

School Kitchen Reconstruction– development beginning in Donja Lopusnja



Desa Djordjevic and director Milenkovic discussing on the next steps for school improvement



School Kitchen reconstruction process

LOPUSNJA, SERBIA – Through the USAID-funded Community Revitalization through Democratic Action (CRDA) program, CHF is helping communities to improve conditions in which their children are educated and to develop a vision of their village in the future.

Desa Djordjevic is a local entrepreneur from Lopusnja. She is the owner of two mini-markets in Lopusnja and Vlasotince. She also purchases and processes mushrooms. Desa is also a very active member of Lopusnja Community Development Council (CDC) and with her energy and vision she motivates other CDC members.

When Desa came to live in Lopusnja, 20 years ago, the school had 550 students and worked in three shifts. It had a modern school kitchen. It was a prosperous time. Now only 60 students attend school in Lopusnja. In 2000, a fire completely destroyed the kitchen of the school. Children who travel over 5km by foot to get to school did not have proper meals. CHF helped them to rebuild a new, modern school kitchen. With the completion of the school kitchen Lopusnja residents began considering other ways through which they could improve their own village.

The next priority, supported by CHF, is to build a School where students from across Serbia could have access to education in the nature and about nature. The school will have modern information technology equipment and offer students the chance to enjoy the products of beautiful nature, which can't be found in urban areas.

"Our village offers healthy mushrooms, blueberries, blackberries, wild strawberries, raspberries, medicinal herbs. Very close to the village center we have few spring wells of clear, mountain water. We raise the best potatoes in the country. We also have a few endemic kinds of herbs. Paths near the village could be used for building a ski-chute..." said Desa Djordjevic.

Lopusnja residents are very active in cooperation with CHF. Director of the school, Dragan Milenkovic said that nature has awarded them with many resources. "If we finish everything we planed, our School would become the center of village development", said director Milenkovic. "When I was thinking 10 years before about how we can benefit from our meadows and paths everyone was telling me that it is not possible. With CHF, our plans start to become realistic", said Desa Djordjevic.