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## **'REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR THE FUTURE' NETWORK ESTABLISHED; SERBIA BECOMES ONE OF THE EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES REPLICATING RDFG' EXPERIENCE.**

*The successful experiences and achievements of the NGO Association Rural Development for Future Georgia (RDFG) are becoming increasingly attractive for developing Eastern European countries. It is crucial to support socio-economic development and provide technical assistance to local governments to develop and adapt advanced management systems and methodologies, and significant interest in RDFG's successful programs was expressed from Serbia. To replicate good practices, the RDFG team shares its knowledge and significant achievements with Serbian colleagues interested in organizing a similar development and relief non-governmental organization in Serbia.*

*Thus, RDFG continues working on the foundation of the regional development network Regional Development for the Future, International (RDFI), aiming to establish non-governmental organizations in the model of RDFG, fully oriented on socio-economic development and strengthening local communities' self-resilience. Currently, preparatory works are being conducted in several countries where local non-governmental organizations are replicating RDFG's successful experience and practice. At this stage, Ukraine, Serbia, and Romania are engaged in the process.*



On October 25-26, 2019, RDFG Chairman Vano Grigolashvili and team member Shota Kublashvili visited Serbia. Within the framework of the visit, they shared successful experiences and practices with local partners and took part in the preparatory works for the foundation of the new non-governmental organization Regional Development for Future Serbia. The working meeting was attended by the Charge d'Affairs of Georgia in the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Ilia Koberidze, who welcomed the initiative, expressed full readiness for further cooperation and emphasized the importance of the foundation of RDFS in strengthening relations between Georgia and the Republic of Serbia.



At the meeting, RDFG representatives, together with RDFS co-founders Dusan Kostic and Anja Randjelovic, worked on the following documents: founding documentation, organizational regulations, operational manual and cooperation principles.

The establishment of RDFI began in 2018 with the foundation of the Regional Development for Future Ukraine (RDFU). RDFU has already begun replicating RDFG's good practice and implements activities based on RDFG's successful experiences. In Serbia, RDFS will begin its work shortly. Regional Development for the Future, International (RDFI) will work to attract more countries with

similar challenges related to climate change and local economic decline to the network.

Founded in 2010, RDFG is a development and relief nonprofit organization that assists vulnerable communities with social and economic development to strengthen their self-resilience. RDFG also provides technical assistance to local governments to develop and adapt advanced management systems and methodologies. RDFG's work encompasses issues such as human rights, environmental protection, gender equality, peace building and disaster risk reduction. The organization works with different vulnerable social groups to ensure equal access to services and opportunities and promote inclusion and responsiveness to the needs of vulnerable groups in Georgia.

RDFG works to improve the conditions of the most vulnerable people to prevent and alleviate human suffering and protect and respect human dignity with complete impartiality and no discrimination. We envision a Georgia of resilient communities and liable government. RDFG works in the following fields: social-economic development, peace building, Disaster Risk Reduction, advocacy, gender mainstreaming, youth engagement and innovation.

### **RDFG AND TETRITSKARO LAG PARTICIPATE IN THE EUROPEAN RURAL PARLIAMENT 2019**

On November 6-9, 2019, the 4th European Rural Parliament took place in rural Spain, in the village of Candás (Asturias). The event was attended by the 335 delegates from 40 countries including the representatives of the Association Rural Development for Future Georgia (RDFG) and the Tetrtskaro Local Action Group (LAG) executive director, Nino Tikurishvili. The event turned out to be a fruitful opportunity for sharing experience and information about rural issues and policy through workshops, speeches, and informal conversations. The European Rural Parliament (ERP) is a long-term campaign to express the voice of rural people in Europe; and to promote self-help and action by the rural people, in partnership with civil society and governments.





Within the welcoming event, the participants were taken to the different field trip areas of Asturias where they had discovered the challenges of agriculture and landscape management; Also, the importance of young entrepreneurs taking over vital basic services in the villages or refurbishing the family manor for rural “boutique tourism”.

On the second day, after the formal opening of the event, the delegates listened to important speeches about rural communities regaining control of their resources and addressing the issues obstructing their sustainable development. Mr. Mihail Dumitru, Deputy Director-General at DG AGRI delivered a keynote speech on the “EU rural policy and rural communities. Future of Rural Development post 2020”. He stressed that rural Europe is key to addressing the existing climate crisis and that recently elected President of the EU Commission, U. von der Leyen, has highlighted the importance of the European countryside in her published political guidelines., as well.

