



Celebrate International Women's Day with Oxfam GB

This year the entire world will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the International Women's day – March 8.

On that occasion, a number of international non-governmental organizations, including Oxfam GB, Amnesty International, Save the Children, White Ribbon Alliance, Safe Motherhood and other organizations, have made up the EQUALS coalition and launched a campaign led by the famous singer Annie Lennox. The objective of the campaign is to draw attention to the issue of equal rights for men and women.

Mission possible: ending poverty

1,1 million people are poor in Armenia. According to the latest data of the National Statistical Service, every third resident of our country (or the 34,1 % of the population) is poor. However, changes are possible.

Oxfam is a vibrant global movement of passionate, dedicated people fighting poverty and doing amazing work, together. Oxfam GB works in 120 countries, including Armenia, under the slogan "we believe that poverty is not a fact of life but an injustice which can be overcome". Oxfam and its partners are working to bring changes to the lives of poor people living in the most remote and isolated rural communities in Armenia.

Women are the Heart and Soul of our Project



This way the Country Director of Oxfam GB Armenia, Margarita Hakobyan characterizes the participation of women in their projects. All the projects of the organization are developed and implemented in a way that they could ensure the involvement of women and vulnerable groups of communities in decision making affecting their life and having more say.

Woman & politics

Special issue, 2011

Oxfam GB and its partners celebrate International Women's Day with a campaign for equal rights and equal opportunities.



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Members of Reliable Hands group



Equal Opportunities in "Reliable Hands"

Varser Zakaryan is one of the young activists of the Reliable Hands group of Ijevan town. She is an 11th year pupil and for the last 3 years has already taken numerous initiatives with her friends. We met Varsar in autumn of last year in Ijevan, where we took part in the "Let's Unite for Equal Opportunities" flesh-mob which they had organized within the framework of a month for the protection of the disabled people's rights.

"Everything started from our dispute club in the Bridge of Hope NGO centre. Then, the group of young leaders became more active, and we were so inspired that decided to give a new name to our group: "Reliable Hands". We created our logo and even our hymn", Varsar says, meanwhile disseminating the motto of the flash mob on coloured paper hands, where the participants were writing their contacts and patching them on wallpaper.

By the way, the 2000 "hands" prepared for the flesh mob had been already consumed, but people kept on coming to express their concern on ordinary colored papers.

"Before I have been very constrained and had complexes. But now, in the Reliable Hands, I feel confident and have become brave, have gained new knowledge. I'm aware of my rights and liabilities and when I notice someone else's rights are violated, I immediately interfere. We all have equal rights, but not all of us are conscious of exercising them. Often we don't even notice the opportunities. We try to encourage people in order that they could see the opportunities", Varsar told us.

Another group member, Hrach, who was disseminating information booklets said: "There are 179.257 disabled people in our Republic, the 4,7 % of which are

children under 18. Our objective is to inform people about this issue, to unify them around the idea of equality, to prove them that the environment, where the disabled people live, is comfortable for everyone". In his words, the disabled people can also fully participate in civil life, if there are appropriate conditions and equal opportunities. "We also call on everyone to contribute to the creation of opportunities", he added.

Reliable Hands group protecting young leaders' rights was established in Ijevan in 2009 within the framework of "Raising her voice" project, which aims at promoting the role and involvement of women in the process of decision making at community level. The Bridge of Hope NGO implements the project with the support of Oxfam.

Armine Nersisyan, the director of the Bridge of Hope Ijevan branch mentioned in our conversation that the project was one of

their most successful initiatives. As for the Reliable Hands group members, they were very active and recognized in the community.

"The Children are really prepared and behave themselves as accountable citizens. They respond to any problem promptly. Recently we have gained one more achievement. There was a very vulnerable family in the community which had three under-age children. They were living on the last floor of a 5-storey building where they were constantly facing problems. Our young leaders applied the Mayor with a rare letter and, fortunately, the problem was solved", she said.

By the way, there are women and youth rights protection groups in the child development centres of the Bridge of Hope NGO in Dilijan, Noyemberyan, Berd, as well as in Yerevan.

