

RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA



**e - bulletin**

**no.10**

**January -  
June 2015**

**EDITOR**

Rural Development Network  
of Republic of Macedonia

---

"Kosta Veselinov" 3a,  
1000 Skopje  
R. Macedonia  
T: +389 (2) 3075 506  
F: +389 (2) 3075 503  
email: [info@ruralnet.mk](mailto:info@ruralnet.mk)

---

[www.ruralnet.mk](http://www.ruralnet.mk)





## In this issue...



- 1  
page 3 **Activities implemented by the ARTI KRAFT Artisan Association**
- 2  
page 5 **Rural Development – Sustainable Tourism**
- 3  
page 6 **ORGANIKA Project**
- 4  
page 7 **Activities and achievements of Art Point – Gumno**
- 5  
page 9 **Promotion of a Volunteer Resource Center in Gevgelija**
- 6  
page 10 **Activities of MES Zakamen Struga – Youth in Movement Project**
- 7  
page 11 **“Flower” from Krushevo – an active promoter of the tradition and culture of Krushevo**
- 8  
page 12 **The First Day of Spring Celebrated**
- 9  
page 13 **Children grow watermelon and beans at the Holy Virgin Mary Monastery in Matka**
- 10  
page 14 **Annual Assembly of Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia**
- 11  
page 15 **Rural Development Network, participant in the USAID Organization Performance Improvement Program (OPIP)**
- 12  
page 17 **Project Mechanism Concept**
- 13  
page 18 **Support for the LEADER approach in Southeastern and Eastern Statistical Region**
- 14  
page 19 **The Study on Adaptation of Animal Production to Climate Change in the Republic of Macedonia Presented in Bitola**
- 15  
page 20 **The 7th Session of BRDN’s Assembly Held**
- 16  
page 21 **2nd Latvian Rural Parliament and Meeting of PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe**





1

## Activities implemented by the ARTI KRAFT Artisan Association



**T**he need to create an organized system for conservation, fostering and promoting national values and disappearing crafts in our country and throughout the Balkans is more than obvious. Therefore a group of enthusiasts established the ARTI KRAFT association of artists and artisans with an aim to promote and use traditional cultural values and customs by unifying ethnicities creating and living in Macedonia. This association became a member of the Rural Development Network of RM in 2015.

According to the program and project goals of this association, numerous activities were carried out within a period of 6 months, such as the following:

1. A Bazar of Creative Handicrafts was held in Hotel Continental in Skopje on the occasion of the 8<sup>th</sup> March International Women's Day. Items crafted by the artisans were made

skillfully, showing high-quality and artistic value. The skillful hands of the artisans merge tradition and culture of living with the modern times and create items that take your breath away and are a sight for sore eyes and souls, beautifying many women.

2. On the occasion of Easter Holidays, 20 artisans had their exhibition at the Hotel Continental, exhibiting items related to this holiday.
3. The 2015 Craftsmanship Collage (working title) was implemented by ARTI KRAFT and the City of Skopje as part of a group of projects in the field of craftsmanship initiated by the City of Skopje for 2015. A Spring Bazar of handicrafts was organized on 21 and 22 May 2015 at the Philip II Square in Skopje. The attractive event allowed for artisans, artists and craftsmen working with old crafts and young talents to pres-







ent their creations representing the Macedonian art and culture at the same spot. The event was especially joyful since it was held on the Feast of the Ascension and the Summer Feast of St. Nicolas. By implementing project activities first contacts were established and opportunities for cooperation between representatives of LED of the City of Skopje and ARTI CRAFT from Skopje.

4. A Balkan Bazar of handicrafts was held for the third time in cooperation with Izet Mexiti, Mayor of the Municipality of Chair. As part of the story we began in 2013 to gather in Skopje artisans from all over the Balkans, the event Days of Culture and Craftsmanship of the Balkans in Skopje was held on 15 and 16 June 2015 at the Skanderbeg Square in Skopje. The artists that exhibited were from Turkey, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Germany, contributing to this event of special significance with their unique creations. We, the hosts from many towns in Macedonia (Kumanovo, Kavadarci, Kriva Palanka, Veles, Shtip, Bitola and Skopje) will proudly continue with this work.