Evidence-based policy and decision-making, re-connecting rural and urban environments, smart villages and rural tourism, agropolitan cities and metropolitan villages, climate change and the importance of the existence of eco-villages, urban neighborhoods in LEADER LAGs areas – these amongst others were the main topics of the official speeches and group discussions. The event offered valuable networking opportunities, as it gave the chance for in-depth conversations at the different stands of the Initiatives Market.

Association Rural Development for Future Georgia (RDFG) carries out important activities to Georgia’s rural development, including working on issues related to climate change and local economic decline. Since the year of 2016, RDFG has been implementing the EU-supported ENPARD Programme in the Tetrtskaro municipality using a LEADER approach to rural development. The programme aims to improve the quality of life of local citizens using innovative social-economic models. Fundamentally, it is the energy and resources of the local people that contribute to the rural development process by forming partnerships at a sub-regional level between the public, private and civil sectors.



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## Regional Youth Entrepreneurship Program Boot Camp was Held in the City of Kvareli

On November 3-10, 2019, in the framework of the USAID Zrda Activity in Georgia, Regional Youth Entrepreneurship Program Boot Camp was held in the Kvareli Training Center of Justice House. Within the event, project participants attended training sessions and met with the representatives of private companies and public sector who spoke about their experiences and different opportunities in the field of entrepreneurship.

Overall, 15 (the total of 17 people) project authors, representing 9 Zrda target municipalities attended the Boot Camp and underwent intensive entrepreneurship trainings. Following completion of the camp, young people will have at least 2 weeks to finalize their projects.

The project participants attended intensive training sessions led by the trainers instructed within the ToT by Tea Mkheidze, the master trainer. Along with the trainings, the invited guests, Levan Ketskhoveli, CEO and Managing Partner of Redberry (creative digital marketing agency of Georgia), Ketevan Latsabidze representing the Agricultural and Rural Development Agency (ARDA), and Beso Trapaidze, RDFG Financial Consultant, provided valuable insights to the trainees on sales, marketing, funding and financial matters necessary for proper completion of entrepreneurship projects.

Within the I phase of the program held from June to September 2019, 5 winner projects were eventually selected and awarded grants: 10 000 GEL, 6 000 GEL, 6 462 GEL, 3 000 GEL, and 3 600 GEL. The Program winners introduced the projects from agriculture and creative industry, such as production of rye and buckwheat bread and biscuits in Gori; Production of succulent plants in Zugdidi; Support to production of traditional Georgian



folk instruments in Kaspi; Production of piquant jams in Aspinda and support to small sewing shop in Adigeni.

At this stage of the project, the participants are working on completing their business project ideas and preparing the pitch for the evaluation day. On the final stage of the Phase II, the Grant Selection Committee will select at least 3 winner business projects eligible for funding with the maximum amount of 10 000 GEL per project.

Regional Youth Entrepreneurship Program is being implemented in 9 target municipalities: Zugdidi, Borjomi, Aspindza, Adigeni, Ninotsminda, Marneuli, Bolnisi, Kaspi, and Gori. The project participants were required to present their business ideas related to agriculture, tourism, innovations/technologies or creative industries. The project is being implemented by RDFG, within the USAID Zrda Activity in Georgia and is supported by Enterprise Georgia, Creative Georgia, Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency, National Tourism Administration, Agricultural and Rural Development Agency, Crystal, National Bank of Georgia, TBC Bank.

## **The city of Batumi will be provided with a new fire engine**



On November 19, 2019, Association Rural Development for Future Georgia (RDFG) signed the project according to which the city of Batumi will be provided with a new fire engine. The project on Provision of Fire Engine for Batumi City aims to contribute to the strengthening of the emergency response capacity in Georgia. Mentioned activity is being implemented within the cooperation of the GGP Grassroots Human Security Grant Program of the Embassy of Japan in Georgia and the Association Rural Development for Future Georgia

(RDFG) Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Center.

