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MEMBERS OF THE BALKAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

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Mreža za ruralni razvoj u Bosni i Hercegovini

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ANRD

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BRDN General Assembly held on December 2 and 3, 2021

As from its official registration, BRDN, this year organized the second General Assembly, in Belgrade, Serbia, on December 2nd and 3rd. Besides the BRDN Assembly members and representatives of the BRDN Secretariat, the meeting was attended by representatives of relevant partners and donors of BRDN, such as: We Effect, GIZ and SWG. The comprehensive agenda of the Assembly included report on the results and activities implemented by BRDN and the member-networks during 2021; share of experiences from the implementation of the joint projects of BRDN members (NAGE and ALTER); adoption of BRDN internal documents, such as the BRDN's Anti-corruption and Integrity Policy; as well as presentation and discussions on the operational plan for 2022 and the fundraising opportunities for BRDN.

National LEADER events organized in the BRDN member countries

The BRDN member-networks organized LEADER events at national level, to strengthen their position as promotors of the LEADER approach in their countries. In accordance with the current situation regarding LEADER in each country, different types of LEADER events were organized, gathering all relevant right-holders and providing opportunities for share of knowledge and experience.

North Macedonia (10th – 13th May, in Gevgelija)

With financial support of the German Development Cooperation - GIZ, RDN of NM organized a three-day event for LAGs' representatives at national level. The participants learned about LAG animation; how to get to know the local community; how to mobilize people into action and to build partnerships.

With financial support of the Swedish development organization, We Effect, through the project for support to BRDN in institutional development to Revive Rural Communities in the Western Balkan, the BRDN member-networks of Albania, Kosovo, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, organized national LEADER events in their countries, throughout the period from September till December 2021.

Albania (23rd September, in Tirana)

ANRD gathered 28 representatives of active and potential LAGs, civil society organizations, national and local authorities and donor community that support integrated rural development, including FAO, UN Women, GIZ etc. The event was organized in cooperation with the IPARD Managing Authority in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development with the intention of giving a new impetus to the implementation of the LEADER approach, after long waiting for a national undertaking toward LEADER approach implementation in the rural communities across Albania.

Kosovo (2nd September, Prishtina)

NORDK gathered 20 stakeholders at national level, to discuss the challenges and problems of the functioning of the Local Action Groups, as well as the ideas and recommendations related to LEADER implementation, which can be addressed through the working group on LEADER in the process of preparation and drafting of the new Program for Agriculture and Rural Development – ARDP.

Serbia (26th October, Belgrade)

NRD of Serbia in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management and the existing LAGs, organized hybrid event in Belgrade, giving an opportunity for participation of 37 stakeholders. The goal of the event was to improve the environment for LEADER implementation in Serbia, through emphasizing the importance of LEADER implementation for development of the rural communities in Serbia; presenting the actual situation with supporting LAGs in Serbia and planned activities for their support; sharing first-hand experience by LAGs about their development process from the establishment till now; as well as good practices of the LAGs in project implementation as support to their Local Development Strategies.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (29th October, Han Pijesak)

Considering the specific situation with LEADER in BiH, presented by only one active LAG – LAG Devetak, the NRD in BiH gathered stakeholders from Han Pijesak and Sokolovac, the 2 municipalities that cover this LAG. The LEADER approach and the work of the LAG were presented at the event, to motivate the local stakeholders (with focus on youth) to get actively involved in the work of the LAG Devetak.

Montenegro (24th November, Niksic)

The NRD of Montenegro invited LAG manager from one Croatian LAG to the LEADER event, to share knowledge and positive examples related LEADER implementation in Croatia. The LEADER stakeholders of Montenegro were introduced to the LEADER approach and the existing LAGs initiatives, including the new LAG initiative "Župa". The group discussed and shared experiences related to future LEADER implementation in Montenegro.

Croatia (26th November, Rupić rural household)

As an EU country, Croatia has a long-term experience in implementation of the EU LEADER approach. Therefore, the Croatian Network for Rural Development, organized a national LEADER event to discuss about the evolution of the LEADER approach in the EU and Croatia, the current state of affairs related to the implementation of LEADER / CLLD in Croatia, as well as the opportunities of LAGs and FLAGs in the new programming period 2021/2023-2027.