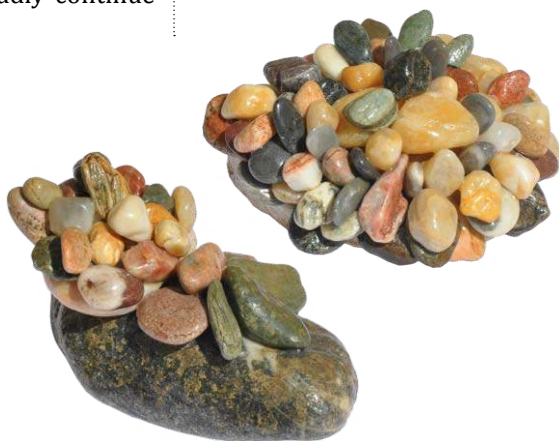
5. On the occasion of Days of Women's Entrepreneurship held in Sarajevo on 14-16 May 2015, ARTI KRAFT-Skopje was invited by the SNAGA ZENA, a female entrepreneurs organization and the Association of Women in Business in RM where ARTI KRAFT is a member, to participate at a fair and a conference *What does the new women labor legislation bring us in the region*, represented by the president and the vice president of ARTI KRAFT-Skopje.

6. ARTI KRAFT attended training on creating felt handicrafts in Skopje, organized by a Turkish NGO with female trainers from KOCAELI/Turkey.

Exhibitions in Macedonia for the summer period are planned for Pehchevo and Bitola, and internationally in Ulcinj and Turkey.

The idea of ARTI KRAFT members is to exhibit their unique items and works in a gallery like open space to be provided free of charge by the state, since their works are inspired and are a legacy of the past of our people, telling a story about the rich culture of all ethnicities from this region who have lived here for centuries.

Text prepared by Mitrovska Gordana Beba, Authorized representative of ARTI KRAFT Skopje/Macedonia.







2

## Rural Development – Sustainable Tourism



**T**he Rural Tourism Sustainable Development project initiative, supported by USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture Project, was created and implemented by HORTI EKO Association of producers of garden and flower varieties and AGRO-Vinka Vinica Association of women farmers, both members of the Rural Development Network.

2 trainings were organized on Rural Tourism and Sustainable Development, on 4 and 5 June 2015 in Panorama Restaurant in the village of Mokrin and on 17 and 18 June 2015 near Vinica in the villages of Istibanja and Blatec. Participants at the trainings came from the Vinica and Strumica regions, and had an opportunity to acquire knowledge in the field of rural tourism, as well as to get acquainted with the region through field visits of the Mokrin-ski springs, the Meanche of Tanchevi family, the Koleshinski falls, the Roman baths in Banja Bansko and the Strumica Valley, as well as a visit of the village of Istibanja near Vinica. Several sites that could contribute to development of the rural tourism in the region were visited including a fishpond of a farmer in the village of Laki, the Ethno-restaurant Konak, wood carving workshop, monasteries, churches, village fountains and other sites.





## ORGANIKA Project



**T**he Institute for Community Development Association (IRZ) – Tetovo, has been working on implementation of the ORGANIKA Project within the framework of its programme activities. This project is part of the RDN activities for support of project initiatives by member organizations. The project will last for 2 months. Partner organization to this project is My Farm – Association of Female Farmers from Gostivar.

The goal of the project is to increase the interest of farmers to produce organic food, to upgrade knowledge and skills of citizens for better production of organic food through consultations, counseling, information and education of citizens. Project activities will improve farmers' work, which in its turn will affect family income, and will contribute to rural development.

IRZ has also carried out several project activities including:

- Preparatory stage, working meeting with farmers held in the Village of Janchishte. It was a consultative meeting with interested citizens to get to know the farmers and to establish channels of communication.
- Workshop with farmers where they extended their knowledge on organic production and association into collectives. Guidelines were set for cooperation and development of a strategy.

A web-site is in the process of being developed to be promoted at the final conference. Two workshops will be held at the conference on organic production, presentation of products and panel discussion on relevant topics.

The planned activities will allow for strengthening the capacities of farmers who will acquire new knowledge and skills, and they will be encouraged to start associating into collectives in order to achieve greater yields and quality of products.

