



հայաստան համահայկական հիմնադրամ
The Armenia Fund



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Rural Development Program

DATE: 7 March, 2008
FROM: RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION OFFICE
SUBJECT: WEEKLY UPDATE OF THE ARMENIA FUND RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

It's hard to believe that it has only been a week since our last report. In that seemingly short period, Armenia has gone through a chain of disturbing events that left all of us shaken. A week later we can still feel the repercussions of these events. We will not go into details of what happened: you have probably read the reports and seen the pictures. What happened was a potent evidence of how thin is the line between democracy and chaos, how fragile - our illusion of security. Our thoughts and prayers are with everyone who was affected by this tragedy.

Despite all this, we have a job to do and this week we offer you a photo story of our trip to Lori, which covers two projects implemented in the region's border communities.

Other news at a glance:

- The Armenia Fund Rural Development Program team had a meeting with the representative of the Farmer's Association of Armenia through which we will select the first beneficiaries for the automated milking unit initiative.
- We are also in the process of research to single out the challenges and possible solutions for micro financing in the border communities.
- During a meeting with Armen Abrahamyan, the IT cluster coordinator for USAID CAPS (Competitive Armenian Private Sector Project), we discussed the IT development possibilities in the border villages. We decided to gather all the major players in the IT field around one table - present the problem and together look for possible solutions and the potential input that every organization can have in bringing together a viable action plan.



THE DZYUNASHOGH EXPERIENCE

On the 4th of March, we organized a trip to Lori region's border villages. Aiming to shoot two bunnies with one shot (sorry, environmentalists) we were out to deliver a computer and a printer to the community of Dzyunashogh and check on the results of the refurbishment project implemented in association with the Hye Dproc Foundation. This is our story - in pictures.

While in Yerevan it is already springtime, it certainly did not look like spring where we were going...



As we neared our destination the weather got much better and the roads – much worse. As they say, you can't have all at once...



On our way to the primary goal of Dzyunashogh, we made stops at Arzni and Dzoramut. All these communities, along with the village of Gogavan, have received new school furniture through an initiative made possible by the AACC (Armenian American Chamber of Commerce) and implemented in association with the Hye Dproc Foundation. With the financial assistance of



the Armenia Fund, the transportation of the furniture to the villages was organized by Susanna Poghoyan, the principal of Dzoramut community school. Ms. Poghoyan is now trying to mobilize the community resources to start the renovation of the school.



Some paint work is already underway with the new furniture soon to replace the ancient tables and chairs.



After another stop we (barely) made our way to Dzyunashogh. There, the furniture was already in place...



...now we could move on to our core task of delivering the computer and the printer as well as conducting an on the spot improvised training with the school principal and a senior student who honestly pledged to pass on the knowledge to his younger peers.



An hour later we were back on the road. Another fifteen minutes later we were stuck in the mud with a flat wheel. They say, it's a thorny way to the stars and it seems that one of the thorns just got our wheel...



All is well that ends well and soon enough we were back on the road allowing us to get back to the city before midnight. What really stays with you after similar trips are the faces of the people you meet and the desire to do everything you can to alleviate their life. These people don't want their job done instead of them; they just need a helping hand to aid them through harsh times.

And finally, speaking of harsh times, here's our car before...





... and after the trip.

