E - Bulletin
No. 3
July **2019**

WE EFFECT

brdn
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

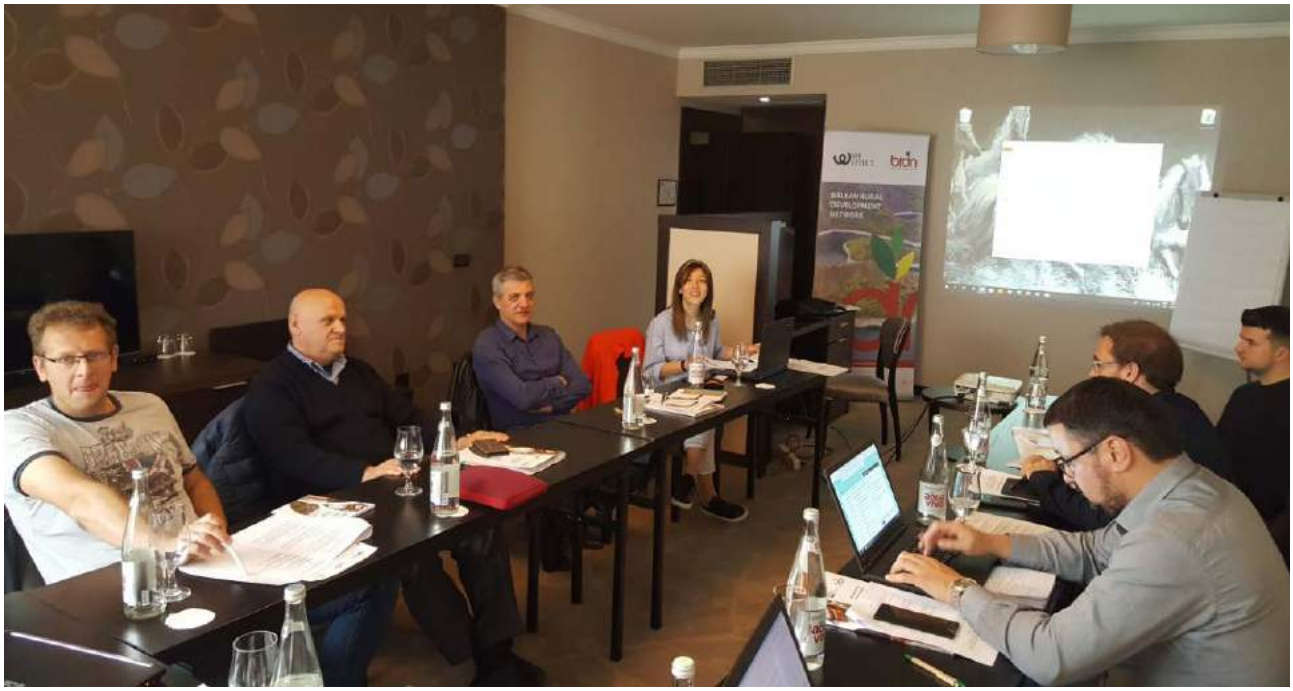
NETWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK OF KOSOVO

RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

ANRD

Developing of BRDN procedures for functioning of management and executive bodies



The Balkan Rural Development Network, starting from the last year is working on development of its Statute and procedures for functioning of the management and executive bodies. For this reason, the members of BRDN gathered in Belgrade, Serbia, in the period from May 14th till May 16th where they have discussed the draft documents and commented on the main issues related to content of Statute articles and the rulebooks. After making the final conclusions, the BRDN members discussed the details and made some modifications to the rulebooks which determine the procedures for work of the Governing structure, as well as the Secretariat and the Professional Teams, as part of the executive structure.

This meeting was also an opportunity for the members to discuss the progress of implementation of their joint projects ALTER - Active Local Territories for Economic development of Rural Areas and NAGE – Networking and Advocacy for Green Economy. They have also shared information about new initiatives for joint activities and projects.

