



Georgia Employment and Infrastructure Initiative
საქართველოს დასაქმებისა და ინფრასტრუქტურის ინიციატივა

COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENTS

Making a Village Mighty: Bringing Water to Villagers in Ptsa

"A person cannot sustain without air and water. If a village has no water it can not be strong and mighty. I am hardly able to transport water from afar. Nothing is better than to have water available in the yard."



"Water is necessary and nothing is possible without it. It is very good that we won't have such problems [with the water supply] anymore," happily declares Maro Mchedlishvili, who, at 67, no longer has to travel further than her front yard to get water.

These words spoken by Vano Tsonniashvili voice the thoughts of most villagers residing in Ptsa, a small village in the Kareli District of the Shida Kartli region, some 100 kilometers from the national capital Tbilisi. Despite his age, Vano, along with virtually all his fellow residents, was still forced to travel great distances to procure water for his family and his crops, as the main water supply to the town had not functioned properly for over 7 years. Like in most small villages in Georgia, the citizens of Ptsa depend on farming to provide their livelihood. Many of the village's 1068 villagers earn their humble wages from the growing of seed-stock that is either stored locally, to be employed in future agricultural development, or, more commonly, taken to area markets to be sold. This laborious lifestyle requires that villagers in Ptsa constantly tend to their agricultural duties, so when the local water supply system failed citizens in the community was faced with many problems. Because only 10% of the local residents maintain functioning wells, the other 90% of Ptsa's residents were forced to travel to neighboring villages to retrieve water for daily usage. Even those fortunate 10% that were able to pump potable water into their homes and fields from a well were not saved from further complications, as their additional well usage would result in an average monthly increase in cost of 15 GEL nearly 20% of the average monthly wage in the region. In winter, rains would contaminate these water sources so that nearly 100% of the villagers in Ptsa were forced to spend a great deal of time traveling large distances to fill their daily water needs during the harsh winter months. "We had to bring water in from outside the village. We wasted time, transport and fuel. People who had wells in their yards still needed electricity to pump water," says 42 year old Mikheil Osadze, a resident of Ptsa, "sometimes there is no power at all, and even when there is, electricity costs increase."

Recognizing this problem as the highest priority for assistance, citizens of Ptsa appealed to CHF International's GEII program to help them solve this pressing problem and conducted an initial community meeting in March, 2005. The community drafted and submitted a budget of 8,217.48 GEL, of which 2,468.30 GEL or 30% of the entire budget - would be contributed through cash and in-kind contributions from citizens in the Ptsa community. This proposed budget would finance a project that would ultimately rehabilitate 3 water collection points and place heads on all three of them a job that required excavating over 1 kilometer of ground - fence these 3 water points, to help prevent unwanted wildlife from polluting these sources, and place shutters on the main reservoir. This three month project, which was completed in September, 2005, was hailed by all those involved as a huge success which will have a lasting impact on the community for years to come. "Whatever you say, it's terrible without water nothing is possible without water. And to bring water from afar takes so much time and energy that there is no time left over to do anything else," admits Tamar Laperashvili, a 40 year-old, long time resident of Ptsa. Because the 1068 members of the Ptsa community now have direct access to water, the quality of life there has greatly improved. Potable water now flows to 320 families who no longer have to travel great distances to supply water for their families and lands. Those few who filled their water needs through the employment of wells can now redirect the cost of electricity required by those wells to help address other financial concerns. Above all, the massive amounts of time once reserved for the collection of water by many of Ptsa's citizens can now be utilized for tending crops, thus improving their revenues, and for spending time with friends and family the ultimate way to improve the quality of anyone's life.

www.chf.ge
www.chfinternational.org

