



Ecologically Safe Agriculture

Under Eco Awards 2011 Program, Civil Society Institute (CSI) implemented a project aimed at improving socio-economic condition of local farmers residing in five mountainous villages of Adjara (Vashlovani, Nigazeuli, Akhaldaba, Zvare and Kvatasha), through introducing and promoting environmentally friendly and effective methods of agriculture.



Various developments in the past decades have created growing pressure on the environment. The lack of knowledge about modern, ecologically safe agricultural technologies and farming, as well as irrational usage of

fertilizers, and contamination of soil and ground water, have led to a decline of soil structure and fertility, resulting in structural changes of ecosystem and other larger scale natural disasters.

One of the most important and practical means for reducing the adverse effect of the agriculture on the environment is introduction and promotion of biological farming methodology, especially in the regions prone to the risks of natural disasters.

Project Objectives

- Popularization of ecologically safe and efficient methods of agriculture in five selected high mountainous villages of Keda, Shuakhevi and Khulo districts.
- Popularization of ecologically safe methods of agriculture among schools and increase in the role of schools in civic education through their involvement in the project.
- Formation of sustainable model of ecologically safe and efficient agriculture for further popularization across the country.

Project Activities and Outputs

- Nine demo-plots were created, where various cultures, specific to the region (potato, cucumber, paprika and tomato), were produced by using different environmentally safe methods of agriculture.
- Theoretical as well as practical trainings were provided for farmers on such issues as bio-production of vegetables (cucumber, tomato, potato and paprika), biological methods of combating various plant diseases, ecologically safe methods to be used against phytophthora, warehousing of harvested crops, measures against the root putridity, and safe utilization of environmentally friendly pesticides.

The bio-production methodology offered by the organization proved to be successful: the resistance of the plants toward various pests and the amount of harvest on the demo plots have exceeded twice and in some cases three times those, produced by the regular methods.



Photo by: Georgian Agrarian Movement

- The project offered an innovative model of providing service to farmers through active involvement of the youth. Eco-clubs were formed at schools of the target villages and were equipped with PC and camera. Eco-club members served as liaisons between the farmer and the project specialists. Upon request from local farmers, the members filmed symptoms caused by diseased cultures or damage caused by pests, sent the pictures to specialists via Skype and returned relevant recommendations to the beneficiaries. Through this model, full agricultural service was provided to the farmers of the target villages with the minimal effort, with the number of consultations reaching 444.

- Flyers, containing information and useful advice on conventional as well as biological production of the agricultural crops (tomato, paprika, potato, cucumber) were printed and disseminated among the project beneficiaries and the communities in Keda, Khulo and Shuakhevi districts.
- Within the framework of the project a publication **Perspectives of Introducing Innovative Technologies in the Agrarian Sector of Mountainous Adjara** was prepared and published. The publication provides information on the results of the implemented activities, the analysis of the region's agrarian sector and the ideas and recommendations, together with ecological risks and ways of preventing them, and the influence of agrarian sector on the region's ecologic condition.
- In the framework of additional award, acknowledging successful completion of Eco-Awards Program 2009-2011, CSI issued publication **Models for Poverty Reduction in Rural Areas**, including the one used in Adjara. Brochures will be distributed among stakeholders. During the fall 2012 three presentations in Tbilisi, Samegrelo and Adjara will be commenced. This will contribute to popularization of the project and its results, and further replication of the used approaches. At the same time, this will contribute to CSI's popularization, which has been intensively working on promotion of environmentally safe agriculture during the recent years.

Project Duration

April 2011- December 2011

Donors and Partners

The given project was implemented within the framework of the 2011 Eco-Awards Program. Eco-Awards Program is initiated and financed by BP, on behalf of its oil and gas co-venturers (BTC Co. SCP Co.) and administered by Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF).

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