



We seek a world of hope, tolerance and social justice, where poverty has been overcome and people live in dignity and security.

Defending Dignity.

Fighting Poverty

# NEWSLETTER # 29

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## Women From Across the South Caucasus Marked International Peace Day

On September 21 women from across the South Caucasus region marked the 30th anniversary of the International Day of Peace. The event was marked by partner organizations of CARE International in the Caucasus that have been working in conflict-affected areas.



## Environment clubs stress ecology and leadership

Young people attending eco-camps this summer participated in a program designed to teach them to care about the planet but—more importantly—to teach them team-building and networking skills that will empower them to organize and act to protect Georgia's natural environment.



A Programme Team at Country Office has held a two-day workshop to further elaborate on the programme concept for the South Caucasus. Rural households with income below the poverty line and at risk of falling below remains the impact group of the programme. However, the team refashioned the definition of sub impact groups and will be targeting the socially and economically marginalized people and/or those cut off from markets and basic services; people affected by or vulnerable to political hazards (conflict, closing borders, etc.) and/or environmental risks; young people aged 18-31 and women. Moreover, the team has also identified four cross-cutting themes which will dominate our interventions within each domain as well as with our work with each impact group: gender, conflict sensitivity, environment and emergency preparedness.

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CARE's MEALS Group held a workshop involving project managers to move forward towards harmonization of monitoring and evaluation system. MEALS stands for Monitoring, Evaluation, Analysis, Learning and Sharing.

The project managers and M&E focal points presented M&E systems with the aim to identify similarities and differences and discussed the strategies and methodologies which each project applies to achieve project goals.

MEALS group is to enable the CO to measure and analyze progress towards program objectives, establish cross-project learning and sharing mechanism and improve accountability to stakeholders.

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Shereen Ibrahim, MEER MU Deputy Regional Director-Programme Quality, facilitated a workshop for the programme team during her visit to Tbilisi, Georgia on Oct 4. The workshop aimed to help the programme team develop indicators of the programme breakthroughs. The exercise will help the CO measure progress towards programme objectives overtime.

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MEALS Group is planning to conduct a survey on youth across the South Caucasus to reveal poverty dynamics, challenges and opportunities, interests and attitudes of young people in the region. Young people aged 18-31 is one of the four sub

### WHAT IS OUR PROGRAMME APPROACH?

The program approach represents an effort by CARE to better coordinate its activities to achieve a meaningful and sustainable impact on people's lives. The approach builds on CARE's Unifying Framework for Poverty Eradication and Social Justice.

### WHY ARE WE MOVING FROM PROJECTS TO PROGRAMME?

We believe that working through programs is the most cost-effective way to achieve and measure impact at scale.

Poverty and social injustice have many causes and attempts to alleviate either will require actions in many parts of government, society and the economy. The program approach ensures that CARE's work in all of these areas seeks to achieve the common goal.

### HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE OUR PROGRAMME GOAL

The program of CARE International in the Caucasus is focused on alleviation of economic need and the enhancement of social justice and security amongst poorest rural communities. After examining the underlying causes of poverty in these communities we highlighted four main domains -- governance, civil society, conflict-prevention/,security and markets -- where action could be most clearly directed in order to achieve that goal. These domains draw directly on CARE's unifying framework which seeks to achieve the three pillars of social equity, livelihood security and improvements in the governance environment.



## “CBO inspires business spirit in rural community”

CBO



*“When we look at these directly, it motivated us and gave us an optimistic view of the future that the community really can improve,” Liparteliani said. “We are very optimistic to do more. The community is together with us.”*

Women in the community of Kheledi are ready for change.

They say that working with CARE’s COMBI project has inspired them to dream of a thriving village where they will have a way to make money—and their children will want to stay instead of leaving to seek their fortunes elsewhere.

