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The Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC) has been an active actor in the development of the local communities and capacity in the area of civil society sector and local self-government, for several years. For a while, these activities were performed without many common points, i.e., they were not complementary to each other. However, presently, faced with the big challenge of decentralization, the need of exchange of experience and joint actions has been emphasized.

In 2006, MCIC started with realization of the three year programme Local Development of Communities (LRZ) 2006 – 2008, which, as a basis, has the positive experience from the previously conducted programme Enabling Communities and Institutions (OZI) 2001 – 2005. It is continuation of the MCIC's activities in the region of the rural communities' capacity building.

The Study on the Conditions in the Rural Focus Communities represents one of the initial activities, realized in the framework of the LRZ Programme. It is a base-line research on the needs of the programme as well as the local communities themselves.

The information found in the Study provides an overview of the conditions in the focus communities in the LRZ Programme, in 2006, which may represent a basis for comparison and measurement of the progress of the development of these rural communities.

The Study poses more questions and challenges before the entire communities with regards to the conditions of the rural communities in Republic of Macedonia and calls for increased attention and commitment to their progress, development and inclusion.

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