Lilit Kochinyan

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170 000 direct and 700 000 indirect beneficiaries in Armenia

How is Oxfam GB Armenia helping?

Oxfam GB has been working in Armenia since 1994. During these years it has supported 170 000 direct and 700000 indirect beneficiaries.

In Armenia, Oxfam's focus is on health care, creating new business opportunities for small-scale farmers, disaster preparedness

and amplifying the voices of poor people, especially women, at government level.

At present, in cooperation with local non-governmental organizations, local self-government bodies and regional authorities, Oxfam GB Armenia implements the following

schemes in 6 regions and over 165 remote and borderline rural communities of the Republic:

- Community-Based Primary Health Care in Borderline Regions of Armenia
- Women's Voice and Role in Governance

➢ Community Voices in Decision Making from Local to National levels

- New Economic Opportunities for Small-Scale Farmers in Tavush and Vayots Dzor
- Participatory Multi-Hazard Disaster Risk Reduction in Armenia

Be Humankind

Lessons of Kindness



Ani Paronyan and Lida Movsesyan – the Reliable Hands group members successfully gave such a lesson for 5th year pupils of Inclusive School No 3 of Ijevan town. A surprise was waiting for them in Tsaghkavan School.

“They were informed about the lesson of kindness

just two days ago and for this short period of time they had just worked wonders. The children performed the Good Samaritan play, painted beautiful, bright and kind canvases, prepared the family tree of the word “kind” and collected sayings on the subject of kindness. We were delighted”, Ani Paronyan said.

Lately, on the occasion of the International Day of Kindness on February 17, the group members organized a unique action in the towns of Ijevan, Dilijan, Berd and Noyemberyan by distributing seed-hearts of the Tree of Kindness among their fellow-citizens.

I like autumn, the leaf-fall ...

Another member of the Reliable Hands group, Serob, told us how they had visited the botanic garden of Ijevan together with children with and without disabilities under “for equal opportunities” campaign.



“We spent an interesting time in nature. We had a walk and followed leafy paths. Some of us were collecting autumn leaves; some were painting or embroidering...”

Tree planting together



Ijevan Municipality organized tree planting in Ijevan’s boulevard at the request of the members of the Reliable Hands group. *“It is the second year the children with and without disabilities plant trees together and our town becomes more beautiful”,* Narine Tadevosyan, a member of the Reliable Hands group says.

By the way, with the efforts of the action participants, the boulevard got 100 fir-trees.

Dual discrimination

“Disabled women are targets for dual and parallel discrimination: gender discrimination on one hand and discrimination towards the disabled on the other hand”, the trainers of Discrimination Towards Disabled Women training, as well as members of the Reliable Hands group – Tatev Minasyan, Lida Movsesyan and Ani Paronyan said.



“We have repeatedly disputed on this subject and we have also discussed it during the first youth forum entitled “the Voice of the Young Generation. Through this training we showed coordinated approach to the existing problems. During the next meeting we’ll present our problem solving proposal”, Tatev Minasyan said.

Photos by Arpine Khachatryan, Lida Movsesyan

Community Voices

Law says people have rights... People ask “Really”?

The members of the Union of NGOs of Shirak Region consider it their duty to prove people that putting such a question is wrong. Moreover, they not only explain but also provide significant assistance in restoring their beneficiaries’ rights. The Union is an OXFAM partner and with its support it has implemented a series of projects in the rural communities of the region.

“The majority of Shirak region’s population, living in harsh social conditions and, meantime, being unaware of the rights, often cannot protect their rights. We strive to fill the gap. We also support villagers, who have difficulties in getting to town for different services. We give information and consultation on leading programmes, assist in paying off water supply debts”, the president of the Union of NGOs of Shirak Region, Mkrtych Tchartaryan says.

By the way, according to him, the majority of people applying for assistance are women. It is due to the fact that village men are mostly absent from the Republic, and women carry the heaviest burden. The lawyer of the Union often takes the responsibility for the barrister of village women during litigation. The Union also covers the court expenses, if a need arises.

