

CHF enhancing Civic Participation in Manojlovce



Students on the computer science lesson in renovated classroom in Manojlovce School

MANOJLOVCE, SRBIJA – CHF International supported computer classroom equipment in Manojlovce through Community Revitalization through Democratic Action program (CRDA), funded by USAID. The Community Development Council (CDC), established in September 2001, selected computer classroom equipment for the Manojlovce School as a community priority, since people in Manojlovce, young and old, didn't have access to computers.

Manojlovce now has a newly renovated classroom with 12 new, state of the art computers. Two young professors, previously unemployed, now work as teachers in the computer lab. They organized classes in which 172 school students attended lessons last school year. During the recent entrance exams for high schools in Leskovac, data was processed using the new equipment in the computer center.

Zoran Tatic is one of the newly employed computer science professors. Zoran says that students in Manojlovce are very interested in computer science: "It was very hard to motivate students for active participation in study and learning. Now we have a new problem in the computer lab: how to ask students to leave the school. It is very often that

parents come to school to take their children home from the school". Zoran is organizing summer school sessions of computer skills training for students of Manojlovce School. More than 250 students will attend summer school in July.

The Manojlovce CDC has been working hard with CHF Community Facilitators in learning and applying practical approaches to Civic Participation, one of the four pillars of the CRDA program. Although pleased with their first successes, CDC members in Manojlovce have new plans and new experiences prepared for continuation of CRDA program.

The next project will be renovation of the old ambulance in Manojlovce. CHF approved this project and the works should start in July. CDC members have recently organized a local "donor conference" where they organized local entrepreneurs and business people who donated money for ambulance reconstruction. But CDC members were still not satisfied. They encouraged people from eleven neighboring villages to donate money for the ambulance improving the quality of life for people throughout the region.

Bojan Dinic, CDC Manojlovce president says that they mobilized 600.000 dinars from citizens, private firms and the Municipality. Other materials have also been collected, which will improve the citizens' contribution to this new CRDA project. "People didn't have any confidence at the beginning of our cooperation with CHF. But after few good experiences, people look with confidence on what is happening. They see that there will be something from the cooperation with CHF. So, it is now our turn to do something for our village!"