BRDN Celebrated the International Day of Rural Women

The long-standing tradition of the Rural Development Network of North Macedonia in organizing national events on the occasion of the International Day of Rural Women – October 15, in 2021, was expended in the other Western Balkan countries, by the BRDN member-networks. With financial support of We Effect, the rural development networks, members of BRDN, organized events in their countries focusing on the importance of rural women for food security. The events in Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, gathered about 200 stakeholders. The events' program included field visits of local women farmers and entrepreneurs, share of positive examples of rural women entrepreneurship and discussions on the role of women for providing food security.

RDN of NM and the National Federation of Farmers, organized online conference on "Economic empowerment of women in rural areas in the context of a sustainable food security system", providing networking opportunities and knowledge transfer among 70 participants from the government institutions, NGOs, donors, rural women and farmers from N. Macedonia.

Balkan Green Businesses Stories

Enjoy the travel around Western Balkans and get inspired from the green businesses presented in the video "Balkan Green Businesses Stories", prepared within the EU funded project NAGE-Networking and Advocacy for Green Economy.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVa8qg0wuKs

Successful Closure of the NAGE Project

With a feeling of satisfaction and pride, we celebrated our successes and achievements together at the close-out conference of the EU-funded NAGE – Networking and Advocacy for Green Economy project, organized online, on November 10th, 2021.

Representatives of all BRDN members, as project partner organizations, including the Rural Development Networks of North Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, addressed the present attendants. The participants provided an overview of the project activities and the achieved results, presented the BRDN digital platform (http://brd-network.org/) and the mobile application, and showcased good practices and positive examples from each country. As part of the project, Roadmap to Green Economy in the Western Balkans was also prepared, with proposed steps and actions for introducing and advancing the green economy concept in the Western Balkan countries.

The green economy practices don't end here. The partner organizations are determined to continue with their activities for promoting the concept of green economy as a unique cross-sector entrepreneurial model for development and sustainability.

NORDK successfuly conducted the Annual Assembly meeting for 2021

Network of Organizations for Rural Development of Kosovo (NORDK) held its regular Annual Assembly for 2021 according to the working plan.

In the beginning of the annual meeting with sufficient quorum, were presented and discussed the most relevant challenges, difficulties and developments throughout the year.

The following important decisions were reviewed and voted by the members:

- Review of 4 (four) new applications for membership, of 4 organizations-associations and voting for their membership;
- Approval of the new Strategy, 2022-2026;
- The preparatory process for the 2nd edition of the Rural Parliament as well as other plans and needs for the next year in harmony with newly adopted Strategy;

The annual meeting of the Assembly concluded with a joint end-of-year lunch.

ANRD Rural Youth Hub (RYH)

In the frame of the consolidation of the ANRD Rural Youth Hub as a functional platform towards the processes and policies focused on youth and rural development (EU Project Rural You), three events boosting the exchange of experiences and knowledge among young people active in various organizations and initiatives in sustainable rural development, were organized in different rural areas of Albania. On December 21-22, 2021, ANRD organized the exchange visit 'Rural Youth: Exchange of experiences and knowledge about their opportunities, challenges and needs for the consolidation of the Rural Youth Hub' in rural areas of Durrës municipality. Also, two traveling workshops joined by a group of 30 young people from the hub were organized during July 28-29, 2021, at the Polia Guesthouse, Theth, and August 26-27, at the Grand Albanik farm, Këlcyrë. At the three events participated young people with different backgrounds, including young farmers, activists, representatives of civil society organizations mainly focusing on strengthening the agriculture and rural development sector.

- https://anrd.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/EN-ANRD-Newsletter-%E2%80%A2-Maj-Gusht-20211.pdf
- https://anrd.al/lajme/pervjetori-i-qendres-rinore-rurale-rural-youth-hub

New impulse and mechanisms for boosting the development of rural areas in Albania – Project "Academy from Farm to Fork – V4 for Sustainable Agriculture in Albania."

In the framework of the Academy from Farm to Fork, a project financed by Visegrad Fund, from 30 June to 3 July 2021, the Albanian Network for Rural Development (ANRD) implemented a series of activities, carried out in the presence of the project's farmer-beneficiaries, experts from Visegrad countries, and representatives of partner network organizations at the local level. The activities started with demonstration workshops and visits to three pilot investments funded by the subgrating scheme of this project.

The main purpose of the demonstration workshops consisted in giving visibility to these initiatives as a good opportunity to be piloted in other rural areas of Albania, orienting small farmers towards increasing the sustainability and diversification of their activities. During the workshops along with the presentation of the implemented actions were disseminated good practices and information on the New Green Deal principles, postulates and actions. On July 2nd in Durrës, took place the final event – the Roundtable on lessons learned from pilot investments and their evaluation. Visegrad experts brought to the table interesting experiences and insight from the rural realities of the countries they come from encouraging the efforts of the Albanian colleagues on the path of setting up initiatives for sustainable rural development and the protection of biodiversity.

