



Georgia Employment and Infrastructure Initiative
საქართველოს დასაქმებისა და ინფრასტრუქტურის ინიციატივა

COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENTS

Children from Patara Chailuri welcomed back after winter break with a new roof for their school



The joy and contentment felt by these 170 children was shown in the dancing, singing and reciting of poetry that took place during a concert for the opening ceremony of the school. One of the school's teachers expressed her satisfaction by musing that "our kids will become poets after this project!" Amazingly, this statement was already becoming a reality, as many poems about the newly renovated school were written by 7th and 8th grade students at the school.

The small village of Patara Chailuri is located in the Sagarejo district of the Kakheti region. This village, which derives its name from the two rivers, Didi Chailuri and Patara Chailuri, that flow near the village.

400 families live in the village of Patara Chailuri and the children of Patara Chailuri all attend the one school there, which was built in the early 1960s and has not received any upkeep since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Because the school has never been thoroughly rehabilitated, it now stands in a dilapidated condition. While the entire school is in need of repair, the roof, above all else, stood out as the most urgent priority for emergency repairs. The overall condition of the roof made it impossible to heat the school itself and on days that it would rain or snow the roof would leak, forcing students and teachers in the classrooms on the second floor to use their umbrellas during lessons. In addition, plaster on the walls was peeling off and, frequently, portions of the roof would fall on pupils' heads. The increase in dampness in the school, owing from the inadequate shelter offered by the roof, resulted in an increase in the number of pneumatic and respiratory problems among teachers and children, dictating that attendance would significantly tail off during the cold and wet winter months.

Because the situation was becoming increasingly more serious, a commission from the education department visited the school and decided that the school would be closed the following year if the roof was not rehabilitated. Were this to happen, students would be forced to attend school in the neighboring community of Kakabeti, 5 kilometers away, and the teachers of at Patara Chailuri's school would be left unemployed for an indefinite amount time.

Given this reality, It is not difficult to imagine how desperate the teachers and parents of the village's school children were just a few months ago. When CHF representatives visited the village and briefed a community group about its new program for the first time, this problem of the school roof was immediately mentioned. The villagers did not have any hope that the local government would help them rehabilitate the school, as the region's budget would not allow for this. Having never worked with a non-governmental organization before, the citizens of Patara Chailuri were also not very optimistic that CHF would help after they were briefed on the organization's concept and requirements for the Georgia Employment and Infrastructure Initiative. However, interest grew in the village and the citizens of Patara Chailuri ultimately decided that it would be a good idea to try to participate in this project.

More than 100 people, representing all 400 families in the community, met in the school in October, 2004 in order to discuss and prioritize their village's problems. At this meeting a council, consisting of 10 people, was chosen to manage all coordination activities related to the project. The rehabilitation of the school, along with the rehabilitation of gas lines and roads, was prioritized as an urgent need during this initial meeting. Support, both in-kind and monetary, was also offered to help implement this project.

Once the community successfully passed through the initial development process, contracts between the community and the contractors were signed, a cash contribution was made and construction began. Doubts of whether this project would actually be implemented persisted in the minds of many of the villagers until the very moment that the first materials were delivered to the project site.

Today the Roof Rehabilitation Project of Patara Chailuri School has been successfully completed and the risk of the school's potential closure has been eliminated. The replacement of this roof was essential, owing to the fact that the roof was not only old and dilapidated but it was constructed from asbestos as well, something that was further harmful to the

health of the school's children and teachers. Now a new roof now sits where the old, asbestos roof once was. As a result of these repairs to the roof, conditions at the school have drastically improved and it is now possible for the children of Patara Chailuri to continue their education in a more comfortable and healthy environment



In addition to the investments made in this project by CHF and the Patara Chailuri community (including GEL 1300 for salaries), the Gamagebis of both Sagarejo and Patara Chailuri each donated GEL 300 GEL to purchase glass for the school's windows, allowing for a warmer environment in the winter.

This project resulted in the improvement of 25 rooms, which, in turn, means that the 170 children who attend the Patara Chailuri School will not have to walk 5 km to attend school in the neighboring village next year.

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