the EU and in the development processes in the country. At the same time, the EU encourages the countries to create equal opportunities for education of young people and at the labour market, to promote civil activism, social inclusion and solidarity among the youth.

## Goals of the project:

1. Improving the capacity of youth civil organisations and of young people from rural areas to create and implement public policies through a structural dialogue with decision makers;
2. Strengthening the capacities of the young people from rural areas for improved competitiveness at the labour market.

## Expected outcomes:

1. Enhanced knowledge of young rural people about issues related to EU integration;
2. Increased awareness of young rural people for enhancing the opportunities for career building;
3. Strengthened the capacities of representatives youth organisations for youth activism;
4. “Regional Youth Platform” created;
5. Opportunities generated for efficient dialogue on sustainable development policies and EU integration mediated by the Regional Youth Platform.





Building the capacities of young people in order for them to become a factor in local development policies creation is the goal of the 'Rural Youth for Integration of Macedonia in the EU'.

This project was promoted on 27/02/2018 in Skopje; it is funded by the EU and implemented by four organisations. The leading organisation is Connecting Natural Values & People Foundation - CNVP with a seat in the Hague, the Netherlands, and partners for project implementation are the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, the

Rural Development Network of Croatia, and the Rural Development Network of Serbia.

At the promotional event, it was stressed that this project will focus on the youth from the Eastern and the South-eastern planning regions of Macedonia where project implementing organisations will make efforts to animate the young and the civil organisations working with the young in order to strengthen their capacity for youth activism and career building, and to empower them to influence policy making at local level.

Daily migration of young people from rural to urban centres, and outside the country is a serious problem in the country. This project will address the needs of such young people at a higher level, and will support them to get closer to sources of ideas and initiatives, as well as finance needed to meet their needs.

The duration of the project is 18 months, until June 2019.

## Mapping active young rural people and CSOs in the Eastern and the South-eastern regions

The survey was carried out by a field researchers engaged by the project, in selected secondary schools with pupils in the third and the fourth year secondary education. The selection of schools was done taking into account the number of enrolled pupils from small rural areas. The selected municipalities included Štip, Kočani, Vinica, Delčevo, Strumica, Gevgelija, Radoviš (as one of the larger municipality with highschool). The number of pupils involved in the survey in different secondary schools was determined proportionally with pupils enrolled at schools.



As a conclusion, with reference to the opinion of responders, the main challenges in the region in addition to infrastructure development are participation of young people in the processes of policy and decision making, better information on the EU integration processes and the EU in general, as well as employability of young people in the region causing large brain drain.

On grounds of the findings, the research team recommends developing and implementing the following workshops for the young in the region:

- Youth activism
- Methods for participation in processes of policy and decision making
- Leadership and other soft skills for employment
- The EU, EU institutions and integration of Macedonia into the EU