



Հայաստանի Հանրապետության Հիմնադրամ
The Armenia Fund



ԳՅՈՒՂԱԿԱՆ ԶԱՐԳԱՑՄԱՆ ԾՐԱԳԻՐ
Rural Development Program

DATE: 18 April, 2008
FROM: RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION OFFICE
SUBJECT: WEEKLY UPDATE OF THE ARMENIA FUND RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

This week we'll bring you up to date on two infrastructure development projects in the border community of Khashtarak in Tavush region. These projects are to become the infrastructural cornerstones for the Rural Development Program pilot cluster and coupled with the smaller scale initiatives are part of the general development strategy.

NEWS AT A GLANCE

- On Thursday, our staff visited Lori region's border community of Gogavan. The aim of the visit was to conduct a community meeting to select the beneficiary for the buy-a-cow small project.
- The two automated milking units are already delivered to farmers in the communities of Sizavet in Shirak region and Gorhayk in Syunik region. The machines were immediately put into operation (the cows seem to be very happy!).

TOMORROW'S PROJECTS TODAY



In the last few reports, we talked a lot about the small projects: fast to implement and relatively low cost, these projects bring immediate and visible change into the lives of the people, empowering them and restoring hope for a better future. At the same time, without large scale initiatives to come along with them, the small projects can only be a temporary remedy. However happy the child will be to have a computer and a nice collection of DVDs in the community library it cannot



replace him a normal school, where he's not risking to fall through the floor riddled with holes every time he runs through the corridor. This is why infrastructure projects were, are and will be the priorities of the Armenia Fund Rural Development Program. Going into the dangerous sea of metaphors, while the small projects are the icing on the cake, the infrastructure and economic initiatives are the cake.



Today, in the border village of Khashtarak, which is the central community of the Tavush region pilot cluster, we already have one infrastructure project going full speed ahead: the full restoration of the Khashtarak health clinic will not only address the issues in the community but will also have the technical capacity to reach people in need of medical attention in the five other villages of the Khashtarak cluster. The construction process is going ahead of schedule and we hope to present Khashtarak with a new health clinic as early as August.

All the people working on the reconstruction were enlisted from the neighboring border communities. This is a policy that we will carry on in all our future projects. There are a lot of qualified people living in these communities - this is the potential that needs to stay in the village and we need to do everything possible to help them find a job and earn income without leaving their homes for cities or Russia, often, never to return again. This project was made possible through the efforts of the Armenia Fund Netherlands Affiliate office that managed to rally the support of both the local Armenian community and the government of the Netherlands behind the project.

This week, another major project in Khashtarak got the green light with the announcement of the tender for the community school. The project will come to life thanks to the collaborative efforts of the Armenia Fund France, Germany and Switzerland Affiliates as well as the Association of Armenian Entrepreneurs in Germany. Along with the health clinic, this initiative will give another centralized solution





to this vital component of social infrastructure. At the same time centralization does not mean replacing the existing schools in the villages. We aim at creating a viable alternative and giving people a choice, an opportunity for the parent to ensure that his child gets the best possible education in an adequate, up to date and positive educational environment.

VISITING DOCTORS

This week, we had a meeting with the representatives of the Armenian Medical International Committee (AMIC). We presented the physicians the Khashtarak health clinic project and talked about the potential ways of cooperation. The doctors had visited the border communities included in the Khashtarak cluster and agreed on the importance and urgency of the issue of health care in these communities. During their visit, they also had a meeting with the regional head of health care department. When asked what AMIC can do to help the villages, she gave a very short answer – come and work here.

This idea immediately appealed to the physicians (and us) and this is also something that we believe can have a very positive impact on the health care situation in the border communities. Here, once again, we're talking about double impact as from one side the visiting doctor will be able to bring his expertise and know how to the places that often lack qualified medical personnel, from the other side his presence by itself will have an encouraging psychological value. This two week to a month visits will also provide an interesting experience for the doctors themselves, giving them a very real insight into the lives and problems of the people in the border villages. This project can become an exhilarating manifestation of the concept that is the underlying fabric of all the Armenia Fund initiatives: for people by people.