The Union of NGOs of Shirak Region has started its operation in four communities, the number of which increased year by year and reached 15. OXFAM has supported

in establishing civic centres in many communities, which provide free legal consultation, organize trainings and workshops on forms of democratic participation and on their effective application. In one word, we teach people how to raise the community voice. It is exactly the case when women show more activity. Community self-initiative and women leadership active groups, functioning under the project, collaborate with local self-government bodies and periodically present proposals for solving the problems existing in the communities.

Moreover, rather active women involved in the groups also seek to take the next step and to put forward their candidacy during local self-government elections.

“As a result, today we have 8 women who strive to become a Council member. This is the outcome of our efforts”, the psychologist of the Union of NGOs of Shirak Region Gayane Gevorgyan says.

“Besides, the traditional stereotypes still prevail. For example, one

of the woman residents of Amasia village had been nominated to the post of the head of the community during previous elections. But she had withdrawn her candidacy at her husband’s request, because the acting governor of the village has been his friend”, they told us in the Union of NGOs of Shirak Region.

Civic centres become unique islands of hope and faith. Everybody who attends here and who can always receive consultation from the specialists of the Union of NGOs of Shirak Region, including on-line consultation, share this opinion. The centres are well furnished and are equipped with appropriate computer technologies. They also provide wide opportunities for the residents of remote villages to communicate with the outer world via internet connection.

People become inspired and put forward new problems, start thinking about improving their lives, for example, having beauty saloon in the village, creating playground for children and even reconstructing fountains which haven’t been in operation since long. And all these happen when it seemed poor people had lost the ability to dream...

Arshak Adamyan

Success formula

“At any post a woman can work better, than a man”

...Varditer Gasparyan who leads Akhurik community of Shirak region believes. She was born in Akhurik, and it is 1, 5 years since she has been elected the head of community. But before that she’s had extensive experience of managerial work. At one time, she has been the chief engineer of a dairy plant, the director of Akhurik state farm, the secretary of executive committee of Akhurik, etc.

Before the elections, she was working in the Regional Council of Shirak as a leading specialist of the Board of Agriculture and Nature Protection. She actively elaborates with OXFAM Community-based projects in Shirak region. By the way, now a well equipped civic centre successfully operates in Akhurik, where, until recently, a computer was considered a luxury item.



- Was it hard to win the elections?
- I would not say it was easy. There were also two candidates. However, I could win.
- They say you have received an unenviable heritage.

-Akhurik community was in harsh financial condition. Before the elections I had promised people to take out the community of that condition. In just 1,5 years we managed to pay off all the debts and in accordance with a number of indices, we were recognized the first in the region, even if in terms of paying taxes and wages in time.

-What other reforms have been carried out in Akhurik under your rule?

Before the election the village municipality hasn’t even had its own office space. It has been a wagon-house with broken windows. But today it is full of lights. Akhurik is beautiful especially at night. The newly rebuilt quarter, which had suffered of the earthquake, now has already had a 1 km long water pipeline. We have reconstructed not only the community roads, but also inter-community roads at our local expenses.

And the most important thing is that I don’t notice the trends to leave the village with families any more.

- A traditional question to a woman leader: Is your family satisfied with your new status?

- My husband understands me and doesn’t com-

plain. Though family burdens are first priority for me. I try not to neglect in my duties.

-In your opinion, do Armenian female politicians have opportunities for self-discovery, or there is lack of confidence in women?

- Women are not active. Nowadays, in our country there is no relevant climate for them to act or enter into big politics. However, I don’t even think gender plays a crucial part here. If you wish to work, you can overcome even the biggest barrier. I’m sure a woman can work better than a man regardless her position.

-Do you also mean yourself?

-Please, don’t think I praise myself. It has been long time since I’ve gained the confidence of my co-villagers. They also share their family problems with me.

-Does it mean, you are going to put forward your candidature?

-Certainly. If I have given it a start, I must finish it.

