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Balkan Rural Development Network

www.brdnetwork.org

MEMBERS OF THE BALKAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

MRRBiH
Mreža za ruralni razvoj u Bosni i Hercegovini

NETWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF MONTENEGRO

HMRR
HRVATSKA MREŽA ZA RURALNI RAZVOJ

NETWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK OF KOSOVO

RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

ANRD

Balkan Rural Development Network (BRDN)

The Balkan Rural Development Network BRDN is a regional platform of NGO-based rural development networks in the Western Balkan WB.

The overall aim: strengthening the civil society and promoting multi-national exchange in rural development at regional and EU level.

BRDN brings together the rural development networks from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania and Kosovo. The member organizations are all established in the SEE region, and are themselves member organisations, which represent national rural communities' interests and rights, and act for rural development. The BRDN member organisations represent more than 200 rural development associations from the region, and advocate for the interests of more than 9 million rural people from the represented countries.

Develop capacities of BRDN network to become accountable actor for development of sustainable rural areas in the Western Balkan Region

The Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia coordinates the activities for developing the capacities of BRDN network to become accountable actor for development of sustainable rural areas in the Western Balkan Region, which are financially supported by the Swedish organization We Effect.

In the framework of this three-year institutional support, actions are undertaken to support the Balkan Rural Development Network (BRDN) in becoming an important actor in contributing to sustainable socio-economic development of rural areas in the Western Balkan Region. Based on the previous activities and experiences from the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia (RDN of RM) as one of the founders of BRDN, the activities will build the management capacity of BRDN and its member networks by exchange of good practice. The support by We Effect also encompasses the process of implementation of BRDN strategy and 2 years action plan, in order to ensure its future activity and sustainability. BRDN will be helped to improve its performance by developing their management capacities; to review and upgrade existing, or develop new strategic framework and action plans; based on self-assessment, participative and consultative methods by involvement of their members.

BRDN Members Joint Activities

ALTER – Active Local Territories for Economic development of Rural Areas

The four-year project "ALTER – Active Local Territories for Economic development of Rural Areas", financed by the European Commission started in December 2015. It is implemented by the Network for Rural Development of Serbia, together with 8 implementing partners: Institute for Democracy and Mediation, Albania; Rural Development Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina (MRRBiH); Network of organizations for rural development of Kosovo (NORDK); Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia (RDN of RM); Network for Rural Development of Montenegro (MRRCG); Development Foundation of Turkey; Croatian Rural Development Network (HMRR) and Latvian Rural Forum.

The project has two key objectives:

1. To strengthen the capacity of CSOs and CSO networks which contribute to sustainable socio-economic development of rural areas in the Western Balkans and Turkey to participate actively in policy planning and implementation; to build a strong civil society in rural areas; and to enhance regional development through networking and cooperation.
2. To build partnership of CSOs and CSO networks with public institutions and their involvement in decision making and governance processes, for the well-being of rural communities in those countries.

Project target groups are: 220 national, regional and local CSOs (both within and outside the partner networks); regional agencies, sub-regional partnerships and LEADER-type groups; associations representing farmers, rural entrepreneurs and cooperatives; 90 Grass-root organisations; local authorities; Government ministries and agencies; EU network PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe; 7 national networks and Balkan RD Network (BRDN).

More details about the project:
http://www.balkan-noborder.com/

Networking and Advocacy for Green Economy – NAGE

The project "Networking and Advocacy for Green Economy – NAGE", financed by the European Union, was launched in April 2018, by the implementing organization "Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia". Project implementing partners are the rest of the BRDN member organizations: Croatian Rural Development Network (HMRR); Albanian Network for Rural Development (ANRD); Network for Rural Development of Montenegro (MRRCG); Network for Rural Development of Serbia (MRRS); Network of organizations for rural development of Kosovo (NORDK); Rural Development Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina (MRRBiH).

Project objectives

- **Overall objective of the project** *is to provide support to enhance the policy and decision-making impact of BRDN and its constituents, through involvement in the agricultural and rural program and policy reform processes for introduction of the green economy concept.*
- **Specific objectives (outcomes)of the action**
  - Oc1: Strengthening of the grassroots' CSOs capacities in generic work, advocacy and networking, to be able to sustain their role of agricultural and rural reform advocates, in transparent and accountable way;
  - Oc2: Introduction of the concept of green economy as unique cross-cutting entrepreneurial model for rural diversification and sustainability;
  - Oc3: BRDN and its constituents use evidence-based policy development and rights-based advocacy to foster the national EU CAP approximation processes and promote green economy.