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





# Activities and achievements of Art Point – Gumno

## 1. Travelling exhibition “WILD PLANTS FROM MY HOME AREA”

**1.1.** Art Point – Gumno started the year by continuing the travelling exhibition WILD PLANTS FROM MY HOME AREA. This is an original exhibition of drawings, herbaria, and photos made by volunteers united in the project “Connecting people with nature – strengthening and networking civil associations in Macedonia”. This project was implemented in cooperation with Plantlife International from the United Kingdom and the Macedonian Environment Society from Skopje. The final destination of the exhibition, previously set up in Demir Hisar, Bitola, Ohrid, and Tearce was the EU InfoCentre in Skopje, where it was symbolically by closing the exhibition on 31 May the end of this project was marked (21/03-31/05/2015).

**1.2** An event “Grafting Autochthonous Fruit Varieties” was organized within the framework of the same project. Together with representatives of Krste Petkov Misirkov Secondary School from Demir Hisar we were guests of ED GRASNICA from Ohrid in the Village of Zavoj. Our hosts were uncle Krste and uncle Naumche, famous grafters who have been taming wild grounds by planting autochthonous varieties of apples and pears originating from the Ottoman period. The Macedonian Environment Society – MED, provided expert assistance by Professor Tosho Arsov, PhD, who, among other things gave a special accent to protection of the biodiversity (17/04/2015).

## 2. Official launch of the project “GREET THE BIRDS OF ILINSKA PLAKENSKA MOUNTAIN!”

Field activities of GREET THE BIRDS OF ILINSKA PLAKENSKA MOUNTAIN project officially started on 18 April. This project is supported by the Macedonian Environment Society – MED and Euronatur from Germany. The main goal of this project is promotion of biodiversity by identifying and learning about the birds and their habitats in the area of Ilinska-Plakenska Mountain and the Belchansko wetlands (the Municipality of Demir Hisar). The aim of the project is to raise the awareness of the local population and tourists about the birds and their significance for the countryside in the region. In addition, this project will support bird monitoring activities in Macedonia and the process of establishing a NATURA 2000 area.



**Akt 1\_1\_TravelingExhibition\_EU Info Center**  
– creative workshop with children from SPIRIT kindergarten at the opening of the travelling exhibition at the EU InfoCentre in Skopje (18/05/2015)



**Akt 1\_2\_Crafting autochthonic varieties\_2** –  
Professor Tosho Arsov demonstrates grafting



**Akt 2\_How do we recognize birds\_MED Expert – Ksenija Putilin,**  
a MED expert at the presentation on recognizing and monitoring regular bird species in Sloeshnica



10 young volunteers from the villages of Sloeshnica, Zvan and Virovo actively participate in the project in addition to the expert support from the Macedonian Environment Society – MED (bird monitoring), including contributions from artists who were guests at the art residence of APG (creative workshop with volunteers).

### 3. Art residence Art Point – Gumno 2015

The 14<sup>th</sup> international art residence was held from 11 until 6 July this year. Again, the workshop stayed consistent to the high criteria of the organizers – four reputable world artists with an original artistic print participated as guests including Michel Connolly from Australia, Beti Bricelj from Slovenia, Joshkin Shiljan from Serbia, and Leon Patchett from the UK (Scotland). Art lovers had an opportunity to meet directly with the artists and to see their works at the event Open Studio which took place on 21 June this year.

This project was implemented with partial support by the Ministry of Culture of Macedonia.

For more information about Art Point Gumno please visit:

[www.artpoint-gumno.org.mk](http://www.artpoint-gumno.org.mk)



**Akt 2\_Monitoring of the birds**  
– A group of volunteers together with artists and experts at field monitoring of birds in the vicinity of the Village of Sloeshnica



**Akt 2\_Minutes from Creative WS**  
- Joshkin Shiljan, an artist from neighboring Serbia and several volunteers at the creative workshop



**Akt 3\_Leon Patchett\_Work in progress** – Leon Patchett from Great Britain working on his pinecone sculpture



**Akt 3\_Beti Bricelj\_New work coming** – Beti Bricelj from Slovenia working at the APG studio



**Akt 3\_Poseta na APG\_Otvoreno studio** – atmosphere at the beginning of the Open Studio event



**Akt 3\_Michelle Connolly and others\_working outside** – Working atmosphere at APG, Michelle Connolly from Australia and other artists.