The interview was conducted by Samvel Aghamyan

Campaign with us

Say "NO" to Gender Discrimination in Armenia

Oxfam GB Armenia, civic centers in rural communities of Armenia and members of Civil Society Partnership Network (CSPN) mark the 100th anniversary of the International Women's Day campaigning against any gender discrimination in Armenia and demanding equal rights and opportunities for women in public life. A campaign with the motto "We say "NO" to gender discrimination and demand equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women" was launched on February 8 and will continue till March 31.



The cornerstone of the campaign is the initiation against amending the law on "Temporary disability benefits" within the framework of which a petition has been circulated in the CSPN network since last year, when the National Assembly adopted the amendments.

In order to support pregnant women, the activists of the community-based civic centres sent a message to the RA President Serj Sargsyan, the RA Prime Minister

Tigran Sargsyan and the Chairman of the National Assembly Hovik Abrahamyan. They demanded to review a series of disputable issues in the law, which violates the social rights of young mothers, as well as does not contribute to the growth of birth rate in the country. The message was also placed on internet, and about 1600 people put their signatures for the protection of their rights.

Though after the long lasting struggle the Government made

concessions and has recently reviewed the law, Oxfam civic centre members and other NGOs protecting human rights are not satisfied with it. They believe that even in the amended bill human rights are violated.

During our conversation lawyer Hasmik Ohninyan marked out at least three disputable items of the aforementioned bill: "As you may remember, according to the proposed amendments, if the monthly salary (income) exceeds the minimum monthly salary fivefold then the benefits would be calculated out of the five time minimum salary amount. Though after the protesting campaign this norm will not be applied in the amended bill in cases if pregnancy and maternal leave benefits, however, we shall keep on combating to eliminate the restrictions in cases of unemployment benefits, be that a woman or a man, as it is unfair for those who receive high salaries, because they regularly pay all taxes", she says.

Furthermore, according to the law, the temporary unemployment benefits, with the exception of maternity and postpartum leave benefits, are not envisaged to be paid for the first day, whereas the employer is responsible for paying for the three consequent days without any further compensation. "We are of the opinion that the above-mentioned fact will lead to many problems, since it is rather clear that the overwhelming major-

ity of employers, who are known to be violating employees' rights in many other issues, will just refrain from paying salary for the mentioned three days, and employees, on the other hand, will keep silent regarding the issue under consideration, trying to avoid any possible conflicts with their employers", the lawyer explains.

"And, finally, we propose to exempt citizens from paying taxes on maternity and post-partum leave benefits", - Hasmik Ohninyan said.

Recently, peaceful demonstrations were organised by the youth from Shirak and Syunik region civil centres within the frameworks of the "Say No to Gender Discrimination" campaign with the aim of expressing protest against the given draft law.

Kristine Hovhannisyan, the Oxfam mass-media and civil defence representative, informed that the "Say No to Gender Discrimination" campaign, initiated by their partners, has a rather wide agenda, and various arrangements are planned to be held within the given framework. Demonstrations proclaiming equal gender rights in Ijevan, "Women of three generations" photo exhibition, competition of women's blogs and other interesting projects are planned to be held. She has also added that there will also be a film specially projected to tell about the campaign.



The Civil Society Partnership Network (CSPN), which unifies about 27 Oxfam-partner NGOs, is claimed to coordinate and direct the activities of the organizations concerned by poverty eradication and other social policies. Website: www.cspn.am

Voice of Protest

Against Reducing Benefits for Pregnant Women

... "This law will result in drastic decrease in birth rate in our country... Families play the most important role in all societies, and, instead of adopting laws that could promote birth rate rise, our authorities do the opposite".

... "The state cannot fight against corruption, and, instead, it tries to do it by violating rights of its citizens".

... "By reducing the amount of benefits for women during temporary disabled period, the law makes those women socially more vulnerable. Thus, the more vulnerable is the mother, the greater is the likelihood of death, maternal or infantile illness".