Khatuna Kurasbediani is a nurse, mother of two, and the head of the Kheledi community-based organization (CBO). “With the CBO’s support, the community received knowledge on new agriculture techniques, which helped us to increase our yield in potato plots,” she said.

The project taught the women lessons beyond agricultural ones, said Tamuna Melkadze, COMBI project manager. The project, officially titled Strengthening community-based initiatives for poverty reduction in Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti region of Georgia, targets marginalized rural communities, especially focusing on women. The project aimed to reach a total of 1,000 households and benefit 4,000 individuals.

“They are confident they can meet their food demand in the village,” Melkadze said. “It is a very big step forward. Now they are ready for change. They are looking for business development, ecotourism, handicrafts. They’re looking for something better.”

member Makvala Liparteliani said she and the other women were especially inspired by cross-visits to other experienced communities.

“When we look at these directly, it motivated us and gave us an optimistic view of the future that the community really can improve,” Liparteliani said. “We are very optimistic to do more. The community is together with us.”

Although the COMBI project has ended, Melkadze said the community is seeking additional funding from other donors interested in carrying on similar work in the region.

Women in the community are interested in livestock development including pigs and sheep, making Svaneti hats, and operating guesthouses to serve tourists visiting the area’s historical monuments, Liparteliani said.

“Now we have ambition to have more income,” she said. “Before, we had no ambitions. Now we have motivation to have new business. Everyone is thinking about being employed.”

Instead of resigning themselves to watching their children grow up and move away, Liparteliani said the women of the community hope to create opportunities for them in the village.

“We need something to keep our children and families here,” Liparteliani said. “New generations are leaving the village. New businesses will keep them here.”



# Youth Camp brings Georgian, Armenian kids closer



Gadavida! Ushadir! Chvenia burti! Ara tvek! Shouts in Georgian and Armenian filled the air when 16 youngsters played a game of football on a sand-covered stadium in Bolnisi, cheered on by a handful of spectators applauding and cheering. The referee announced 7:2: the local Bolnisi guys beat the mixed team consisting of Georgians and Armenians.

The football match was one of the activities in a joint Georgian-Armenian youth camp For a Better Future which was organized on Sep 22-27. The camp, based in Bolnisi, Georgia, brought together more than 20 participants. The youngsters hailed from Ninotsminda, Dmanisi and Bolnisi in Georgia and from a bordering region of the Noemberyan municipality in Armenia. They were engaged in trainings and discussions on tolerance and conflict and enjoyed cultural and sports activities throughout the week.

The event was organized by CARE's target associations, including the Kvemo Kartli Public Information Center and Woman and Universe.

"The camp aims at increasing awareness of youth on issues of common significance," said Mikheil Pakatsoshvili, a STAGE II project coordinator from CARE. "It also creates a platform of interaction between the youth of Georgia and Armenia and prepares ground for future cooperation at a community level in the bordering regions."

A wide range of activities provide opportunities to interact—but communication has not been easy. The camp has hired an interpreter to help the teens talk to one another. But while the Russian language provided an easy solution to the Soviet citizens, which includes both Georgians and Armenians, the language is becoming an issue for a younger generation in the neighboring countries.

"The trainings and various trips helped us to become friends. Some of the trainings were interesting and useful, especially those on environment and emergency situations," said Nika, a 12-year-old participant from Georgia.

**"Before coming here I had a feeling that we would have fights with Armenians every day. I proved wrong."**

**Nika, 12, from Georgia**

The project Poverty Reduction and Confidence-building in Border Areas of Georgia and Armenia by Strengthening Civil Societies in Sustainable Rural Development (STAGE II) is financed by the "Austrian Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe" (ADC), implemented by CARE Österreich and CARE International in the Caucasus, along with the partner organizations – Civil Development Agency (CiDA) in Georgia and Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development (CARD) in Armenia.