Intermediary specific objective of the action

Strengthened BRDN's networking and advocacy capacities, increased recognition, broadened impact and strengthened participation in policy decision-making processes.

brdn
Balkan Rural Development Network

Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia

RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK
OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

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National Rural Parliament as a voice of rural citizens

The Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, together with Connecting Natural Values and People Foundation (CNVP) and Action for Rural Development (ARD) starting from March 2017, are implementing the project "National Rural Parliament as a Voice of Rural Citizens – NRP", funded by the European Union.

The project aims to enhance the impact of the Macedonian rural CSOs and their involvement in development of public policies and decision making processes, by improving their capacities for networking and advocacy.

1. Civil Society will take active part in rural development policy making

Representatives 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 – NRP" project. This process consisted three cycles of training in Ohrid and Pehcevo implemented in the February-June period of 2018.

The first of the series of three two-day training sessions 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," included 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 society organizations and local/national authorities in the area of rural development" provided the representatives of CSOs, ways how to establish partnerships, how to implement networking activities and how to undertake lobbying and advocacy activities.

Following such a process for building the capacities in the civil sector, the project 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.

2. Selected Projects for the Support of the Small Grant Program within the framework of the National Rural Parliament Project as a voice of rural citizens

Under the sub-granting scheme for provision of financial assistance within the framework of the project **"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 the sub-granting scheme is to strengthen the cooperation between different civil society organizations and improve the dialogue they conduct with their stakeholders, such as the local governments and the private sector involved in the rural development of Macedonia.

A total of 44 applications were duly received thus far with the involvement of 88 civil society organizations working in 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.

More details about the project: http://ruralnet.mk/essential_grid/national-rural-parliament-as-a-voice-of-rural-citizens/

Balkan Rural Development Network

Rural youth assisting Macedonia in EU integration

The project "Rural youth assisting Macedonia in EU integration" is designed to encourage young people from rural areas and civil society organizations 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.

This project was promoted on 27th February, 2018 in Skopje. It is funded by the EU and implemented by four organizations. The leading organization is the Branch office in Macedonia of the Organization for Linking Natural Values and People (CNVP) with a seat in 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 organizations will make efforts to animate the young and the civil organizations 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 centers, 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.

More details about the project: http://ruralnet.mk/essential_grid/rural-youth-assisting-macedonia-in-eu-integration/

Albanian Network for Rural Development

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Roundtable discussion "Integrated Program on Rural Development and synergetic approach among stakeholders" held on 28 February 2018 at Hotel Tirana International was organized by ANRD with the support of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

The event brought together representatives of central and local institutions, major public agencies, donors and international agencies, representatives of civil society organizations, academia, and other interested actors. Among distinguished guests who addressed the event were Mr. Ilir Halilaj – Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development; Mr. Enea Hoti – Adviser to Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development; Ms. Almira Xhembulla – Member of the Parliament of Albania, and representative of the 'Friends of Rural Parliament'; Ms. Nadia Kyuchukova – representative of the EU Delegation to Albania; Mr. Grigor Gjeci – Head of the Managing Authority of MARD.

The Integrated Program on Rural Development (IPRD), known as the "100-Village" program, which marks a turnaround in the government policies and instruments that have been undertaken so far in the rural development sector represents the starting point of this event. Taking into consideration that the 100-Village program creates an enabling environment for public and non-public actors at local level to implement the LEADER approach, the Albanian Network for Rural Development (ANRD) organizes this roundtable to promote synergies at the policy level, while the same time to increase the impact of IPRD toward sustainable development. The roundtable generated an interesting debate regarding the 100-villages program as a top-down instrument and paired with bottom-up movement from local actors.

An important tool to fuel the discussions was the Commentary "The LEADER approach and the 100-Villages Program – A Complementary and Synergetic Approach to Integrated Development of Rural Areas", previously shared with all the invited guests. The policy document advocates for an integrated and sustainable development approach toward rural communities in Albania in accordance with the EU Community-Led Local Development Policy (CLLD/LEADER) in an effort to raise awareness of national and local challenges in this area. (http://anrd.al/publications-en/commentary-the-leader-approach-and-the-100-villages-program-a-complementary-and-synergetic-approach-to-integrated-development-of-rural-areas/)

Networking for Participatory Rural Development is a new initiative of three founding and most active member organizations of the ANRD - IDM, Agrinet and AgroPuka - funded by the European Union, which aims at consolidating the role of Albanian Network for Rural Development toward a functional model of bottom-up and participatory perspective in national rural agenda. The project builds upon ANRD member organizations shared vision of civil participation in the rural policy making and seeks to enhance the impact of ANRD and other rural stakeholders in advocating and influencing the formulation and implementation of rural development policy in Albania.

