



# LDA

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY STRUGA

## 2009 Annual Report

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# Vision and Mission

Vision of Local Development Agency – Struga (LDA) is creating sustainable solutions for the development of the Municipality of Struga and southwest region from Macedonia.

LDA – Struga is basing it's vision on the universal principles for sustainable socioeconomic development, social inclusion of vulnerable groups, equality between man and women in all spheres of life, intercultural cooperation and environmental protection.

Mission of LDA Struga is to achieve improved quality of life for the inhabitants from urban and rural areas of the Municipality of Struga, to promote social inclusion, to develop new sustainable forms of tourism and to contribute to regional development by cooperating with various actors from the south-west region of Macedonia and neighboring Albania.



# Long-Term Goals

- Support of intercultural cooperation and inter ethnical dialogue.
- Promotion of sustainable forms of tourism.
- Help achieve the Millennium Development Goals by providing better and equal access to services for socially marginalized groups.
- Regional development by networking with various actors from the region and cooperating on regional and cross border projects.
- To decrease the development gap between urban and rural areas in our region.
- To improve the quality of life of local inhabitants in south-west region of Macedonia.
- LDA is recognized as influential actor in the region with the knowledge and capacity to help the development of the municipality, region and the civil society through its programs.



# Programs & Projects

In 2009, within the 4 programs, LDA Struga has submitted 11 applications to 10 donors. Five of them have been approved and six are in the process of deciding.

## URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The main goal of this program is to decrease the development gap between urban and rural areas in our region and to improve the quality of life of local inhabitants. In our region we need to increase cooperation and exchange knowledge between stakeholders from the rural and urban communities and increase the cooperation between public, nonprofit and private sectors.

LDA has developed a participatory approach in regard to achieving the goals of this program. During the drafting of the Municipality of Struga's Strategy and Action Plan, LDA established 7 citizen's advisory boards in various spheres of life. These boards are comprised of representatives from

three major sectors: public, non-profit and private. Ever since these boards have been established, LDA consults with the board members on how to develop an integrated approach to resolving certain problems.

In 2009 we have implemented the project ***Educational Material for Children Living in the Area of the Future Jablanica National Park.***

**About the project:** The youngest members of our society need to be informed about environmental protection if we want to achieve long-term success in dealing with environmental problems. Our goal in this project was for the children to understand their environment and be aware of the inseparable connection between people and nature. In order to achieve this goal we developed promotional material and held activities for children living near the future Jablanica National Park. During one activity the following topics were discussed with the children:

- What is a National Park?
- What are their obligations towards the National Park?
- How can they contribute to the protection of nature?
- Endemic species of flora and fauna on Mountain Jablanica.
- Attractive places for hiking and recreation.

**Time Frame:** January 2009 – September 2009

**Partners:** Primary schools in the region of Jablanica

**Results:** The brochure and the promotional posters that were created in this project, combined with the field visits and workshops in schools, has reduced the lack of information in the regular curricula about environmental protection.

The brochure is a one-of-a-kind source of information about flora and fauna in the future Jablanica National Park, as well information about the unique natural species in the future park that must be preserved and protected by future generations.

**Supported by:** Macedonian Ecological Society, Euronatur, BfN





The cross-border areas of Albania and Macedonia have the same geographic features, similar potentials for the development of natural resources and similar constraints related to the protection and the valuation of these resources. The two countries share common valuable natural resources, particularly Ohrid and Prespa Lakes and the Drim River. This program's major goal is to contribute to the EU efforts for regional development by networking with various actors from the region and cooperating on regional and cross border projects. To meet the goals of this program, our team has implemented a cross-border project for ***Promotion of Organic Agriculture as Alternative for Protection of Ohrid and Prespa Lakes.***

**About the project:** Health and environmental protection are becoming main priorities at a global and local level. People living in urban communities are especially concerned about how to obtain healthy food and protect their health. The media informs the public about the consequences of diseases, but does not inform them about locally available healthy food. Usage of pesticides in conventional agriculture negatively influences the health of consumers and the biodiversity of the lakes.

The main goal of this project is to promote behavior change and to stimulate consumption and production of organic food in urban areas in the Ohrid and Prespa Cross Border Regions. Main activities are awareness raising campaigns, assessments of public opinion, workshops and cross border meetings with farmers, experts and municipality authorities. The target groups are farmers and consumers from the municipalities of Ohrid, Struga, Debarca and Pogradec.