*financed by*

**Austrian  
Development Cooperation**



# Women From Across the South Caucasus Marked International Peace Day

*On September 21 women from across the South Caucasus region marked the 30th anniversary of the International Day of Peace. The event was marked by partner organizations of CARE International in the Caucasus that have been working in conflict-affected areas.*

In Georgia, the IDP Women's Association 'Consent' held five concurrent children's drawing competitions on 21st September. The competitions took place in Vake Park, Tbilisi, as well as in four conflict-affected communities. Participating children shared their visions of peace using coloured chalk on pavement. The young artists who created the four best artworks were awarded with book vouchers.

"I drew a heart, a dove, a symbol of peace, a flag of Georgia, the sun and a church," said Shmagi Devidze, 11. "All of them together are peace for me."

Shmagi and his family were displaced by the August 2008 war. They currently live in Gardabani, where displaced persons were settled after the conflict. "I want to come back to my real home in Tskhinvali," said Shmagi.



Cultural and sports events took place all across the South Caucasus.

The Armenian Committee of the Helsinki Citizen's Assembly marked the celebration with several events during the weekend of September 24 and 25. Local activists opened a school library in the village of Hachik by hosting a concert and an exhibition of drawings on the theme of peace and hosted an opening of a town square in the city of Sisian, together with an exhibition of handicrafts and a concert.

The Association of Women of Abkhazia ran essay competitions among school children in the four conflict-affected communities: the towns of Gali and Ochamchira and the villages of Baslahuba and Chuburkhindzh.

The Women's Problems Research Union of Azerbaijan held a children's drawing competition in the city of Barda, the settlement of Zobujug and the compact displaced persons settlement of Pirshagi. In Pirshagi, the competition was accompanied by an exhibition of peace-themed photographs.

The Centre for Civilian Initiatives organized a round table on the theme of peace, which will include the showing of the film "To see if I was smiling", on the subject of women in war, as well as discussion of two short stories by the writer Ashot Beglaryan.

"Paying attention to World Peace Day is very important," said Anthony Foreman, director of CARE's Strengthening Women's Capacity for Peace-building project. "It's an opportunity for a kind of confidence-building measure. People can see little bit of each other across the conflict lines, across borders, across barriers of different kinds."

The project is funded by the European Union (EU) and Austrian Development Cooperation and Cooperation for Eastern Europe (ADC).



*With funding from*

**Austrian  
Development Cooperation**



*"Women and violence are incompatible" - this was the main message of our discussion which followed a film screening "To See If I'm Smiling."*

*Ashot Beglaryan, a writer then presented two of his stories called Eagle and Children of War. All these themes are topical for local communities in Karabagh: prisoners of war, hostages and missing persons.*

*It was a lively discussion inspiring many to express opinion. Ashot himself was answering the questions. The discussion focused on the need to strengthen peace in the region and the need to solve issues, saying no to war, violence and brutality. "*

Albert Voskanian,  
The Centre for Civilian Initiatives



### Small Investment Means Big Changes

For Tsiala Gugeshashvili, a grant to buy two refrigerators was a life-changing investment.

Tsiala and her husband have been living in limbo as internally-displaced people since the 1993 war in Georgia's Abkhazia region forced them from their home. They spent about eight years living in a repurposed hotel in the capital city of Tbilisi before settling 11 years ago in a borrowed house in the village of Ivanovka, in the Tetrtskaro region of Samtskhe-Javakheti.

But while they now have a place to live, they still struggled to get by on a government allowance for IDPs. "There was no job, so we couldn't earn money for food," Tsiala said.

In Ivanovka, Tsiala and her husband grow potatoes and beans. But two years of bad weather have resulted in disappointing harvests.

To earn some cash, Tsiala and her husband thought of opening a grocery but the couple was limited in the products they could offer, since they couldn't afford a refrigerator to store perishable items.

Tsiala received a 1000 USD small grant under the Community Development Initiative to make her idea about the grocery possible. Community Development Initiative is initiated and funded by BP and its co-venturers in Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC), South Caucasian Pipeline (SCP) and Georgian Pipeline Companies (GPC) and aims at improving livelihoods of the people living along the pipelines.