- https://anrd.al/anrd-events/exchange-of-best-practices-and-lessons-learned-from-the-visegrad-countries-on-biodiversity-protection-and-sustainable-agriculture/

ANRD's Fundraising Campaign "You Are Not Alone!"

In the frame of 3rd Edition of the 'Pro Rural Women" event it was launched ANRD's newest initiative - the Fundraising Campaign "You Are Not Alone! Support today livelihoods for the women living in the rural communities and they will provide for themselves, their family and community for the entire life aiming at taking a concrete step to support the most vulnerable part of rural women". The event and the fundraising campaign aimed a better connection with the concerns, the aspirations and the energies of rural women, channeling their energy into concrete initiatives that will benefit the sustainable development of rural communities and of the whole Albanian society. The third edition of Pro Rural Women was supported by We Effect and the Balkan Rural Development Network.

- https://anrd.al/news/key-highlights-2021-edition-of-the-pro-rural-women/
- https://anrd.al/news/support-livelihoods-for-the-women-living-in-the-rural-communities-today-and-they-will-provide-for-themselves-their-family-and-community-for-the-entire-life/

Success stories from Rural Development Network of North Macedonia

MSD project interventions

In the period from June to December, 2021, the RDN of NM, within the project „Organizational Development of RDN of NM and development of sustainable models for food security in local communities ", supported by We Effect Europe and Sida, conducted about 50 interviews through which, managed to identify problems in local communities. Practicing the MSD approach, two pilot interventions were defined. The MSD (Market system development) approach is about identifying the root causes of poor performance in certain markets that are particularly important to people in rural communities, with aim to create lasting change that will have a major impact on the community. This approach seeks to change the way markets operate so that low-income people will be included in the benefits of growth and economic development.

MSD project interventions defined through this approach are aimed at local rural communities, their resilience, and sustainability in rural development with a special emphasis on poor community members.

The first pilot intervention is aimed at supporting the establishment of a value chain in the fruit sector - subsector pomegranate. The intervention in this sector will be aimed at improving market access and increasing productivity and standards. The processing company, which is an intervention partner in the pilot intervention, is at the beginning of its development and therefore will work on increasing the trust between the buyer and the pomegranate producers. At the same time, the intervention will provide market access to the final product through the development of marketing and promotional activities.

The second pilot intervention concerns the strengthening of the value chain in the vegetable sector – subsector onion. The intervention in this sub-sector will be aimed at improving market access and increasing productivity through the application of agro-technical measures and standards in production. A purchasing company has been identified that is ready to cooperate with potential suppliers / farmers and through agreed production the mutual relations will be built.

The Pehchevo food processing workshop has officially started working!

The food processing workshop, as a concept, is a kitchen that is properly equipped and certified in accordance with food processing and sales regulations and HACCP standards and serves as a common space in which all local stakeholders can schedule a date for preparation and processing of their products while making full use of the equipment from the workshop for processing the products they will procure. In addition, the food processing workshop will conduct various trainings and events for the preparation of traditional food, which contributes to greater cooperation and is an opportunity to transfer knowledge to younger generations, as well as achieve greater inclusion.

With the opening of this food processing workshop, we believe that in the future, local production and processing of fresh food will increase and improve, sales, local employment and positive economic impact will increase.

Thematic group on gender equality and economic empowerment of rural women

Rural women play a key role in rural development. At a meeting with the RDN's thematic group on gender equality and economic empowerment of rural women, the participants discussed the problems of women in rural areas that were particularly deepened due to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the future activities of the thematic group.

The purpose of the meeting was for women from rural areas to give their own suggestions and proposals for activities for the next 2022 that would help them in their further work and would further strengthen them economically.

Thematic group of young people

How can young people be more involved in rural development? Through the thematic group of young people, which works within the RDN of NM, we encourage young people from rural areas to identify the needs of their peers.

In addition to identifying the problems, the young people during one of the meetings of the thematic group actively worked on offering possible solutions to them. Some of the proposals included support for opening youth hubs in rural areas, development of rural tourism and creation of new offers as well as support of business ideas and initiatives by granting and re-granting young entrepreneurs for modernization and digitalization of rural businesses, with special emphasis of agricultural production.

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