

# Friends of Macedonia Grant Final Report

## Sustainable Development of Rural Communities through Rural Tourism: Knowledge Exchange and Network Building

*By Karen Schaan*

This report will be the final report for the grant money received from Friends of Macedonia unless additional information is requested from the grantor.

It will contain a summary of objectives met and the actual costs of the project. In [Appendix A](#) is the write-up from the first field trip (sent to FOM in March) and in [Appendix B](#) is the write-up from the final field trips (new details and photos).

### Final Evaluation of Objectives:

The participant's feedback was all very positive. For many of them it was their first time viewing private accommodation or eating at a village restaurant setup to serve tourists.

Summarized Objectives	Outcome
<b>Objective 1.1:</b> Help villages identify existing resources and ways they can utilize them in a rural tourist offering with little to no start-up costs.	Trips were made to each participant's site prior to the field trips. During these visits we walked around their villages, talked about their tourism ideas and the feasibility of these ideas and also helped them identify other possible offerings.
<b>Objective 1.2:</b> Assist villages in putting together a unique tourist offering.	
<b>Objective 1.3:</b> Help villages develop a clear understanding of what it means to be in tourism.	The participants learned a lot from the experts and received a lot of encouragement to move forward with any ideas they have. They exchanged contact information in order to
<b>Objective 1.4:</b> Special focus on including and educating the women of the villages.	More than 50% of the participants were women.
<b>Objective 2.1:</b> Provide the opportunity to interact with experts and allow for the transfer of their knowledge and experience regarding the development of sustainable rural tourism.	Participants met seven different individuals who currently operate a rural tourism business. They received information about each business (how they started, how they advertise, etc.) and were given the contact information of each expert.
<b>Objective 2.2:</b> Tour the village in order to observe how they achieved quality tourism in an environmentally friendly manner.	In the main villages we visited we walked through town so the participants could see how the villages were maintained (lack of litter), how trails were marked if hiking trails existed (e.g. in Brachino-see photo below) and how existing traditional buildings were used for restaurants and private accommodation.

Summarized Objectives	Outcome
<b>Objective 2.3:</b> Utilize lessons learned from developed villages, follow best practices of successful villages.	Participants took notes during the expert talks – also the Project Manager took extra time to verify the participates noticed and understood key concepts passed on from the experts. Also each participant received a DVD with over photos and video from the field trips. Already one participant changed how they served food to the guests of their tours – they used to use plastic for everything but now food is served on traditional wooden serving platters.
<b>Objective 2.4:</b> Raise awareness on key concepts and practices.	
<b>Objective 3.1:</b> Contact information will be exchanged in order to build a network of support.	Participants exchanged their contact information with each other and also with the experts. There was talk between the Dihovo business owners at the participants about creating a local rural tourism association so they can continue to share information.
<b>Objective 3.2:</b> Inform local tour operators about the village’s offerings.	Some of the local tour operators offer trips to the villages of the participants who currently have an offering. For example the village of Kuratica offers donkey safaris and this summer they have had at least 3 tours a week with the Israeli groups that come weekly to Ohrid.
<b>Objective 3.3:</b> Provide project coordinator’s contact information.	All participants have contact information for the project coordinators.

### Final Expense:

The following table shows how the \$784 or 37250MKD received from Friends of Macedonia was spent.

Item	Unit Price		Narrative
	MKD	\$	
Experts	3,000	\$63.17	1500MKD x 2 experts (other experts spoke for free).
Transportation for coordinators to villages	1,750	\$36.85	Transportation for 2 people to Zavoj, Rechitsa and Lockocherry.
Mini Van-Transport of villagers to example villages	17,500	\$368.50	1 mini-van to Kalista & Vevchani for 6500 and one van to Dihovo and Brajchino for 11,000.
Lunch	12,000	\$252.68	Lunch in Brajchino for 20 people, 10 euro or 600 denar per person = 12000mkd.
Entrance Tickets (2 Museums)	1,750	\$36.85	Entrance to museum in Kalista 550 and ethno museum 1200mkd (1 euro or 60mkd x 20 people = 1200mkd).
DVDs	400	\$8.42	20 DVDs x 20mkd each = 400mkd.
Phone Calls to Sites/Experts	600	\$12.63	One phone card for 600mkd.
Printing of Final Packets	200	\$4.21	20 packets x 10mkd per packet = 200mkd.
<b>Totals MKD &amp; \$</b>	<b>37,200</b>	<b>\$783.32</b>	
Exchange rate used \$1 = 47.49 (from budget)	47.49		

## ***Appendix A – First Trip***

On the sunny Saturday afternoon of March 21<sup>st</sup> we took people from 6 different villages to Kalista, Vevchani and one other small village (to show the participants how the village setup the grounds of its church). Based on the comments from some of the participants and their overall enthusiasm voiced during the trip, we think this first field trip was a success and met the goal we set out to achieve. For example, one couple from the village of Lokochery was being encouraged to finish their upper floor to be used for private accommodation by their daughter. Prior to the field trip they had a hard time envisioning how this could work, but after the trip and seeing 3 different private accommodations they came home very inspired and ready to discuss possible next steps with their daughter. All throughout the trip they were constantly telling me “this is wonderful – super super”. In order to make things happen one must “see” the possibilities, I feel this first trip has opened some of the villagers eyes as to the possibilities and some right/wrong ways to develop rural tourism.

Now we’d like to share a few photos and some more details as to what the trip included.

The participants were very interested in how homemade wine, rakija, honey, fruit and more was packaged for resale.



In Vevchani we visited 3 different restaurant/guest homes and at each they were given a tour & presentation by the owner along with a question & answer session. It was great to see how attentive the participants were and how many questions they had for the experts.



In addition to information about the business side, they received information (and examples) on what sort of serving platters they use, how to present food, traditional crafts sold, and much more. We even got to visit the wine cellar!



We showed them how the springs area in Vevchani was developed and how the town has a sign with a map of the town. Vevchani has some great traditional homes, but they also are building many new modern buildings that do not fit with the village architecture. This was pointed out and discussed with the participants.



Photo of part of the group in Vevchani.

A couple of the gentleman enjoying the sun and view.

## *Appendix B – Final Trips*

We also visited the villages of Dihovo and Brajchino the weekend of April 11-12<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

In Dihovo we visited three different places: Two bed and breakfasts and one private accommodation located above a restaurant. This was probably the most inspirational visit for the participants since the owners of these businesses had started less than one year ago and were very willing to share all their startup info and offer encouragement to the participants through words as well as through their story of success (e.g. more than 200 guests the first year of business).



*The participants were able to see how an older building was converted for private accommodation and how the furniture was handmade from simple materials.*



*The participants also received copies of brochures for both the private accommodation and restaurant in Dihovo so they could see one form of advertizing used.*

Next we went to Brajchino but on the way we stopped and visited a collection of traditional attire in a private ethno museum. We felt it would stir ideas on how you can turn a private collection of something into a tourist attraction. From there we continued onto Brajchino where we were served a traditional lunch and heard from the owner of the restaurant on how she started, runs the business, advertizes, etc.



*Special attention was paid by the participants regarding how the food was served and displayed. We also stopped at another private accommodation near Brajchino and viewed their private trout farm.*



*Brajchino is situated near the mountains as are many of the villages of our participants, so we pointed out to them how Brajchino has marked some trails near their village. This is an example of creating a draw to the village without a lot of start up costs. Simple guided hikes could be offered or just the fact there are marked trails bring tourists to the village who may stay or eat in the village.*