Tsiala bought two refrigerators with the grant, then made wooden shelves with her own resources to bring her idea about grocery into life. It was a savvy



business move, since their store has become the only source for groceries in Ivanovka village, bringing in supplies from Marneuli, a village nearby.

Last summer, tourists visiting from Tbilisi spent between 35 and 40 GEL per day and her net profit in August alone made up 250 GEL.

"Before I have had I refrigerator, I couldn't bring a meat, ice cream," Tsiala said. "We didn't have money for buy food or anything. Now we do. It isn't too much but it is enough."

The grocery shop is one out of 77 new small businesses launched this year under the project. The small grants aim to provide income-generating opportunities and encourage entrepreneurship in communities along the pipeline through a combination of training and grants.

For hard-working people like Tsiala Gugeshashvili, one small boost was enough to make a difference.

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

The views expressed herein do not reflect the donors' official opinion.







## For Villagers, Bridge is a Link to the Land

For the past 10 years, farmers in the village of Kldisubani were forced to walk seven kilometers out of their way each day to reach their hay fields and plots.

Their land lay on the far side of the Red Bridge, built in the 1930s to serve the Retseula hydroelectric power station but abandoned after the central road was rerouted.

The Red Bridge linked people with their farms, especially in the 1960s, when the village of Kldisubani was damaged by landslides. Rough living conditions forced the entire Village Kldisubani residents to leave their homes in the mountain region and settle in the plains below.

Every day, farmers and their animals trek the dangerous road back to their hay fields and plots up in the mountains. The bridge, 32 meters long, was a safe and convenient route for walkers.

After the bridge was officially abandoned, local inhabitants tried to maintain it using local materials, including acacia tree bark and earth to fill in the gaps.

“Every year we were taking dirt with carts and were ramming it on the planks,” said Ketevan Ratiani, 57.

In this way, villagers were able to keep the bridge usable for 20 years. But finally, the Red Bridge deteriorated so badly that it was too dangerous for people or animals to use. Instead, villagers switched to an alternative route, walking their cattle along the roads to the fields.

The new route was much longer—and nearly as dangerous as the damaged bridge.

It is like “between the devil and the deep blue sea”: says Natela Papuashvili, 62, who traveled the route to graze her two cows and look after her vineyard and orchard in the mountains.

In 2010, CARE and its partner organization CENN studied the condition of natural pastures and hayfields. In collaboration with the local municipality, 20 communities were selected to implement those small grant projects aiming to help villagers access their hay fields and pastures more easily.

Restoring the Red Bridge is one of these projects.

The bridge project has been the united initiative of the local community of Sadmeli, the municipality of Ambrolauri and CARE International in the Caucasus, with labor contributed by local inhabitants. The project is implemented by CARE International in the Caucasus and financed by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

This fall, Natela Papuashvili and other 94 families will begin to use the newly rehabilitated Red Bridge. They can mow and prepare the hay for winter. Their cattle will feed better and walk less. This will improve milk yields.

The Red Bridge will once again become the shortest and safest way to the hayfields  
—and a bridge to stability in Kldisubani.



Young people attending eco-camps this summer participated in a program designed to teach them to care about the planet but—more importantly—to teach them team-building and networking skills that will empower them to organize and act to sustainable utilisation of Georgia’s natural environment.

Twenty-three young people who are affiliated with the eco clubs participated in a six-day camp focused on environmental issues. The camp took place in the protected area of Lagodekhi, located in the eastern Georgian province of Kakheti. Participants represented the regions of Racha and Kakheti.

During the camp, the students learned about organization, strategic planning and drafting projects. Each of nine EcoClubs proposed an idea for an environmental project to carry out at home. The top four ideas received awards.