## Promotion of a Volunteer Resource Center in Gevgelija



**P**ast and present activities of the Volunteer Resource Center – Gevgelija (VRC) were promoted at an event held on 11 May 2015 in Hotel Apolonija.

Representatives of companies, organizations and institutions in the Municipality of Gevgelija had an opportunity to get informed and to discuss about advantages they might have if they become users of services offered by the Volunteer Resource Center.

The event was opened and moderated by Magdalena Stamkova, president of the Slozuvalka Association on Education of Children and Youth, which is partner organization in the joint project implementation. She presented the VRC idea as well as the program that promotes volunteer work and social responsibility among the young people. Risto Atanasovski, the manager of FLORIT which is an active supporter of the VRC by providing support in resources and exchange of experience, pointed out the need for cooperation and mutual promotion of local NGOs. Aco Ristovski, manager of the Foundation Apolonija which initiated the VRC, briefly presented the story about the

beginnings of the local volunteer corner.

VRC was launched in 2014 by the Foundation Apolonija and Slozuvalka Association on Education of Children and Youth, as a reaction to the identified gap at the labor market regarding working qualifications of young people and skills needed to the local private sector.

The second cycle of VRC activities will begin to be implemented in the second half of August 2015, including trainings and seminars on how to write a CV, cover letter and advice on appropriate behavior in the course of a job interview, public speech, basics of administrative work, working online, useful IT skills, marketing promotion through the social media and project management.

VRC was established for the purpose of creating conditions by means of voluntary work for skilled workers who would successfully match the needs of the local private sector in Gevgelija.

The main goal of VRC is to develop the capacities of young people by means of a series of workshops on soft skills and practical promotion of volunteer-

ing, as well as to allow them to acquire skills to make them more competitive at the labor market and improving the process of adaptation to future jobs/internships.

The event was organized by Slozuvalka Association on Education of Children and Youth – Gevgelija in partnership with FLORIT and the Foundation Apolonija, supported by the Rural Development Network and the Detra Center within the framework of the USAID project.

In addition to preparations regarding the new cycle of trainings and seminars by the VRC, Slozuvalka has been preparing to participate at the D-Festival in Dojran between 17 and 19 July 2015, in the section Zone for Civil Action, where it will offer two-day agenda with workshops and social games for visitors in order to promote its goals, activities and trainings.

This year Slozuvalka will also support the initiative on marking the International Youth Day 2015 in Gevgelija with a single event organized for the second time, to promote capacities of young people to get involved by being active in certain areas of common interest, as well as promotion of local young talents. The event will take place on 12 August 2015, prior to which activities will be organized to raise funds to organize the event in cooperation with representatives and volunteers from the Foundation Apolonija and the Center for NGO support.

For more info on VRC Gevgelija and other activities of Slozuvalka, please contact us at [info@slozuvalka.org.mk](mailto:info@slozuvalka.org.mk)





6

## Activities of MES Zakamen Struga – Youth in Movement Project

**Y**outh in Movement Project was implemented between April and June 2015 by Zakamen mountaineering environmental society from Struga. The goal of this project was to raise public awareness and to educate local population about biodiversity of the Jablanica Mountain, in order to conserve it and properly use it in the future.

The project consisted of four activities including:

1. Education events at *Niko Nestor* and *Dr. Ibrahim Temo* secondary schools in Struga where young people were presented the scope of biodiversity at the Jablanica Mountain.
2. Hiking tour for young people to see the consequences of uncontrolled lumbering at the Jablanica Mountain.
3. Three-day youth environmental camp where participants learnt about medicinal herbs, forest fruits and mushrooms found on Jablanica Mount, as well as ways for sustainable use.
4. Environmental march Lets Preserve Forests at Jablanica Mount on the occasion of the World Environment Day. Due to uncontrolled and illegal timbering with growing intensity, vast areas at Mount Jablanica have been deforested. This march was organized to promote the initiative of the Macedonian Environmental Society to declare Jablanica as a national park and preserve its rare natural heritage.

Youth in Movement Project was funded by the Euronatur Foundation from Germany and Mava from Switzerland, supported by the Macedonian Environmental Society.

