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## SUCCESS STORY

### Villager Opens Room with a View

**A local group helps small businesses find markets and clients**



Dimitar Chavkaraoski, center, shows the brochure he produced with other bed and breakfast owners to Kosta Mickoski, left, from the Economic Development Center, and a member of the mayor's staff.

***“We are here to help the citizen’s realize their own projects,” says Kosta Mickoski.***

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When Dimitar Chavkaraoski retired, he decided to open a bed and breakfast in his mountain village of Krushevo, Macedonia. He had a hunch that his tidy house with its view of the old church and the crisp air were a winning formula, but he had no idea how to attract visitors.

Some of his neighbors, who had already opened bed and breakfasts, had an idea: they would all make a brochure together. Working with the local USAID-funded Economic Development Center, the group produced and distributed a simple booklet promoting all of their businesses. It was a success. “We definitely have new guests because of the brochure,” says Dimitar.

Dimitar’s bed and breakfast is just one of many businesses that the center has helped. The center’s goal is to help businesses figure out how to survive in a changing Macedonian economy. The poor economic situation in Krushevo is

similar to that in many other former-Yugoslav towns, where the closure of communist-era factories left many unemployed. The center works to revive the local economy and build stronger businesses. “We are here to help citizens realize their own projects,” says Kosta Mickoski, the center’s coordinator. “We want to help this town regain its prominence as a spa and ski area,” he added. Among its many projects, the center plans to help create a solid-waste management program, build a drinking-water tank, and construct a much-needed road linking the upper and lower sections of the town.

Dimitar was born in Krushevo, as were his father and grandfather. He hopes that future generations will choose to stay there, just like he did. For a while, the economic downturn had dampened his hopes. But now with the hard work of both local businesses and the Economic Development Center, he is optimistic that more families will stay and, like his grandparents, watch their own children and grandchildren grow up in the town he has always called home.

Photo: USAID/Teresa Albor