

CDI4 Project Update Sakire, 2013



Sakire is a small mountainous village surrounded by massive forest range where agriculture and timber processing are the main activities. The village has a herd of 3000 heads in possession (up to 10 heads per family) grazed on 400 ha summer pastures at Kodiani mountain fields, 7km away from the settlement. Cattle is the main source of income generation for locals and is taken special care of by the community. For this very reason, a newly created Community Based Organization (CBO) of Sakire was charged with arrangement of cattle watering troughs shortly after successful completion of potable water system rehabilitation, both implemented within the framework of Community Development Initiative (CDI4) funded by BP and its partners.

Safe water is a crucial asset for any community, but especially for Sakire, where most families raise 3-4 kids on average (according to CBO) and earn for living through cattle farming. Milking capacity of local herd is quite good if compared to others in the region and stands at 10-15 liters per day. Milk is an essential commodity here, highly consumed by locals and commercialized as a raw material for production of dairy produce sold in Borjomi, Akhaltsikhe and Tbilisi farm markets.

The village was quite passive before 2012 in terms of engagement in CDI activities, missing on the opportunity to change anything for the better, perhaps due to lack of organized approach.

“Upon learning of matching assistance, we decided to use our chances and registered new Community Based Organization, with the main purpose to resolve water related problems our village had been struggling with for years”, says Zurab Kapanadze, head of Sakire CBO, who chairs the three-member union of young leaders entrusted by the village.

“It’s a little strange when Melatubani water project is called rehabilitation, because for my family, there was nothing to rehabilitate, we got use of potable water in our house for the first time in our lives” - adds Valeri Peradze, one of the members of 45 Sakire families who got water piped to their doorways for the first time, whereas 215 other households improved the volume and quality of their supply.



Zurab Kapanadze, Head of Sakire CBO (right) with project beneficiary



Valeri Peradze, Melatubani Water Project Beneficiary

“The Melatubani project reached 85% of Sakire households and its success winded up our motivation to reapply for second round of solicitation”, continues Zura Kapanadze, referring to newly funded project anticipating arrangement of cattle watering troughs in the village and Kodiani pastures.

Local cattle usually satisfies its thirst from small streams that are frequently used for disposal of household waste and increments by the villagers.



In some places, one can also meet hand-crafted, obsolete wooden troughs that seem to provide a relatively safer portion, but the risk of diseases due to fungi-prone damp timber - could be even higher. From now on, Sakire has not only the safe drinking water but also the milk and the benefit of the two projects is received by 100% of the villagers as well as by those consumers who purchase local dairy.

There will be 12 units of 12m long galvanized metal troughs installed (4 in the village and 8 at Kodiani pastures) within the frames of Infrastructure Rehabilitation project, allowing cattle to limit the movement throughout a 4-6 km radius in search of water, preventing from dehydration and extra calorie burning which is crucial for milking capacity.



Gocha Javakhadze, Sakire village resident, performing part of job within matching requirement of Sakire Water Troughs project



Rich with highland pastures, Sakire lacks plains for cultivation of grains or fruits and vegetables, but even available plots are rested, waisting the capabilities of local fertile soils. No wonder that a picture-perfect CDI4 On-Farm Demonstration (OFD) of maize in Sakire is the only, isolated plot on the territory.

“We are pioneering maize cultivation in Sakire and I’m not afraid to risk”, says Gogita Gelashvili, one of the three members of local OFD group who claims to have applied for demo farming project after evidencing highly productive onion yield of his heighoubor, received with CDI assistance in 2011. The demo farmer expects 6-7 tons of produce on the one-hectare plot to be marketed to Tsnisi Combined Feed factory through RDA in fall.



However, Gogita may not know that his plot is not the first ever grain field here, as Kodiani mountain valleys are scientifically proved to have hosted rich grain cultivation culture since early Bronze Age, which is evidenced by discovery of remains of honey made from cornflower – a plant which grew as weed in crop fields in the past.

The sensational unearthing of the world's first trace of honey at Tsikhisdziri-Sakire junction during the pipeline excavation works led by BP, challenged the oldest found honey remains of Tutankhamun tomb and attracted global attention to the village¹. Sakirians are especially proud of the finding after learning the results of a throughout study of the discovery published in 2012, which states that uncovered clay vessels contained three different kinds of honey sealed individually (cornflower, lime tree and wildflower), referring to highly developed beekeeping practices here as early as 27 centuries BC. It's interesting, that the clay pottery was placed in a tomb of a woman, who may have been an ancient honey specialist according to the scientists.

Wether it's a genetically preconditioned aspiration or just a simple coincidence, Sakire is one of the few villages where CDI4 funding was requested to start-up a beekeeping business by a woman.



Marina Gogaladze is a mother of three and an active enterprenur, who decided to learn and earn from scratch with help of CDI. “We married young and my husband was always the only one supporting our family financially and I couldn’t afford to limit my role to being just the housewife”, says Marina.

¹ CNC Video Footage “Georgian Ancient Honey”, 2012 [<http://youtu.be/iL6PtORg40c>]; The use of fossilized honey for paleoecological reconstruction: A palynological study of archeological material from Georgia [<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1134%2FS0031030106110074>]

“When my wife came up with an idea of starting a bee farm, I didn’t consider it seriously initially, thinking she wouldn’t be able to cope with it”, continues Zaza Kurtanidze, admitting that he had underestimated her eagerness to respond to this grant competition. “She was so motivated after she qualified for proposal writing training in RDA, that I mobilized all my previous knowledge of the business and supported her in full”, says Zaza Kurtanidze.

This project uncovered Marina’s entrepreneurial spirit which spread to whole family. Shortly after purchasing bee families, Zaza resembled his carpentry skills and started crafting bee hives for sale with assistance of his teenage son.



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The Community Development Initiative (CDI) is initiated and funded by BP and its co-venturers in Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC), South Caucasus Pipeline (SCP) and Georgian Pipeline Companies (GPC).