More info on [zakamen.org.mk](http://zakamen.org.mk) и [www.facebook.com/ZakamenPED](https://www.facebook.com/ZakamenPED)







## “Flower” from Krushevo – an active promoter of the tradition and culture of Krushevo

**W**omen’s Association Flower from Krushevo is one of the first RDN members and has been actively working for years on conservation and promotion of the tradition and culture of Krushevo.

At the beginning of this year, “Flower” organized a festival for the Holiday of Vasilitsa and some of the funds gathered from the lottery organized and the tickets sold were given to charity as support for socially deprived families. Children from socially deprived families and children with disabilities from the daycare center in Krushevo received New Year’s gifts.

An annual assembly of “Flower” was held in March including a lecture on eco-tourism.

The RDN project mechanism supported a project initiative Education of Creative Industries, which was implemented by “Flower” in cooperation with “Preda Plus” from Prilep. In the course of April and May, they organized education workshops for hand production of traditional clothing with new and modern design. Hence “Flower” also contributed to transfer of knowledge and skills to younger generations and economic empowerment of the women in Krushevo.

Women from the “Flower” organization participated at decorating a Vlach room on 23 May, which was an activity implemented in partnership with the local self-government. It included preparing old traditional deserts, various types of old liquors, and traditional fruit jams.







## The First Day of Spring Celebrated



**P**upils from the primary school "Vancho Kitanov" in Pehchevo, celebrated the first day of spring with singing and dancing. The event held on March 21st was supported by the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia and a couple of NGOs from Pehchevo region such as the Environmental Association «Solza» and the Center for herbs and forest fruits «Ambrosia».

Besides the spring-cleaning activities in the school yard, the children had the opportunity to learn about negative influence of climate change on people and to the agricultural crops. At the event USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture Project shared promotional T-shirts featuring climate change inspired catchphrase.







9

## Children grow watermelon and beans at the Holy Virgin Mary Monastery in Matka



**T**he Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia (RDN of RM), in cooperation with Maganmak Company and the Holy Virgin Mary Monastery in Matka, made possible for small children aged between 6 and 13, all belonging to the church community at Krivi Dol, to learn about the process of planting and growing vegetables and fruits.

"We began the activity almost a month ago. About twenty children and their parents gathered and were taken to the garden of the female monastery Holy Virgin Mary. The goal was to have an impact education-wise, but also to involve children in certain activities. They planted small watermelon and beans seeds in small pots to prepare seedlings. The seed was provided by Ivan from Maganmak. Each child took 2 pots home, one with bean seeds and one with watermelon seeds, so that they can watch them grow, water them and nurture them – says Petar Gjorgievski, RDN president, who started this initiative.

When plants grow to a certain height, the children went back to the monastery on 10 May and planted the seedlings at the sisters' garden. In addition to the watermelon and beans seedlings, they also planted different flowers to contribute to the horticultural setting. At the same time this was an opportunity for the children to get to know each other and to make friendships.

The initiators have an idea to extend the project and provide support from various funds, so that it could be repeated at a farm in the vicinity of Skopje.

"We have farmers who are interested in supporting this idea. Both farmers and children will have benefit. Children will learn basis of vegetable growing and farmers could offer their farms for various kinds of services. Children will be engaged, will have their tasks and the plan is for them to visit farms each two weeks depending on what is going to be planted. Since farms have large spaces, many children could get involved. On the other hand, farms also have animals, so children could learn about them as well. In Italy for example, there are farms where mozzarella is directly produces, so that anyone can see the process. Children could also make dishes from the garden products they have planted and raise their awareness on healthy food and how it could be prepared. There are many ideas that could develop further to bring benefit both to children and farmers, such as rural tourism" – says Petar Gjorgievski.

Sisters from the Holy Virgin Mary monastery were happy to support this idea since in their opinion it is educative and healthy for children and it will allow them to learn more about plants and nature.







10

## Annual Assembly of Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia

On March 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> at the “Holiday Inn” hotel in Skopje, The Rural Development Network organized its regular annual Assembly. In total, 37 representatives of 30 RDN member-organizations attended the two-days meeting of the Assembly.