Functioning of Gender Equality Hub within BRDN

Gender mainstreaming is one of the major challenges of BRDN for increasing the participation of the women in rural development and include women from rural communities in the decision making process since rural life and disadvantages arising thereof have been influencing rural women in different ways than rural men. Rural women from the Western Balkan countries face similar challenges due to the gender inequality which persists in the region, such as: feminized poverty; insecurity in the labor market; a growing share of unpaid care work; uneven progress on tackling harassment and violence; ensuring access to health, sexual and reproductive rights; greater duties regarding family and care for family members, lack of effective use of ownership rights, patriarchal family relations, relative invisibility in most agricultural and rural development programs and insufficient representation in the decision making process.

In order to advance gender equality within BRDN and among rural communities in the Balkan countries, the last year was established the Gender Equality Hub as part of the professional teams within the executive body of BRDN. The Gender Equality Hub consists of members nominated by each of the BRDN member organizations. During their initial meeting held in Skopje, last year, the members discussed about the Hub's priorities and activities to be implemented in a two years period.

On April 16th and 17th, 2019, the members of the BRDN's Gender Equality Hub, participated at the two-day training on gender equality and mainstreaming which was organized in Skopje, North Macedonia. The participants learned about gender roles and stereotypes; gender inequality; gender mainstreaming; gender division of labor; practical and strategic gender needs. The training helped the members of the Hub to equip with knowledge useful for their further work in applying gender mainstreaming within BRDN and among rural communities.

Networking and Advocacy for Green Economy - NAGE

Enhancing the capacities of the grassroots CSOs in the Balkan Region

Networking and Advocacy for Green Economy - NAGE project from the beginning of 2019 started with implementation of the program-specific capacity development training in order to enhance the capacities of the grassroots CSOs in advocacy, lobbying and networking, and in green entrepreneurship. To bring closer the concept of green entrepreneurship to the target beneficiaries (grassroots CSOs), and to mobilize the community in an advocacy campaign that will facilitate the EU approximation process of the national agricultural and rural development program and policies, towards the EU CAP reform, the project organized two-module training of trainers in:

i) Advocacy, lobbying, networking and constituents empowerment, and

ii) Green economy and entrepreneurship.

Through these trainings the participants from all 7 countries of the implementing project partners, gained knowledge which they are transferring at national level to the grass-root organizations.

Green Entrepreneurship Caravan

The rural development networks in the Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, Albania, Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as partners in the project NAGE – Networking and Advocacy for Green Economy, this spring, launched the Green Entrepreneurship Caravan throughout the Balkan countries. This is the first of the series of three green entrepreneurship caravans which will be implemented once per year, in all seven project-represented countries. The aim of this activity is to familiarize the stakeholders with the concept on green economy and entrepreneurship, as well as to introduce them to some practical examples.

In the Republic of North Macedonia, the Green Entrepreneurship Caravan was conceptualized in a form of field visits of green business. On April 3rd, the Caravan which included around 25 stakeholders, made a couple of stops in the Skopje surrounding, to introduce the participants with some examples of green entrepreneurship. First stop was the village of Trubarevo, where the Caravan visited a company which works on recycling of electronic waste and a company producer of organic cosmetics. During the second stop in the neighborhood of Vizbegovo, the Caravan visited a company which deals with collection, storage and treatment of waste edible oils and graphic design and printing company. An expert on green economy joined the Caravan to explain the green economy concept and its advantages. Also, the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia presented the project activities to the participants, as well as the opportunities for them to engage and take active participation in the project.

In Croatia, the Green Entrepreneurship Caravan was organized in two different places – in Sisak on March 23rd and in Nova Gradishka on March 26th. The Croatian Rural Development Network presented NAGE project objectives and activities, as well as the green economy and green entrepreneurship concepts. In both locations, different examples of good practices in the area of social and green entrepreneurship were presented, such as an ecological fruit producer with an emphasis on traditional varieties from the surroundings of Nova Gradishka, who presented his family farm and activities undertaken to raise awareness, research and preserve the old varieties of fruit. Two associations presented their activities - the Inclusive Farm Project in a rural area as a center for independent living of people with disabilities, and socially responsible company founded by association. The Caravan had a great coverage by the local media.

In Serbia, the Green Entrepreneurship Caravan aimed to promote the green economy concept among the young people, by organizing presentations in 4 secondary schools in the towns of Loznica and Sremska Mitrovica. Approximately 224 pupils participated in the Serbian Green Entrepreneurship Caravan, which was organized by the Network for Rural Development of Serbia on March 26th, 28th and 29th.