**Time Frame:** September 2008 - December 2010

**Partners:** Civil Society Organization PEF from Pogradec

**Results:**

- Established four Citizens' Advisory Boards (one in each municipality) comprised of farmers, the Agency for Agricultural Support, local branches of the Ministry for Agriculture and representatives from the Municipalities.
- Created a Logo and Motto for the Project: *Take care of yourself. Take care of nature. Organic food.*
- Designed and produced posters, fliers, t-shirts, hats, paper and cloth bags.
- Organized two joint visits to organic farms in Pogradec, Albania and Valandovo, Macedonia. Participants were farmers from two countries and they used the opportunity to share good farming practices.
- Organized two joint seminars for the Citizens' Advisory Boards in both countries and 30 field workshops for the farmers included in the project.
- Selected local farmers that produce healthy food and promoted their work in the local media.
- Drafted and published an assessment of public opinion about organic food.
- Setup free stands for the promotion and sale of organic food.

**Supported by:** This initiative is supported by the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe's [SECTOR Programme](#), funded by the [Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency \(Sida\)](#).



This program is designed to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals by providing better and equal access to services for socially marginalized groups. Our main goal is to develop projects for social integration of women, elderly and disabled people. Existing common social problems such as poverty, unemployment, lack of continuing education and training programs are experienced with more intensity by these groups.

In 2009 in the framework of this program we have realized two projects: ***Theater of the Oppressed - Education Tool for Behavior Change and A Step Towards Gender Equality.***

### A Step Towards Gender Equality

**About the project:** Democratic societies in which women and men have equal opportunities tend to be more developed compared to societies that still operate under a patriarchal system. In Macedonia, as a patriarchal society, it is of utmost importance to support women and strengthen their capacities. The goal of this project is to assist women to become more active in pursuing their rights, especially at the local government level. Through Women's Forums, training and conferences, we will bring together a wide range of stakeholders that will discuss topics about gender equality. Since unemployed and poor women are one of the target groups of our project, we will provide information about where and how to obtain free counseling services for women whose rights are violated. Part of the training will help women increase their economic potential and help them develop business ideas.



**Time Frame:** January 2009 – May 2010

**Partners:** NGO "The Blue Project" – Ohrid, Centers for Social Work, Ministries of Internal Affairs, Courts, local media, Commissions for Equal Opportunities from Ohrid and Struga

**Results:**

- Conducted awareness-raising campaign (brochures, fliers, monthly newsletters, TV interviews).
- Established Women's Forums in Ohrid and Struga and organized monthly discussions on various topics.
- Conducted and published research on gender equality.
- Organized 2 conferences and 8 training sessions.
- Submitted Plan of Action on Gender Equality to local authorities.

**Supported by:** European Union



## Theater of the Oppressed - Education Tool for Behavior Change

**About the project:** The welfare of the society is closely connected with the welfare of the families in it. The principles used in family relations are inevitably reflected in the whole society. Children that grow up in a healthy environment where parents demonstrate respect, love and cooperation, will continue using these values outside of their homes. Opposite to this, children who are witnessing domestic violence can later on become an oppressor themselves and accept being victimized as something normal. Young people often cannot recognize and identify domestic violence as a negative behavior because violence is still considered as a taboo topic that is not to be discussed.



The goal of this project is to teach young people how to recognize and deal efficiently with negative behaviors among family members. Our main activities are workshops and performances using a methodology called "Theater of the Oppressed", awareness-raising campaigns and the establishment of a coordinative body against domestic violence comprised of members from relevant institutions.

**Time Frame:** September 2009 – December 2010

**Partners:** Organization of Women – Struga, NGO "Blue Project"-Ohrid, Red Cross – Ohrid

**Results:**

- Established coordinative bodies against domestic violence in Ohrid, Struga and Vevcani with representatives from relevant local institutions including a signed Memorandum for Cooperation.
- Young participants in the "Theater of the Oppressed" trainings will begin to recognize negative behavior patterns in their families and act as change agents bringing positive solutions.
- Parents and families for the first time will have an opportunity to watch situations of domestic violence performed on the stage by their children. They will easily recognize the roles of the oppressor and the oppressed and this will prompt them to reexamine their lives as well.
- Printed and distributed posters and fliers in Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish under the motto *"Do not allow violence to become part of your family"*.

**Supported by:** This Project is supported by UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund as a part of the UN Joint Project to prevent domestic violence





This program's major goal is to support the development of sustainable forms of tourism (such as ecological, cultural, rural, religious and archeological) that can provide income to locals but do not have a negative effect on the people and environment. Tourism is the greatest potential for development of the region and a major priority for most of the stakeholders. All the municipalities in our region have many natural resources that easily lend to the development of tourism activities: stunning mountainous landscapes with national parks perfect for the development of winter and mountain sports, clear blue lakes with beautiful beaches and a pleasant climate for summer tourism, and world famous historical and spiritual sites.