During the first day, the consulting company “DETRA” as implementer of the USAID Organizational Performance Improvement Program, provided assessment of program influence on the work and working procedures of RDN and its members. The discussion and evaluation of program activities' impacts were followed by analyses of activities' implementation regarding the: process, RDN members inclusion in project activities, lessons learned, gaps and bottlenecks.

The President of RDN opened the second day of the Assembly and presented the agenda. The President of the Managing Board listed all RDN activities implemented during 2014 and promoted activities planned for 2015. The members unanimously adopted RDN's annual program and Assembly and Managing Board working procedures. Rankica Bozhinovska, representative of “Moja farma”, as a member of the Project Mechanism Administrative Body presented the framework on sustainable project mechanism of the Network, elaborated the criteria for projects support, as well as the method and procedure for obtaining support from RDN.

The second half of the meeting was organized in a form of group work with the aim to identify challenges and problems in rural areas and gather ideas within 6 defined themes:



*Challenges and potentials of small scale family farmers contributing to security and safety of food supply; The need for networking and demand driven pluralistic rural advisory services; Diversification of rural economic activities and development of other non-farm activities like crafts production and support to rural tourism development in the countryside; Social cohesion and sustainable demographic development in the rural areas; Access to employment for young population and other vulnerable groups in the rural areas; and Absorption of available Government funds of the potential beneficiaries involved in agriculture and rural development. The general goal of this workshop was to raise the voice of rural communities at European level, through collecting ideas locally and synthesizing them at national level.*







# Rural Development Network, participant in the USAID Organization Performance Improvement Program (OPIP)

**T**he Rural Development Network (RDN) was one of the partner organizations in the USAID Organization Performance Improvement Program, implemented by DETRA Center. The main goal of this Program was to improve the performance of organizations that are considered to be of key importance for development of the state and the goals USAID Macedonia makes efforts to achieve. As part of the Program, RDN has been receiving expert support for strengthening its structure, improving its working processes, as well as strengthening the capacities of its employees and representatives of member-organizations of RDN.

According to the evaluation carried out by OPIP and the needs identified, the focus of the interventions in the period June-December 2014 was set on two areas: capacity on strategic and operative planning and project management.

Representatives of the central office, as well as representatives of member organizations of the Network participated in implementing planned activities. OPIP support was provided by means of working and mentorship meetings, as well as a series of workshops with experts in different field.

With regards to the capacity of the network and its members for strategic and operative planning, RDN implemented a process of revising the existing strategic plan. Four workshops were carried out to support an analysis of inter-



nal organizational capacities and the working context of the Network, followed by a revision of the Network vision and mission, including a definition of the strategic focus in the upcoming three years. This process allowed for wide inclusion of Network members in various ways which contributed to strengthening the communication and the sense of belonging and community within the Network. RDN Strategic plan was finalized in September 2014, followed by two promotions of the plan in cooperation with OPIP at the regional offices in Pehchevo and Gostivar.

The RDN Annual Program was created by means of several workshops and

mentorship support in the course of November and December. A workshop was held on integral planning within the Network with representatives of member organizations who learnt about the significance of the process of integral annual planning; they are expected to contribute in the process of integral planning, in the nature and the scope of the overall process of annual planning, as well as in its key elements and dimensions. As a result of the workshop, the participants defined priorities for RDN for the upcoming 2015 and developed several joint activities of the members and RDN. Furthermore, a small group continued to





work on the development of the Annual Program as a specific document which was adopted at a session of the RDN Assembly in March 2015.

In order to establish an internal group of potential trainers and trained facilitators who will be able to independently manage and facilitate activities of RDN in the domain of building the capacities, OPIP carried out training for internal integrators. This training helped 12 representatives of the member organizations to improve their facilitation skills and learn about the approach to work used by DETRA Center within the framework of its SKI-TOP methodology. In addition, some of the participants attended training for trainers on preparing and developing strategic and annual plans. This group of trainers, with mentorship support by the OPIP, implemented the process of developing 5 strategic and 5 annual plans for RDN members.

