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Economic empowerment of rural women – launch of Gradistea bakery



HE Mrs. Soknan Han Jung, UNDP Resident Representative, HE Mr. Naotoshi Sugiuchi, Ambassador of Japan and Mr. Dumitru Tudor, Comana Mayor at the inauguration ceremony

On 30 July 2003 UNDP launched a bakery in Gradistea village that employes 10 women who will produce bread for the five villages that compose Comana commune in Giurgiu county.

This pilot demonstration unit is run by the “FEMINA PAN SRL”, as one of the four jointly developed by the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women project of UNDP, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and Japan Women in Development Fund (JWIDF). This site is entirely financed by the Government of Japan.

The ceremony was opened by HE Mrs. Soknan Han Jung, UNDP Resident Representative, UN Resident Coordinator, HE Mr. Naotoshi Sugiuchi, Ambassador of Japan, Mr. Dumitru Tudor, Comana Mayor and the women beneficiaries of the project. Among the other participants were strong supporters of the initiative: Giurgiu County

Council, Ministry of Labor, Social Solidarity and Family and Ministry of Agriculture, Forests, Waters and Environment.

One of the means to create the conditions for sustainable livelihoods, and therefore reduce poverty, is to start income-generating activities. The joint UNDP/UNIFEM/JWIDF project is assisting women in the poorest rural communities in creating their own structures required for gender-sensitive business development. With a budget of USD 460,000. The project aims at developing four pilot demonstration units that can be replicated in other parts of the country. Already in place are a vegetable processing plant in the village of Sageata, Buzau, in eastern Romania, and a milk processing plant in Negresti, Vaslui county. Besides the Comana bakery, a food packaging unit will soon open in Cuza Voda, located in the poor southern county of Calarasi.

Rural women experience economic isolation in Romania. The lack of a strategy for local economic empowerment of women is another reason limiting equal opportunities as concerns resources, employment and trade. Insufficiently prepared to cope with the changing economic environment, women are discouraged, and they are the most vulnerable concerning the consequences of the transition process in Romania.

In addition, even if there are efforts underway to create alternative job opportunities in rural areas, these do not match the needs. Consequently, the identification of efficient means to generate employment in rural areas has become a priority for the Government and international organizations.

The UNDP project provides the Government and other interested institutions with options that increase the role of rural women in the development process, and would help them to overcome any form of exclusion that can hinder their progress.

For more information visit: www.undp.ro or contact socio@undp.ro.



The ten women who will run the bakery