In 2009 in the framework of this program we have realized two projects: ***Guidelines "Alternative forms of Tourism on Mountain Jablanica" and Support for the National Park Galichica.***

### **Guidelines "Alternative Forms of Tourism on Mountain Jablanica"**

**About the project:** The region of National Park Jablanica has a huge potential for development of sustainable forms of tourism that will positively influence the natural environment. Tourism is providing an opportunity to learn how to use the protected areas of Jablanica Mountain without abusing them. The development of alternative forms of tourism is especially important for the areas where there is authentic cultural heritage connected with the possibilities for recreation, cultural experiences and/or outdoor activities. High unemployment rates are a major socioeconomic problem in the region of Jablanica. Poverty is threatening the life of the villages and is increasing the migration of the village's residents to larger cities.

The goal of this project is to prepare guidelines for use of the National Park Jablanica that will include possible ideas for development of tourism in the region. It will also provide information for the region's residents on how to develop a sustainable tourism offer in the park.

**Time Frame:** January 2009 – September 2009

**Partners:** Prof. Naume Marinovski – Faculty of Tourism and Catering

**Results:**

- Drafted the Guidelines "*Alternative forms of tourism in Jablanica*".
- Provided training for people living in the villages Lukovo, Nerezi, Podgorci, Vevcani, Radozda, Kalista, Jablanica, Vishni and Gorna Belica.
- Project activities have increased the collective awareness about the importance of having a National Park as well as the protection of endemic species of flora and fauna and sustainable usage of the natural resources.
- Team of LDA offered free advice to all interested inhabitants for the possibilities of development of sustainable forms of tourism in the region of Jablanica, as well as starting up of small businesses that will be based on principles of protection of environment and sustainable usage.

**Supported by:** Macedonian Ecological Society and Euronatur



## Support for the National Park Galichica



**About the project:** National Park Galichica is situated between Ohrid and Prespa lakes and has 17 villages and more than 5000 inhabitants. The park is rich with plants and herbs such as common juniper (*Juniperus communis*), mountain tea (*Sideritis raeseri*), thyme (*Thymus spp.*), yarrow (*Achillea spp.*), strawflower (*Helichrysum spp.*), rose hip and hawthorn berry. Since the 1990s, when the economic situation became strained in the region, the locals have been collecting and using the natural resources of the park to make things for their own consumption or to sell for a source of income. For example, many of the herbs are used for medicinal purposes, tea is sold, etc.

When developing a new plan for use of the park, it was identified that the park should develop guidelines for sustainable usage and production of forest fruits and other natural resources.

One goal of this project was to conduct research on how the unprotected areas of the park could continue to be used by the locals in a sustainable low impact way without conflicting with the goals for protection of the park. Another goal of this project was to educate the locals living near or in the National Park Galichica on how they can continue to cultivate medicinal herbs, tea and fruit with minimal impact to the park and its environment.

**Time Frame:** June 2009 – October 2009

**Partners:** Public Institution National Park Galichica

### Results:

- Analyzed international research regarding the use of natural resources in protected areas.
- Performed a critical assessment of the *Study for Other Forest Fruits in Galichica*, made in 2008, and assessed the opportunities for organic production.
- Analyzed the market for forest fruits and organic products with special focus on mountain tea (*Sideritis raeseri*), rose hip (*Rosa sp.*) and common juniper (*Juniperus communis*), organic sheep breeding and organic bee keeping.
- Analyzed the potential business partners for production, processing, purchasing and trade of the above-mentioned products.
- Analyzed the areas in the park that are appropriate for sustainable collection of forest fruits for organic production, organic sheep breeding and bee keeping.
- Documented business concepts and plans.
- Made recommendations for branding and quality control of the products.
- Made recommendations on how to involving the visitors centers, info points of the national park, local souvenir shops, restaurants and hotels in the area.
- Made recommendations for possible financial and technical support, including state subsidies, EU funds and other programs.
- Trained potential farmers and gatherers of wild herbs and fruits.