The second focus of support from OPIP for the Network referred to strengthening and developing capacities for

project work. For this purpose, in the course of October and November, 2014, a workshop on project cycle management consisting of two modules was held for member organizations representatives and representatives of other OPIP partner organizations. Participants worked on developing their project ideas using the Logical Framework methodology and had an opportunity to acquire knowledge on intervention logic, project results, indicators and budget. As a result of this workshop, two member organizations of the Network – My Farm and Kozjak at the Heart – developed a joint project initiative which grew into an application for the small grant program of the American Embassy. This initiative was identified through a direct contact with rural women in the regions of Kumanovo and Gostivar; its goal is to raise the awareness for emancipation of women in rural areas.

In addition, RDN with support of OPIP carried out two workshops on development of a project management

model. Members of the RDN management structure and representatives of member organizations were involved in this process. The working group developed a framework on sustainable project mechanism internally in the Network, as a support in preparing and implementation of small projects according to the project cycle methodology. Starting from December, the Network began the process of piloting this model. Once all required procedures were developed and authorized bodies were in place, a call was published for support of project proposals from several members, followed by several regional information events managed by the Network representatives. Upon the deadline for applications, the authorized body examined the applications and selected three organizations (Flower – Krushevo, Women's Organization – Pehchevo and Puzzle – Gевгелija) to be granted financial support to implement its project activities. Within the process a key criterion for qualification was establishing partnerships among members for implementation of project ideas.

In addition, by June 2015 when OPIP support ended, many activities were completed on strengthening the capacity of the Network in the areas of working ethics, internal communication and organizational learning.







## Project Mechanism Concept

**T**he Macedonia's emerging civil society organizations, most of which have been established with international donor assistance, are still donor dependent to a significant extent. This refers to RDN member organizations as well which in general reveal shortage in capacity for conceptualizing and ability to implement specific rural community beneficial programs and projects. Hence, RDN provided a specific tailor made capacity building program to furnish the member organizations with needed knowledge, skills and proficiencies potentially resulting with decrease of their donor dependency.

With support of the USAID Organization Performance Improvement Program, RDN developed a project management model called Project Mechanism. Members of the RDN management structure and representatives of member organizations were involved in the process of development of this tool. The working group developed a framework on sustainable project mechanism internally in the Network, as a support in preparing and implementation of small project initiatives according to the project cycle methodology.

In the process of project mechanism piloting the project proposals of three organizations were selected (Flower – Krushevo, Women's Organization – Pehchevo and Jigsaw – Gevgelija) and granted financial support for their implementation. During the April-June quarter all three small-scale projects were successfully completed.

Through USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture project's Capacity Building component, RDN provided support for eight more project initiatives of RDN members and announced the second internal call for supporting project activities. The Coordinative Body organized information meetings in 6 different locations (Kumanovo, Pehchevo, Gevgelija, Gostivar, Bitola and Struga) and supplied RDN member organizations from eastern and western part of Macedonia with further explanation on call's criteria. The application package for this call for proposals was shared with all RDN member CSOs through email and RDN website.

By the deadline for project proposal submission (April 30<sup>th</sup>), RDN received 11 applications, each prepared in partnership of at least two RDN member organizations. The Administrative Body, consisted of representatives from RDN organizations, held two meetings in May and conducted an assessment of all applications on two levels: technical competence (submission of all required documents) and content competence. Eight projects were selected following the evaluation criteria: five were in full compliance with Project Mechanism criteria, while the applicants of three were asked to make modifications. RDN signed Memorandum of Understanding

with the winning organizations which in June commenced with the implementation of the following project initiatives:

### 1. "Promoting local capacities with catalog of canned food"

Lead Applicant: Foundation for Local Development and Development of Information Technologies  
Partner: Association for Education of Children and Youth "Jigsaw"

### 2. "Promotion of Bislim Gorge" Come! See! Enjoy! And talk about the beauties of Bislim Gorge"

Lead Applicant: Citizen Association of Local Action Group for Rural Development "Voice of the Village"  
Partner: Center for Rural Development "BUJRUN"

### 3. "Rural tourism as an opportunity for community development and cooperation"

Lead Applicant: Association Center for Herbs and Forest Fruits "Ambrosia"  
Partner: Ecological Association "Solza"

### 4. "LEADER FEST 2015"

Lead Applicant: Regional Center for Advocacy - Delchevo  
Partner: Association Center for Herbs and Forest Fruits "Ambrosia"

