

Echo of a meeting

In 2002 NGO BIOS responded to a request from village Biesti to help stop degradation of the village and exodus of the people. BIOS team made a research of artisan occupations in the village and organized an exhibition-fair of crafts represented in the village including weaving from straw, embroidery, baking of ritual breads, pastry production, carpet weaving, etc. The event was attended by local authorities, national women's NGOs, representatives of the Union of Artisans of Moldova, Ministry of Labour and the media. A movie was produced by BIOS showing off all the art generated by the village throughout the years (<http://bios.org.md/arhiva/filme/>).

During the event the village women (and several men) complained about people leaving the community to look for jobs, the dying out of crafts which were once flourishing in the village, bankruptcy of the few agricultural companies operating in the community, but also of the need for women to find an occupation to generate income for families.

They were encouraged by all guests and by local authorities to start businesses in the village and not to let the village die like so many other villages of Moldova and promised initial support. That same year several companies were established, followed by more and more every year, most of them led by women.

Now Biesti village has 10 registered active companies, including enterprises producing vegetal oils, ritual breads, pastry and cookies, woodworks, embroidered clothing, carpets, not only for own village and neighbor ones, but also for sale in the national networks. One of this enterprise is owned by Maria Godoroja, who was very active during exhibition-fair. The income generated by village women led to development of services in the community such as improved roads, household goods shops, construction businesses, body care enterprises, etc.

The village also boasts enhanced cultural activity such as development of a village museum, a choir participating in national events, dance club, etc.

The key to development of a dying village and empowering women to take the initiative to change their lives is synergy and initial support, but also inspiring women to do what they are good at and take pleasure in, but paying attention to market demand too.