The Albanian Network for Rural Development (ANRD) organized the Green Entrepreneurship Caravan in a form of a two-day event. During the first day, exhibition named as "Green Economy through Art" was organized in the Castle of Tirana Gallery, with

help of the students of the National High School of Art. During the second day ANRD Assembly members, Agriculture University students and academics, rural development experts, rural CSO representatives and media travelled to a couple of Caravan stations where green economy principles and green enterprises were promoted. The following stations were visited:

- The Assembly of ANRD where NAGE project and its objectives were presented;
- National Agency of Nature Resources - renewal energy and its perspective in Albania;
- Tirana Business Park - innovative solutions for energy efficiency and green technologies;
- Uka bio farm - a successful green enterprise.

The Green Entrepreneurship Caravan in Montenegro was organized on April 8th, in the rural area of the biggest municipality in Montenegro – Nikshic (Župa nikšićka). To familiarize the stakeholders with the concept of green economy and entrepreneurship, the Rural Development Network of Montenegro gathered more than 40 people to present them some good practice examples, to exchange knowledge and to introduce them to NAGE project objectives and the opportunities for them to involve and take active participation in the project activities.

The Network of Organizations for Rural Development of Kosovo – NORDK organized the Green caravan in a form of two events-sessions attended by approximately 30 students of Environmental and Economic sciences from the University of Prishtina and the University of Prizren. The main purpose was to promote the concept of green entrepreneurship and its application in various countries, but also to present the overall idea of NAGE project, as a concrete regional project in the field of green economy.

The Green Entrepreneurship Caravan in Bosnia and Herzegovina was organized in two different places in Mostar: Humilishani and Kutilivac. In Humilishani, the participants visited the agricultural property of Citizens' Association ''Neshto Vishe" and there, they were introduced to energy efficiency, renewable energy sources, organic farming and permaculture. In Kutilivac, the participants visited the permaculture farm of Association ''Zemljani" which is in line with the green economy concept because the goal is to have no waste and maximum usage of natural recourses on the farm. 42 students of the Agricultural Faculty from Mostar participated in this caravan.

Networking and Advocacy for Green Economy – NAGE is a three-year project, launched in April 2018, implemented by 7 partner organizations, members of the Balkan Rural Development Network – BRDN.

The overall objective of the project is to provide support to enhance the policy and decision-making impact of Balkan Rural Development Network (BRDN) and its constituents, through involvement in the agricultural and rural program and policy reform processes for introduction of the green economy concept.

Participation of Balkan Rural Development Network (BRDN) at the networX - Inspiring Rural Europe Conference

11-12 April 2019 - Brussels, Belgium

As of 11/04/2019 to 12/04/2019 the largest ever gathering of the European rural networking community was organized in Brussels. Under the name " 'networX' – Inspiring Rural Europe, the conference's aim was to recognize the value of networking for rural development, demonstrate the results of the past ten years of rural networking and proactively look at its future. The interactive format ensured plenty of space and time for informal discussions, inspiring conversations and sharing of experiences, reaffirming the value of human connections in the digital world. Over 400 rural stakeholders from all over Europe gathered to discuss:

- The role of networking for rural policy
- how to build / transform a network
- networking for innovation in agriculture and rural areas
- LEADER/CLLD networking
- networking for evaluation
- promoting effective stakeholder engagement in networks

Parallel sessions

Presentation of Western Balkan Networks and Balkan Rural Development Network at the" NetworX Marketplace"

The Rural Development Networks of the WB countries as part of the Balkan Rural Development Network (Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo), were invited to participate at the event entitled as 'networX' Inspiring Rural Europe, organized by the Contact Point of the European Network for Rural Development. The networks from Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia as IPARD countries had an opportunity to present their work as exhibitors at marketplace stands while the Kosovo and the networks from Bosnia and Herzegovina participated as visitors. Besides the individual activities of the IPARD networks BRDN activities were also presented during the marketplace event through poster presentations and individual discussions with participants.