Specifically, the initiative will extent the Rural Parliament to the entire country through its decentralization into four regional rural parliaments. The journey toward the 2nd rural parliament, will involve ongoing efforts to consolidate the role of the ANRD, empower the non-public actors, multi-stakeholder and inter-sectoral partnerships, as well as sector-related studies and researches. All these efforts to influence processes and reforms in rural development in order to effectively address the needs and priorities of rural areas.

In the framework of this initiative, a series of activities have been carried out in the first part of 2018:

a) Local forums "Networking for participatory rural development"

During May-July 2018, the ANRD reached out to rural communities throughout the 12 districts of the country in order to identify and mobilize individuals, community groups, CSOs, nucleus etc. who have shown local leadership in rural development with the aim to connect them to rural policy-making processes. 12 local forums were carried out by bringing together nearly 250 participants. Through the local forums, active local actors and initiatives in rural development (agri-tourism, agri-business, cultural heritage, agriculture and family farms, slow-food, environment, handicrafts, etc.) were identified across the country and networking for participatory rural development.

b) Regional forums "Connecting local actors and initiatives for sustainable practices in rural development"

Four regional forums, which followed the 12 local forums, brought together about 120 participants. They aimed at empowering local actors to influence an encouraging environment for sustainable rural development. The role and contribution of active local actors regarding the interventions of the 100-Village program was on focus of the discussions. The forums contributed to provide and further consolidate through a dynamic interaction with participants a mapping of local actors, initiatives and their themes in rural development in the region.

The discussions served to develop a more functional organization of the ANRD at the local level with the aim of establishing local forums as constituent parts of the Albanian Rural Parliament initiative. Starting from September, regional and local public institutions will be invited to become part of the regional forums of rural development so as to promote the country's sustainable rural development on the agenda.

In its effort to advance an active agenda toward the second Rural Parliament, the Albanian Network for Rural Development (ANRD) drafted and shared with public and non-public rural stakeholders the Declaration "Civic Participation – A Critical Need for the 100-Village Program" as the main output of the discussions with participants in the above-mentioned local and regional forums.

http://anrd.al/publications-en/declaration-civic-participation-a-critical-need-for-the-100-village-program/

Croatian Rural Development Network

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Promotion of rural development and diversification in Khulo Municipality

Together with the Caritas Czech Republic (applicant) and PMC Research Centre, Georgia, HMRR is a partner in the project financed by European Commission - ***Promotion of rural development and diversification in Khulo Municipality*** (01/05/2017 - 28/02/2021), which aim is to contribute to the reduction of rural poverty in Georgia by improving employment and living conditions in Khulo Municipality through diversification of the rural economy.

In the first half of 2018, HMRR implemented a total of seven days of workshops in which the elements of Local Development Strategy of LAG Khulo were developed (March, April, June), and two days of workshops and consultations on writing project proposals for members of the Khulo LAG fundraising team (April, June). In addition, HMRR members - LAG Lika, LAG More 249, and their members and associates were hosts during the study visit of 14 representatives of LAG Khulo and one representative of the project partner (Czech Caritas) to Croatia (May).

Web: http://hmrr.hr/en/projects/projects/promotion-of-rural-development-and-diversification-in-khulo-municipality/

Facebook album: https://www.facebook.com/pg/Hrvatska.mreza.za.ruralni.razvoj/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1844247112276495

I volunteer and empower local rural community - encouraging volunteering in order to prevent violence against and among young people

HMRR is a partner with Volunteer Center Osijek, in project financed by Croatian Ministry of Demographics, Family, Youth and Social Policy - ***I volunteer and empower local rural community - encouraging volunteering in order to prevent violence against and among young people*** (10/16/2017 - 15/102018), which aim is to encourage young people to be the drivers of the local community development, to embrace diversity through education on volunteering and conflict resolution, and to create and participate in volunteering activities.

