



Georgia Employment and Infrastructure Initiative
საქართველოს დასაქმებისა და ინფრასტრუქტურის ინიციატივა

COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENTS

Getting Connected: Road Reconstruction in Kodalo



“CHF has solved the problem of the century for the village, as we had named the Ziara road the ‘Century Road,’ because we thought it would never be fixed,” explains CDC Officer Iveri Patiurshvili. “Villagers here are very happy and are ready to cooperate with CHF in the future.”

Kodalo is a small village located in the Gurjaani District of Kakheti. The nearly 400 residents cultivate 100 hectares of land, growing mostly grapes which are sold to nearby wineries. Over the last decade residents who drive to Gurjaani to conduct business have been forced to travel 45 kilometers on an indirect route, despite the fact that another road, known as the “Ziari road,” offers a direct 10 kilometers stretch to reach the district capital. Unfortunately, the Ziari road fell into such disrepair that it was more efficient in terms of time, energy and cost to travel the extra 70 kilometers round trip on the alternative route in order to sell their products at the market, procure supplies for their families and businesses or visit the nearest hospital. Meanwhile, those who do not own a car were faced with the option of regularly paying for the long, expensive trip on public transport or walking the distance which often turned to mire after rain. Residents in Kodalo were not alone in their plight as four additional villages rest along the Ziari road, populated by another four thousand people.

Realizing the potential benefits of reconstructing the Ziari road would offer their community, as well as surrounding villages, residents in Kodalo did not hesitate to apply for partnership in the USAID-funded Georgia Employment and Infrastructure Initiative (GEII) project, implemented by CHF International. After the village was selected in a competitive process, CHF facilitated Kodalo's first community meeting on March 23, 2005, in which residents quickly prioritized the rehabilitation of Ziari road as their most urgent need and publicly elected a Community Development Council (CDC) to lead the project development effort in coordination with CHF.

The project application effort involved training in economic development principles, and project planning, budgeting and implementation to ready CDC members to lead the community through the project works. Though Kodalo had never with an international NGO, CHF Community Outreach Officer, Lali Makharoblishvili, claims “From the first meeting I realized that the community would work well with us.” To which a CDC member added from the Kodalo perspective: “Our village has been forgotten for so many years, we are just happy that there is a now that there is an organization willing to work with us.”

Work began in August to level and grade the road with fresh gravel and improve drainage by digging side ditches and inserting pipe bridges in areas where runoff and streams had forged large gullies in the road. Many residents volunteered their time to dig the ditches, comprising a portion of their contribution to the overall budget. The project took just one month to complete with the help of a private contractor and cost \$4,360, of which the community contributed \$1,200 in cash and labor - over 27% of the total budget.

As envisioned, by the middle of September the Ziari road, unused by vehicles for many years, once again became the main route to the district center. As a result of these repairs, the distance to Gurjaani was cut by 70%. Increased access to markets means residents in Kodalo can now sell their goods at the larger markets in Gurjaani more often, which, along with the money saved on fuel, transport and repairs to vehicles, will increase their incomes. Further benefits will come from the time saved in transit. Furthermore, relations with villages lying along the Ziari road has also been boosted by the increased mobility and trade, which increases interaction.

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