Participation of BRDN at the Marketplace stand

Meeting of BRDN with EU DG-Agriculture and Rural Development

During the event the BRDN had a separate meeting with DG-Agri to discuss about Networks in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

The following points were discussed:

- State of play of Technical Assistance under IPARD in each country, and possibility to finance Rural Networks under IPARD
- Rural Networks – outsourced or within the Ministry – two options possible
- Other possible sources of financing (if TA not accredited yet)
- Scope of work (thematic priorities) for Networks from IPARD countries

The representatives of DG Agri (Ms. Anna Nowak-Wood Program Manager for Serbia; and Ms. Iwona Lisztwan Program Manager for Turkey) emphasized the importance and role of networks in supporting the implementation of IPARD. It was pointed out that financial support for networks should be provided through the technical assistance measure in those countries where it is accredited, and in those where there is no such support to find other sources of funding. Such a case of government support exists only in Turkey where the National Rural Development Network is financed by the technical assistance measure. An example of successful work was given from the Turkish network during the entrustment of LEADER and TA in Turkey.

Petar Gjorgievski thanked the Directorate for the support and emphasized that all networks through the IPARD Monitoring Committees will propose solutions to the relevant ministries for establishment and financing of national networks and support of LEADER approach. He stated that in Macedonia the Technical Assistance measure is accredited but still no funds for establishment of National Rural Network are allocated yet. He also emphasized that unlike the Turkish network, the Western Balkan networks that are members of the BRDN are civil organizations and have a much wider scope of action than just IPARD, like EU integration, democracy, decentralization, advocacy and lobbying, guided by the bottom-up principles. Furthermore the relevant ministries still do not recognize the importance of networking and they need to work more closely with civil networks in the process for establishment and functioning of National Networks for better implementation of rural development programs, depending to what extent they would like to involve the CSO Networks and what model of network they will choose. Recommendations were accepted by the DG-Agri and support was offered to increase co-operation and dialogue between the relevant ministries and networks.

brdn
Balkan Rural Development Network

Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia

First National Rural Parliament in the Republic of North Macedonia

The First National Rural Parliament was organized in the Republic of North Macedonia in the period between 12 and 14 June 2019, following the positive example of the European countries that have been organizing rural parliaments for many years as an efficient process of inclusion and discussion among the rural population and the policy creators for the purpose of improving rural policies and addressing certain challenges related to rural development.

More than 90 representatives of local civil organizations, international organizations, the business sector, the local self-government, the National Extension Agency, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy met in Krushevo for the First National Rural Parliament in North Macedonia, having an opportunity to share knowledge and experience in various topics in the area of rural development, addressed at a panel discussion and work in groups. The goal of the Rural Parliament is to create a rural civil organizations national platform to be actively involved in creation of strategies and policies on rural development at national and local level.

The First National Rural Parliament was the final event to complete the three year project "National Rural Parliament as a Voice of Rural Citizens", supported by the EU, and implemented by three organizations – CNVP – Connecting Natural Values and People, RDM of RM – Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia and ARD – Action for Rural Development. In addition to the addresses of the President of the Rural Development Network – Petar Gjorgievski and the Project Manager and CNVP Director – Anela Stavrevska Panajotova, presentations and addresses were also given by the Chief of Cabinet of the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy – Trajan Dimkovski, the Krushevo Mayor – Tome Hristoski, the Rural Development Expert – Sofija Davidova, the PREPARE President – Aris Adlers, the General Secretary of the Standing Work Group for Rural Develop-

RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK
OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Contact:
Petar Gjorgievski, President
Rural Development Network
of the Republic of Macedonia
str.Kosta Veselinov 3A, 1000
Skopje, Macedonia
Tel +389 2 3075 506,
e-mail petar.g@ruralnet.mk
www.ruralnet.mk

ment of Southeast Europe SWG – Boban Ilic, Stole Georgiev from the Local Action Group Plachkovica and professor Jorde Jakimovski, PhD from the Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical research.

'The goal is to include all these organizations that could help in policy creation, since the state cannot reach the priorities in each and every municipality, and each planning region has a different priority, so hence civil organizations are those that could be a good partner of the state that creates the policies', stressed Anela Stavrevska Panajotova, CNVP Director.

