



հայաստան համահայկական հիմնադրամ
The Armenia Fund



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Rural Development Program

DATE: 30 November, 2007
FROM: RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION OFFICE
SUBJECT: WEEKLY UPDATE OF THE ARMENIA FUND RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

This week's update includes information on the gasification of the villages in the Khashtarak cluster, preparation of vocational training materials and the veterinary point project to be implemented in association with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

CLUSTER GASIFICATION PROJECT



One of the primary objectives of The Armenia Fund Rural Development Program is to make greatest possible impact in the border communities with the existing resources. To achieve this scale of efficiency, we are working very closely with the various organizations working in Armenia as well as the governmental institutions of Armenia and other countries. By combining the efforts of different structures we can substantially increase the effectiveness of the otherwise stand alone initiatives, making them part of a truly comprehensive and sustainable solution, covering a multitude of spheres.

This is especially true in the case of infrastructural improvement projects. Our goal there is to install or upgrade all the spheres of infrastructure. This is an ambitious endeavor and is not possible to implement in the designated timeline without active participation with specialized organizations.

The Khashtarak cluster gasification project has been one example of this cooperation mechanism, where, after a period of negotiations, ArmRusGasArd (Armenia's natural gas provider) agreed to co-finance the gasification of all the villages included in the Rural Development Program. Parallel to that, The Armenia Fund has been in constant consultations with the Governmental bodies. As a result of these consultations, it is possible that the Ministry of Agriculture will undertake the gasification initiative in the villages of Khashtarak cluster.



If this initiative comes to life, it will allow The Armenia Fund to redirect the available resources at another project(s), thus increasing the overall speed, productivity and impact of the project.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING



As a follow up to the seminar conducted in the Khastarak cluster village of Ditavan, we had a meeting with Ms. Rose Kachadoorian, who is a pesticide specialist from Oregon, US. The seminar was organized in association with the Armenian Technology Group (ATG) and concentrated on the pesticides currently in use in Armenia's farming households and the proper safety measures.

The field of pesticide use and the applicable safety precautions is very sparsely regulated by the Government and there is a serious vacuum in information on the topic especially in the border areas. To help solve this issue, we asked Ms. Rose Kachadoorian, who is currently on leave from her job at the Oregon state Department of Agriculture, to provide us with training materials and participate in filming a vocational training footage to be distributed as DVDs and narrated presentations in the rural communities.

This initiative is part of a much wider endeavor of overcoming the awareness gap in the border communities. To ensure the availability of information to the farmers, we will provide each community library with a TV and a DVD player. Then there will be a schedule of training materials to be shown in the community and available to anyone interested in the specific topic. The challenge here is ensuring the long term continuity of the initiative, which means delivering new training materials on regular basis. Parallel to that, we need to bring in experts like Ms. Kachadoorian for additional seminars on all the relevant fields. This project is closely intertwined with The Armenia Fund initiative of upgrading the village libraries as vibrant cultural and information centers.

VETERINARY POINT PROJECT

After a period of research and consultations, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) has committed to the Khashtarak cluster veterinary points upgrade project. The initiative will include the establishment of up to date veterinary points in all the villages in the cluster.

The core objective of the project is the provision of a sustainable solution to improving the quality of veterinary service in the border areas. The



veterinary practice in these areas is obsolete, with the veterinarian lacking both the know-how and the technical capacity to perform any procedures beyond the very basic duties.

We are currently working on finalizing the details and the timeline of the project with the SDC.