**Supported by:** KfW



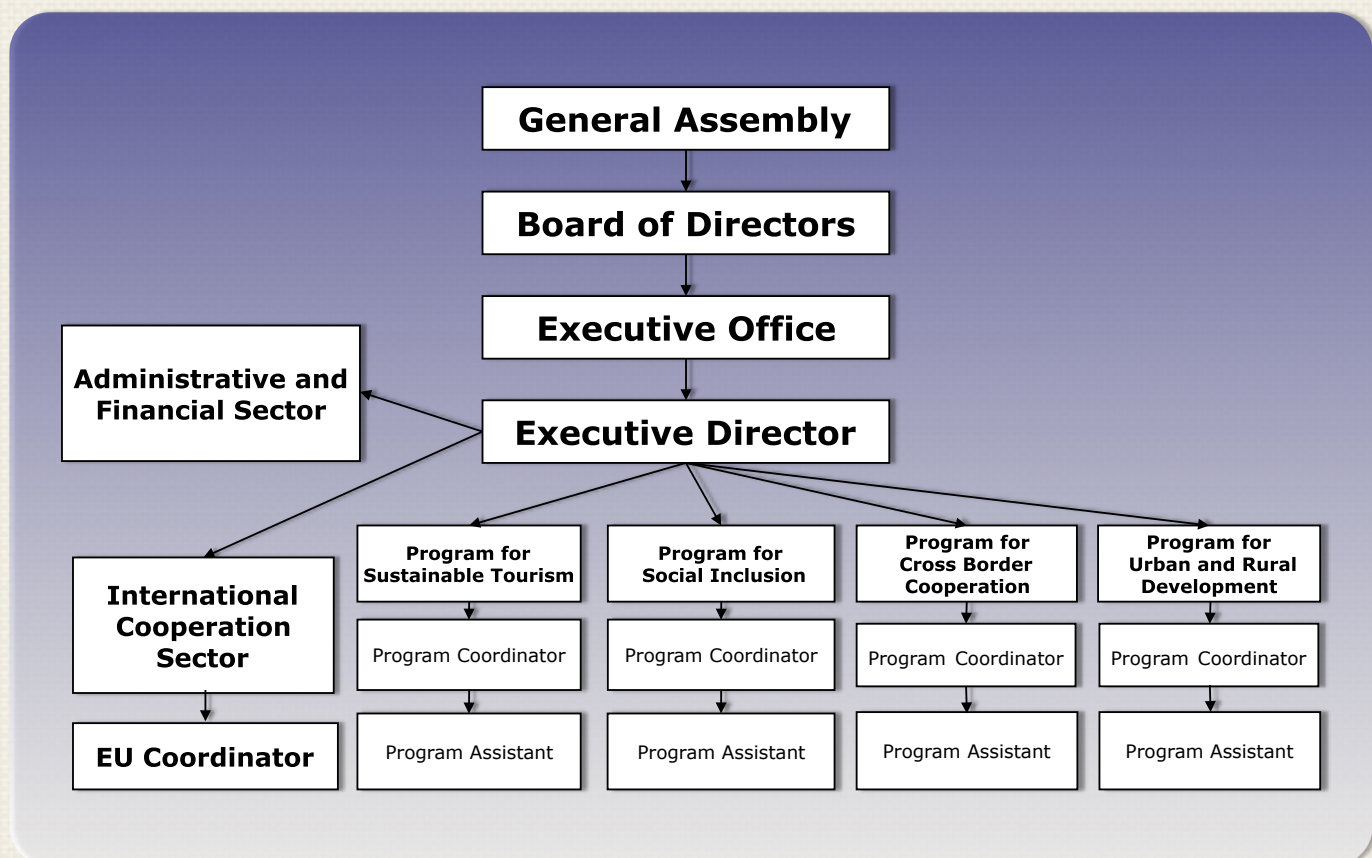
# Public Relations

LDA Struga in its long experience has established good relationships with reporters from the national media and all local media (TVM, NTV, TV Moris, Ohrid News, Super Radio, Biser Radio, TV Kaltrina). They are regularly reporting on our project activities and informing the public about the results. In 2009 LDA has developed and launched its new web site that is regularly updated and is informing about all our activities and campaigns. During 2009 LDA has been publishing monthly newsletter about the situation of gender equality in the Municipalities of Struga, Vevcani and Ohrid.

## Organization

The Local Development Agency-Struga (LDA) was established in January 2004 as part of the project "Local Governance for Sustainable Economic and Human Development" (UNDP's Cluster for Decentralization and Good Governance). In 6 years of continuous work LDA has implemented 25 projects in 5 programs with project budget of around 360.000 euro. LDA has fully equipped office of 50m<sup>2</sup> in the center of Struga.

## LDA Structure





# Project Photos