### 5. "Promotion of the potentials for development of rural tourism – RURAL STRUGA"

Lead Applicant: Association Creative Center "RUR-BANKULT"  
Partner: Association of Equal Opportunities EZERKA

### 6. "Promotion of Malesh region through cultural tradition"

Lead Applicant: Association of Hoteliers, Tourist Workers and Craftsmen "Napredok"  
Partner: Center for Culture and Information "RA-VEN"

### 7. „ORGANIKA"

Lead Applicant: Institute for Community Development  
Partner: Women Farmer Association "Moja Farma"

### 8. "Rural tourism sustainable development"

Lead Applicant: Association of Vegetable and Flower Producers "HORTI EKO"  
Partner: Women Farmer Association "AGRO-VINKA"





13

## Support for the LEADER approach in Southeastern and Eastern Statistical Region

The Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia (RDN of RM) as an organization that focuses on development of rural communities has continued to support activities to promote the LEADER approach that encourages greater involvement of the rural population in the process of making decisions important for the community. Therefore, with the support of the USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture Project, the RDN of RM carried out several activities for development of capacities within the framework of LEADER, with stakeholders in 4 municipalities of the Southeastern Statistical Region: Strumica, Vasilevo, Bosilevo and Novo Selo. The RDN supported the establishment of an entity of the Local Action Group as a public private partnership, including partners from the public, private and civil sector, covering the interests of various parties in these municipalities. The group developed a strategic local development document on grounds of which 3 project initiatives were prepared and selected to be implemented in the upcoming period.

At the same time RDN extended the activities in the Eastern Statistical Region, starting with an initiation meeting to promote the LEADER approach on 11 February 2015 in Berovo. In the following months, the RDN organized several workshops at the municipalities of Pehchevo, Berovo, Delchevo and Makedonska Kamenica, where interested parties from the region had an opportunity to learn about the LEADER principles and to acquire skills to develop local development strategies.





## The Study on Adaptation of Animal Production to Climate Change in the Republic of Macedonia Presented in Bitola

**O**n March 24<sup>th</sup> in Bitola, the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia organized another workshop to present the findings of the Study on Adaptation of Animal Production to Climate Change in the Republic of Macedonia, which was published within the USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture project.

Prof. Sreten Andonov, PhD, as coordinator of the expert team who developed the study, explained the adverse effects of climate change to livestock sector indicating the need of prompt adaptation of the animal production to the anticipated climate change negative influence. He also provided recommendations on appropriate adaptive measures application.





## The 7th Session of BRDN's Assembly Held

**T**he Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia attended the 7th Session of the Assembly of the Balkan Rural Development Network (BRDN) held on April 27, 2015 in Brussels. Representatives from PREPARE – Partnership for Rural Europe, DG Agri, European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) and the European Commission participated at the meeting. The meeting of the BRDN was supported by the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in South-Eastern Europe.







## 2<sup>nd</sup> Latvian Rural Parliament and Meeting of PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe

In the period from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2015, in the small town Ligatne, in Latvia, the second Latvian Rural Communities Parliament „Creation of precondition for development of small towns and rural areas” was held. The three-day event organized by the Latvian Rural Forum and the Society Integration Foundation gathered around 250 representatives of different stakeholders from rural areas in Latvia and throughout Europe, among which was the representative of Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia. The participants had the opportunity to discuss on many themes relevant to rural communities and share their experience and good practices.

Ligatne is a small town located 72 km from Riga. It is often referred to as “cave town” because of the 333 caves nearby. Ligatne is the location for the oldest paper factory in Latvia, founded in 1815. The Parliament’s participants visited a couple of practical initiatives around Ligatne, which were inspirational ideas for rural communities’ development.

The final goal of the Latvian Rural Parliament was developing a common Resolution - commitment of communities and policy makers to specific actions over the next 2 years, and long-term actions.



PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe, used this opportunity to gather its partners on June 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> in Riga, where the Organizing Group Meeting was held. Besides the current issues, there was a discussion about the upcoming second European Rural Parliament. In this regard, the RDN of RM has an active role in the process of gathering and synthetizing the problems and ideas from rural population in Macedonia and addressing them on national and EU level.

