



Nongovernmental Organization BIOS

Message of Elena Bivol, training coordinator of the NGO BIOS:

“We need to go to the source of knowledge about degradation: rural people. Pass the microphone to the people and let them identify the real problems”

Elena Bivol, training coordinator of the NGO BIOS, talks to the UNCCD about the importance of being in touch with the people for a better understanding of the main risks of DLDD.

Nongovernmental Organization BIOS is a non-profit group dedicated to environmental protection, sustainable agriculture and rural community development in the Republic of Moldova. Since 1993, it has established three pilot farms in the villages of Tartaul de Salcie, Cretoaia and Butesti, where BIOS carries out water, soil and biological diversity research and implements conservation activities. In the proximities of the pilot farms, the NGO also established three training centers for diffusion of knowledge. BIOS training centers work on identifying training needs in the respective areas, and on providing training and consultations according to the needs identified.

“The inhabitants just want to feel someone cares about them”

The importance of this organization lies in its promotion of good ways of treating the environment. BIOS is promoting sustainable consumption patterns among the population in order to build a stronger consciousness among the people about issues related to desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD). “When we started the work in the training centers, we realized people were the source to get information about the situation”, says Elena Bivol. Training, education and awareness-raising of various age and social groups provides clues as to how to get them involved with the problems of their own community.

The sustainable agriculture project in Cretoaia village was founded in 1998. Elena remembers that beginning: “One of the first questions that we had from one of the kids was if an official person was coming to participate in the activities”. The children felt motivated by the visit of somebody important, so they removed all

the waste throughout the town and had workshops for planting trees and removing trash from the river. They wanted people to be proud of their village. Nowadays, those kids have grown up, and they have been taught how to take care of the land that they had started to cultivate. Today they are the ones who are proud.

In the Republic of Moldova land degradation has always been a problem because of the topography with hills and slopes, but the massive agriculture of the 1970’s deteriorated the ground even more. The training coordinator of BIOS is concerned about the problem of DLDD and its effects: “Right now we deal with droughts every two years, few decades ago it was every five”. Since young people will be the ones most affected by DLDD, teaching them about these matters is important. They have to be aware of their own needs, as well as of the fact that DLDD increases poverty (if you do not have land to cultivate, you do not have resources), and that poverty leads to migration. This is the message that the NGO is trying to send to the Moldavian population: the proper use of earth’s resources benefits not only future generations, but themselves.

Good advice:

“Real problems need to be solved by real people. If we show them the magnitude of the problem they will listen carefully, because they will be the ones concerned. The citizens are still not aware about how much this can affect them”.

For more information about **NGO Bios**:

NGO BIOS’ website: <http://www.bios.org.md>