'We hope to include the Ministry of Agriculture in the future organization of the National Rural Parliament, because a united approach of the civil sector and the national government is the only way to jointly contribute to improving life in rural areas', stressed Petar Gjorgievski, President of the Rural Development Network of Macedonia.

Participants at the Parliament had an opportunity to discuss and address issues during the activities in the thematic groups:

- Topic 1. Opportunities for employment of young people, women and other vulnerable categories of citizens in rural areas
- Topic 2. LEADER Programme
- Topic 3. Rural diversification
- Topic 4. Sustainable agriculture and practices

Conclusions and recommendations adopted as a result of the group work were further included in the final product – the Manifesto of the National Rural Parliament. This Manifesto, to be officially submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, as well as to other relevant institutions, provides the major directions and priorities to guide rural policy.

The First National Rural Parliament ended with field visits, in the course of which participants had opportunities to see positive examples for rural entrepreneurship, rural and alternative tourism, natural potentials and resources in the regions of Prespa and Mavrovo-Rostushe, as well as to taste specialties of the traditional Macedonian cuisine. These meetings provided opportunity for sharing experience with the rural population and views and opinions regarding sustainability and welfare in rural areas.

The voice of Rural Youth in North Macedonia

On May 29, 2019, in Skopje, the EU funded project "Rural youth assisting North Macedonia in EU integration" implemented by CNVP Foundation and the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, organized the final event which was attended by the young people who were part of the training for trainers within the project, all organizations that had some role in the project implementation, high school teachers, youth organizations and representatives from municipalities and public organizations. The implemented project activities and lessons learned were presented at the event, as well as a summary of the recommendations provided by the youth from the Eastern and South-Eastern region where the project activities took place.

Special attention was given to the Manual for youth activism that was prepared by the youth expert Antonio Danilovski. This manual is a product of the project and serves as a guide to help facilitators, trainers and experts working on youth activism, to disseminate and implement programs for young people who are interested in making change in their municipality, city and country. The event was enriched by the representatives of the project partners from the rural development networks of Serbia and Croatia, who gave some positive examples of implemented projects for youth and actions for youth activism. The representative of the Youth club from Stip and project partner, Dragana Mirkovic, elaborated the sustainability of the project through the platform created by signing the declaration for cooperation of the organizations from the eastern and southeastern region. It was followed by a discussion on targeting the youth and the importance of persistence in advocating their interests. In the end, the project manager Saso Petrovski awarded acknowledgments for participation and selfless contribution in the implementation of the project to the organizations CELOR from Radovish, Youth Club from Stip, Horti Eko from Strumica, the National Agency for Mobility and Education, and the youngest activist and participant in the project Slobodancho Gorgiev from Vinica. The event was moderated by Biljana Vasilevska- Trajkovska, representative of the National Youth Council of Macedonia.

Info graphic on the results of the project

About the course of the project, the results of the activities, the lessons learned and the summarized recommendations, a short info graphic with basic data was produced.

For more info http://ruralnet.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Infografik.pdf

Albanian Network for Rural Development

1. Public debate on national agricultural and rural development policies

The national roundtable on Governance of Agriculture and Rural Development (held on February 12th, 2019) brought national policies on agriculture and rural development to the core of public discourse. In particular, it aimed to raise stakeholders' awareness on challenges and critical issues of the agricultural and rural development policies and to influence their improvement. Over 80 participants from all over the country, representatives of central government institutions and local authorities, civil society, farmers› associations and rural entrepreneurs, academics, experts, donor representatives, etc. were present and contributed to discussions. Pictures can be found on this face book post: https://www.facebook.com/anrd.al/posts/2275787152701697?sfnsw=cl

Contact:
Evelina Azizaj, National Coordinator
Albanian Network for Rural Development
Str. Shenasi Dishnica,
Bldg. 35, E. 1, 1017
PO Box 8177 Tirana, Albania
Tel (+ 355 4) 2400241
Mail: eazizaj@idmalbania.org
info@anrd.al;
website: www.anrd.al

The Position Paper on Governance of Agriculture and Rural Development, prepared with the input of farmers and other stakeholders involved in the consultation process, addresses the main issues and weaknesses of the national sector policy framework and provides recommendations for addressing the barriers to effective policies.

