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**POVERTY ELIMINATION THROUGH SUSTAINABLE RURAL TOURISM SUPPORT – THE FRESH PAGE IN VILLAGE LATALI, UPPER SVANETI, GEORGIA CULTURAL LIFE.**

**THE FIRST STEP IS TO OPEN RURAL TOURISM RESOURCE CENTER IN MOUNTAIN VILLAGE LATALI, UPPER SVANETI, GEORGIA**

**INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR CAUCASUS TOURISM (ICCT)** is the single focused on poverty eradication through population involvement in rural tourism industry. ICCT well acknowledges the significance of UNWTO Program ST-EP ( Sustainable Rural Tourism Eliminating Poverty) and UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) objectives. ICCT Director Ms. Marina Metreveli ,

Recently Association “Latali” representatives applied ICCT for partnership. The leading reason was their will to open Rural Tourism Resource Center for community active participation in tourism development. As authorities of vil. Latali mention the major part of population in vil Latali, Upper Svaneti Region, Georgia needs to be involved in rural tourism industry for to share catching nature and culture treasures with RT devotees, who are fond of wild mountain environment and ancient culture masterpieces. . RT devotees will offered private households as accommodation facilities together with unlike spectrum of service accustomed to this part of Georgia.

The Center will coordinate and facilitate sustainable, rural tourism activity not only in this village but in whole Region of Upper Svaneti.

Center will provide local population with RT trainings for to be initiated into hospitality curricular and management issues. In the result of successful achievements they could have an opportunity to cooperate and support collaborative relations with colleagues from other counties for to learn more and disseminate the best practices.

The Center will be the place of work and rest, both. One could find the opportunity of creative activity according personal interest, i.e. painting, fishing, teaching, hiking, birds & butterflies watching, cooking, cattle caring, knitting, hunting and many others.

The Center will be the place of exhibitions, workshops, folk music concerts, seminars, conferences, different courses, etc.

The Center will, inevitably, attract the attention of business people as the promoter of their activity. Sustainable rural tourism could be supported for micro and small enterprises development including farms, handicraft shops, etc.

The Center could provide groups and individuals with:

- training materials in Rural Tourism vocational education;
- establishing and maintaining a network of Rural Tourism trainers and training organizations in Upper Racha
- developing broadly accepted and recognized curricula for Rural Tourism training and education
- supporting the development of training material based on best practices available
- training professionals in Rural Tourism Training and Education

To reach these goals the following activities are foreseen:

- Development of standardized Hospitality curricular
- Development of a pilot course in Hospitality
- Inventory of existing Georgian training material and trainers
- Train the trainer courses
- Issue of certificates
- Establishment of T&T network of trainers in Upper Svaneti
- Establishment of effective co-operation and collaborative relationship between RTRC Latali and like –minded Organizations in villages of Caucasus or other areas worldwide aimed to exchange experiences, to capacity building rural tourism hospitable skills.

**All issues listed above are solvable only in the event of Latali RTRC communication source provision ,i.e. Internet access supply. Having positively solved this leading Latali RTRC could have the ability to perform the tasks smooth and succeed in all. The center could become the distinguished attractive place for tourists' study and rest.**

**With best regards**

MARINA METREVELI

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Director

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