



RURAL COMMUNITIES DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Support of Poor Communities in Chokhatauri and Khobi Districts in Sustainable Development through Building their Skills and Capacities in Environmental Protection and Utilization of Renewable Energy Resources

Under Eco Awards 2011 Program, Rural Communities Development Agency (RCDA) implemented a project aimed at building skills and capacities of farmers and disadvantaged villagers in six selected communities of Chokhatauri and Khobi districts (*Guturi, Amagleba, Kheta, Khamiskuri, Dablatsikhe and Nabeghlavi*) in protection and utilization of renewable resources that will help them in overcoming poverty and finding ways to sustain their livelihoods.

As a result of underdeveloped rural sector, poverty continues to be deeply entrenched in rural areas of the target districts. Households in the selected communities are particularly vulnerable due to scarcity of energy resources. The lack of fuel has caused localized environmental problems such as deforestation for fuel, cutting of windbreaks, burning dung instead of using it for fertilizer, resulting in soil degradation. The project was implemented in partnership with the local CBOs **Momavlis Gzebi** (Ways of Future) and Khamiskuri-based **Water, Sanitation and Renewable Energy Resource Center**.



*Photo by: RCDA
Fruit and Vegetable Dehydrator*

Project Objectives

- Support the communities in decreasing environmental degradation - land erosion through reforestation of eroded land area and introduction crop rotation techniques.
- Support the communities in utilizing renewable energy resources through construction of water solar heaters and solar dryers for fruits and vegetables.
- Enable communities to decrease fire wood consumption through construction and installation of briquetting machines for production of fuel-briquettes from agricultural residues.
- Build public awareness and capacities of local communities on the above-mentioned and other aspects of environmental protection.

Implemented Activities and Results

- Under the objective of supporting the communities in decreasing environmental degradation, 3800 seedlings of local varieties (Alder-tree, Maple-ash tree, Acacia, Linden) were planted on the eroded land area. More than 500 people, including schoolchildren, voluntarily participated in the cleaning, fencing and planting of the trees. Apart from that, two demo fields for demonstrating crop rotation were organized in Guturi and Kheta comprising one hectare.



- The organization selected 12 people from each district (Khobi and Chokhatauri), based on their interest and skills, to participate in Training of Trainers on construction and maintenance of **solar water heaters, solar dryers of fruits and vegetables and briquetting press**. As a result of these trainings, **12 dryers of different modifications** (two in Nabeghlavi, two in Khamiskuri, two in Kheta, two in Guturi, two in Dablatsikhe, two in Amagleba), **12 solar hot water collectors** and **six briquetting presses** were constructed

*Photo by: RCDA
Tree planting on eroded land*

- The following publications were prepared and published:
 - Manual - **How to Construct a Solar Water Collector**
 - Manual- **Solar Fruit and Vegetable Dryers**
 - Renewable energy info sheet, containing one pages on solar collectors, solar dryers for vegetable and fruit and use of biomass
 - Publication **Climate Change-Causes and Consequences**
- In the framework of additional award, acknowledging successful completion of Eco-Awards Program 2009-2011, RCDA constructed additional solar collector and two dryers with participation of the most active project participants, who were offered support in starting up small businesses. A group of seven people in Khamiskuri is fully equipped to fulfill orders and construct various environmentally safe systems. One of the fruit dryers mentioned above was handed over to this group, enabling its members to use it jointly for drying fruits collected at their gardens and to sell them at markets.

*Photo by: RCDA
Constructing solar water heater*



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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