Following the roundtable discussions, ANRD furthered the **Appeal for 'National Dialogue on Governance of Agriculture and Rural Development – A Critical Necessity".** The call is a plea for Parliamentary Commission on Production, Trade and Environment, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, as well as other public institutions to build ongoing dialogue for discussing the challenges and barriers that hinder the policies and supporting instruments of the sector from being effective and identifying swift and feasible solutions. It also expressed ANRD member organizations' full readiness to cooperate with institutions to advance Albanian rural Agenda.

2. "Boosting rural youth ICT and soft skills to increase integration and employability in the labour market"

From April 2019, ANRD is implementing "Boosting rural youth ICT and soft skills to increase integration and employability in the labour market" project, supported by UNDP Albania with the financial support of British Embassy in Tirana. The project seeks to enhance the employability of young people in Diber area through acquisition of basic knowledge and skills needed to access the labour market and other development opportunities. The envisaged activities are designed to increase public outreach and mobilization, increase awareness and capacities of young people on the use of ICT (information and communications technology) and soft skills and necessary means to employment; and contribute to promote a new culture on new employment models and competencies.

3. Regional workshops "Existing initiatives and the perspective of implementing the LEADER approach in the territories of Drini, Arberi, Egnatia and Vjosa Forums"

During March 2019, in the frame of "Networking for participatory rural development" project, ANRD organized four regional workshops to inform local actors and enable the exchange of existing LEADER-like initiatives in the territories of the four forums. The workshops were organized in close collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, reaffirming the significance of public-private partnership in rural development. In addition, the workshops served as an opportunity to increase the knowledge of local actors about LEADER approach, exchange experiences and know how, and share the perspective of LEADER implementation in Albania. The role and contribution of different actors in relation to the dynamics required by the LEADER approach at local level was at the core of presentations and discussions.

Croatian Rural Development Network

Contact:

Albert Varga, President
Croatian Rural Development Network
Kruge 48, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
Tel +385 1 550 5774,
e-mail: info@hmrr.hr
www.hmrr.hr
Facebook https://www.facebook.com/Hrvatska.mreza.za.ruralni.razvoj/

3rd CROATIAN RURAL PARLIAMENT (Vodice and Tisno, May 20-23, 2019)

Croatian Network for Rural Development (HMRR) organized the Third Croatian Rural Parliament in Vodice and Tisno, in the Šibenik-Knin County, together with the Ministry of Agriculture/Network for Rural Development (MRR), and Local Action Group "More 249" as host and co-organizer of the event. The main theme was "Smart villages". The Parliament gathered more than 300 participants from all over, and international guests.

The second day was dedicated to presentations on current topics - smart villages, the future of the CAP and guidelines for the new programming period, and to discussions of participants in five smaller groups (rural café) on various topics.

On third day, the participants had opportunity to exchange experience and opinions on topics crucial for the growth and development of rural areas, at ten field workshops at different locations in Šibenik-Knin county. Topics included smart management, co-operation of stakeholders at the local level and possibilities for multi-funded financing of rural development, environmental protection, nature and climate, resource conservation, sustainable development, digital villages, transportation options in rural areas and islands, how to keep young people in rural areas, and resources in fisheries.

On the last day, valuable conclusions of all the thematic workshops were presented. The conclusions of the Third Croatian Rural Parliament will serve as a very important element in discussions about the next programming period.

Web:

http://ruralniparlament.com/

http://hmrr.hr/en/news/from-hmrr/3hrp/

Information and photos of all activities can be found on a HMRR web page http://hmrr.hr/en/home/ and Facebook https://www.facebook.com/Hrvatska.mreza.za.ruralni.razvoj/

Project "Voice of the rural Croatia" (March 2019 - June 2019.)

Objective of the project, funded by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, is to involve citizens (especially in rural areas) in discussing the current and future programming period of the EU, with a focus on rural development policy, thus enabling them to actively engage in formulating the next Rural Development Program through expressing attitudes and needs in their communities.

Activities included organization of four consultative workshops with citizens and creation of an informative brochure for informing citizens about the Rural Development Program and possibilities of financing rural development and projects through EU funds.

This material is completely or partly financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and We Effect.
Sida and We Effect does not necessarily agree with the opinions expressed.