“Mariam Kurtsikidze, a grade 12 student at Tchrebalo Public School, plans to share her award-winning plan with other teenagers in her hometown of Racha.

“My project idea was to establish four different types of gardens,” she said. “We will have educational lessons and will invite students from other villages to share our experience that we gained at the Ecoclub.” For their proposal, her school won a science kit.

Thomas Reynolds, Mission Director of CARE International in the Caucasus, said that EcoClub participants have a big responsibility—as well as the potential to achieve tangible results. Previous EcoClubs established by CARE have implemented successful projects in waste collection, recovering destroyed forests, reducing soil erosion, and conducting public outreach to raise awareness of environmental problems.

The INRMW program is financed by the US Agency for International Development (USAID). The program is implemented by Florida International University(FIU) in partnership with UNESCO-IHE; CARE International; Winrock International; CENN (Caucasus Environmental NGO Network).

*The EcoCamp has been established by GLOWS Consortium (Global Waters for Sustainability) within USAID program INRMW (Integrated Natural Resources Management in Watersheds of Georgia).*

*9 EcoClubs in two pilot watershed areas of Racha and Kakheti regions have been formed by CARE International as one of the GLOWS’ Consortium partners.*

#### Partners:



Florida International Representative (FIU)



UNESCO Institute of Water Education (UNESCO –IHE)



CARE International in the Caucasus



Winrock International (WI)



Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN)



# Farmers to Market Project Reports Benefits

*In June 2011 CARE International in the Caucasus officially wrapped up Farmers to Markets (FtM) project which was a part of CARE's existing Community Development Initiative funded by BP and its co-venturers.*

*FtM worked along the eastern and western parts of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and South Caucasus pipeline routes. The project aimed to bridge identified gaps in the value chain between farmers and markets in Georgia, improving livelihood security in pipeline communities through agricultural services and better access to markets.*

## Consolidation Centres:

With co-financing of business partners the project facilitated formation of consolidation centres which collect various agricultural produce from farmers for their further processing and marketing. While allowing the farmers to save time and resources for marketing the goods, the consolidation centres have encouraged them to fully focus on primary production. This has stimulated quantity and quality of the agricultural produce and thus boosted the farmers' incomes. Moreover, the consolidation centres provide various trainings and consultations to the target farmers to improve their knowledge and marketing skills.



### *Photos:*

*a fodder factory in Tsnisi, Samtskhe-Javakheti;  
a dairy in Tsnisi, Samtskhe-Javakheti;  
a grain-drier in Lomtagora, Kvemo Kartli.*

- 792 farmers directly received both financial and non-financial benefits from engagement with CCs.
- Farmers earned around \$268,000 in sales revenue through selling their produce to CCs.
- 76 percent of beneficiary farmers reported using their improved knowledge in practice.
- 89 percent of target farmers reported an average of 19 percent increase in annual family incomes.
- 2,300 hard copies of value chain directories were printed and distributed among farmers and market consumers.





## Trade shows

- 289 pipeline farmers participated in four trade shows, which attracted at least 5,340 buyers of produce.
- Farmers sold 105 tons of produce, earning around \$70,00 (117,000 Gel).
- 114 farmers reached agreements on future produce sales and exchanged contact information with purchasers.

## Trainings

- 602 pipeline farmers received trainings from experts and external consultants on improved production techniques to improve the marketability of their produce.
- 559 farmers were trained in partial budgeting.
- 524 farmers were trained in food safety.
- 76 percent of farmers report that they used improved knowledge gained through extension and trainings in practice.

"Farmers to Markets" is part of the Community Development Initiative (CDI-2) funded by BP and its co-venturers in Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC), South Caucasian Pipeline (SCP) and Georgian Pipeline Companies (GPC).



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**CARE International  
in the Caucasus**



*Our programme impact goal is to reduce rural poverty, vulnerability and social injustice in the South Caucasus and improve conditions for sustainable development, thereby contributing to stability and peace in the region.*

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