Activities included two workshops on introduction to management of volunteering programmes for about 30 participants, after which LAGs developed and implemented own volunteering actions on their territory (in Vukovar-srijem and Osječko-baranjska county).

Web, Facebook: http://hmrr.hr/hr/projekti/projekti-u-provedbi/volontiram-i-osnazujem-ruralnu-zajednicu/; https://www.facebook.com/pg/Hrvatska.mreza.za.ruralni.razvoj/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1842875279080345

Rural youth assisting Macedonia in EU integration

As the partner in the project ***Rural youth assisting Macedonia in EU integration*** (19/12/2017 - 18/12/2019), the main task of HMRR was to appoint an organization dealing with youth education to design and implement a train the trainers course on EU integration, together with Serbia's Rural Development Network. In June 2018, three-day training for 15 young people from rural areas of Macedonia was held in Strumica (Macedonia), by trainers from Croatia and Serbia with the main topics: EU basics and importance of negotiation chapters in the EU accession process. Participants did a lot of experiential exercises in the field of youth policy and advocacy, and in one part of the training worked as research teams.

The project is financed by European Union, and partners are CNVP foundation Macedonia (lead), HMRR, Rural Development Network of Serbia, Network for Rural Development Macedonia.

3rd Croatian Rural Parliament

Croatian Rural Development Network started with preparations for 3rd Croatian Rural Parliament that will be held on 11-13 April 2019, in Tisno Municipality. It is organized by HMRR and co-organized by LAG More 249 and Tisno municipality.

Network of Organizations for Rural Development of Kosovo*

Strategy of Active Co-operation

NORDK is in ongoing process of the consultation meetings for Strategy of Co-operation between NORDK and some other active organizations. These meetings are organized by NORDK in partnership with members and partner organizations / active groups.

PREPARE Gathering 2018:

PREPARE network and NORDK are in preparation phase of the bi-annual Gathering. The Gathering will be organized from 30th October to 1st November in Prizren region, in Kosovo. The approved programme of the ALTER project refers to "international thematic meetings between CSO Networks in the ALTER partner countries and countries with relevant experience in the European Union". The "relevant experience" relates to the key themes in the ALTER project, which may be summarized as:

- Strengthening the capacity of CSOs and CSO Networks to participate actively in policy planning and intimidation, to build a strong civil society in rural areas, and to enhance regional development through networking and cooperation
- Building the partnership of CSOs and CSO Networks with public institutions and their involvement in decision-making and governance processes, for the well-being of rural communities in those countries.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK OF KOSOVO

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Kosovo „This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence."*

Project / Campaign: "Active Youth in Rural Areas"

With support of Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, NORDK will implement the campaign aimed at informing young people from rural areas about the importance of participation in decision-making at all levels.

"Active Youth in Rural Areas" is a campaign that will be implemented in 4 villages from 4 different regions with the main purpose of sensitizing young people from rural areas for the importance of their participation in decision-making at all levels.

The activities and info-sessions which will be organized within the campaign will include presentations about components of ALTER project, information about rural development policy documents at national level and information for the modalities of establishing young farmers clubs. The campaign will last 3 months.

Network for Rural Development of Montenegro

The Assembly of the Network for Rural Development of Montenegro was held

The Network for Rural Development of Montenegro held its regular Assembly and gathering of members on 31st March 2018. On the Assembly, 4 new members were introduced to the Network and Mr. Batakovic was reelected as the president. We have presented the activities of the Network, future plans and conducted the process of future strategic development of the Network.

NETWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF MONTENEGRO

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3rd Regional Youth Routing Camp

The Network for Rural Development of Montenegro successfully organized the Third Regional Rural Youth Camp in the period from July 22 to 25, 2018 in Vučje near Nikšić. The camp, which had 40 participants, was recognized as one of the most important regional events in rural development and youth. Topics were:

- IPARD;
- LEADER approach and how to apply it best in local communities;
- Establishment and management of LAGs,
- Lobbying and advocacy,
- Establishment, organization and management of clusters.

The camp has gathered eminent lecturers from Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, the European Union, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture of Rural Development of Montenegro, who informed the participants in more detail about the IPARD program in our country.

Participants of the camp were representatives of partner organizations from seven countries in the region: Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Kosovo, Croatia and Albania.

The camp was supported by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South Eastern Europe (SWG).

Photos from the camp can be found at:
https://we.tl/UFABjuPAc9

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