The event was hosted by the Ambassador of Japan, H.E. Mr. Tadaharu Uehara and attended by the high-level representatives of the government of Georgia, regional, municipal governance, and representatives of civil society, including Ioseb Chelidze – Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia, Teimuraz Mghebrishvili – head of the Subordinated State Entity Emergency Management Service of Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, and Vano Grigolashvili – RDFG Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Center chairman.





Since 2011, RDFG established a Disaster Risk Reduction Center to enhance resilience of communities and promote culture of prevention through provision of awareness raising, capacity building and technical assistance in the field of DRR/DM to local communities, state and non-state actors. Within the abovementioned pillars, the DRR Center is focusing its efforts on school-based disaster risk reduction, local communities/municipalities DM/DRR capacity building and strengthening national emergency management system/structures.

The establishment and operation of DRR Center provides contribution to the processes of improvements and protection of natural environment, safe social infrastructure and the formation of informed and prepared communities that will lead to the increased resiliencies of communities and further sustainable development of Georgian society.



## **RDFG is Announcing for the Participation in the Fifth Phase of the Employment Shuttle**

Association Rural Development for Future Georgia (RDFG) is announcing for the participation in the fifth phase of the Employment Shuttle for the job seekers living in the Tetrtskaro Municipality. The program will start on November 15, 2019 in the city of Tetrtskaro. After completion of the programme, all participants will be awarded certificates. The project is implemented by the RDFG under the scope of the EU ENPARD programme.

One of the most important components of the programme is the lectures and training sessions from the corporate volunteers. Human Recourses managers from different organizations lead the sessions about the challenges of the modern labor market, share their experiences and success stories. Furthermore, if an appropriate cadre participates in the programme, he/she can be employed by the invited HR managers.

In order to develop participants' personal skills, training sessions will be held on the following topics: emotional intellect, verbal and nonverbal communication, body language, self-assessment and self-confidence, communication psychology, human, environment, development, comfort zone, why and how one should leave it, formal and informal education, self-realization, time management.

In order to develop participants' social skills, training sessions will be held on the following topics: where and how to study/where and how to develop skills, personal branding, world trends, professions evaluation and different calculations, introducing yourself, demand-supply of the modern labor market, challenges of the modern labor market, action plan, CV, cover letter, interview techniques, self-presentation, writing a project.

The EU-funded project "Rural Development for Sustainable Growth in the Tetrtskaro Municipality" is implemented by EU partner organisation, RDFG. The project aims to improve the quality of life in the Tetrtskaro municipality through the introduction of innovative social-economic models and engagement of local private and public sectors in the decision making. RDFG is partnering with the Agro-Technology Association and the Lithuanian Local Action Groups Network to carry out the action.

## RDFG DRR Center Held Meetings with the Representatives of the Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda Municipality City Halls



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Development works here.

On November 11, 2019, Association Rural Development for Future Georgia (RDFG) DRR Center organized the working meetings with the Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda Municipality mayors and city halls' representatives. The events were held within the USAID Zrda Activity in Georgia and their main purpose was to introduce RDFG DRR Center's planned activities related to disaster risk reduction in the 9 Zrda target regions of Georgia. The meetings were led by Shota Kublashvili, RDFG emergency management and disaster risk reduction expert.

At the meeting, the discussions were held about the risks of natural and technogenic disasters and the development of their management plan at the municipal level after which the representatives of the local Municipality City Halls declared their readiness for the future cooperation. Furthermore, as they have the appropriate resources, they have also expressed their willingness for full support and mobilization.

The meeting held in Akhalkalaki was attended by Iurik Unanian – mayor of the Akhalkalaki Municipality, Armen Marangozian- the deputy mayor, Vagarshaksh Shakhbekian – USAID Zrda Activity local representative, and Grigor Stepanian, Emergency Management Service representative.

The meeting held in Ninotsminda was attended by Anivard Mosoian – mayor of the municipality, Alexander Mikeladze – deputy mayor, Vagarshaksh Shakhbekian, USAID Zrda local representative, and Vahan Masgarian – Emergency Management service representative.

USAID Zrda Activity is a five-year program designed to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth in target regions. As it is impossible to support the sustainable economic development without creating safe environment, the project consists of disaster risk reduction activities on the local level, elaborating municipal emergency management plans according to modern standards and implementing relevant methods at the level of instructions. Within the project, DRR activities are being implemented by the Association Rural Development for Future Georgia (RDFG) and DRR Center of RDFG.





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