These are just a few comments out of thousands that men and women, fighting against the reduction of beneficiaries for women during pregnancy period, have placed during the last months on the website of the Civil Society Partnership Network and on other social networks.



Women protesting in front of the Government building, October, 2010

Sign-e-petition

Women Need to Unite

The regular workshop-discussion on "Electronic correspondence means as a tools in the protection of women's rights and interests", held in Sisian civil centre at the beginning of the year, had the above-mentioned slogan.

In accordance with the discussion topic under consideration, participants made a decision to join the project on the collection of electronic signatures, initiated by the Civil Society Partnership Network, with the aim of protesting amendments to the law on "Temporary unemployment benefits", protecting social rights of young mothers. Active groups from Torunik, Uyts, Ishkhanasar and Sisian communities took part in these discussions. All the groups were established due to the efforts of the Oxfam partner NGO "Fund Against Violation of Law" within the framework of the project on "Voice of the community in the decision-making process: Strengthening of abilities and initiatives".

"The main mission of the project is the raising of the awareness of population in rural communities in the issues regarding current laws, self-governing bodies, and what problems they may settle with the help of councils", Arthur Papoyan, the Project Coordinator, said.

Hasmik Ohninyan, the Project Lawyer, states that due to the inadequate level of legal awareness in rural areas there are numerous legal violations. The main concerns refer to the real estate state cadastre committee, social welfare state service, labour stae committee. There is also a great number of violations reported in unacceptable refusals

of applications on family allowances.

However, according to the evaluations of the project specialist Veronika Melikyan, there is an obvious progress: Population has become more active, and the efforts by civil organisations are evident. Representatives of civil centres functioning in Eghegnadzor, Vayk, Sisian, Ghapan and Meghri hold several meetings within a month with population, discussing urgent issues and providing legal advice.

Hasmik Harutyunyan

Get involved

Innovative Technologies for Women's Rights

Oxfam and its partner organizations often apply innovative ideas and technologies in their work. Thus, to overcome poverty in rural areas, they are willing to support agri- and ecotourism or to train modern skills for performing agricultural activities. SMS messages are successfully used in order to advocate for a healthy lifestyle and to raise the awareness of the population on health care services.

In the area of protection of women's rights, Oxfam and its partners recourse to internet technologies, circulating e-petitions for collecting signatures, such as in relation to the amendments made to the RA Law on "Temporary disability benefits" or in connection with disseminating a message against gender-related discrimination.

The message, "No to Gender Discrimination in Armenia" appeared on the internet at the initiative of the residents of some twenty communities in Shirak and Syunik regions. These people expressed their concern with the incomplete manifes-

tation of women's potential in the legislative and executive branches of the country, as well as in business and politics.

"The Armenians have very many age-old customs, where women are worthily presented in public. But today, unfortunately, in Armenia women are not fully presented in public life, as well as they do not have real equal rights and equal opportunities for expressing their abilities in social life. The inadequacies of women and men rights are evidently seen.

Women's potential is not fully expressed in the executive and legislative branches, as well as in business and politics of the Republic of Armenia. Women are vulnerable before the 21st century challenges; they are mainly vulnerable in rural areas, where men migrations worsen their socio-economic conditions more than in any other places. The unemployment, as well as the violation of women rights, does not contribute to the formation of young families", say the authors of the initiative in their message to the President and the Prime Minister of the RA.

Gender quotas

Equal representation of men and women

CSPN network members expressed their concern about the women representation in the parties candidate lists, which is also included in the RA Electoral Code. Recently an amendment has been offered to the Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia, according to which women representation in parties candidate lists should reach 20% instead of previous 15%. In our opinion, such formulations contradict the democratic principles, including guidelines adopted by the state on protection of gender equality. We think the mentioned percentage limits shall be removed from the Code by replacing it with "equal representation of men and women" this way complying the provision with the RA Constitution and recovering gender equality. Because even a difference of a half percent between two genders in any sphere of social life is theoretically considered to be gender discrimination", this offer was placed in the "Voice of Community" blogs.

Raising her voice

We have already had a chance to tell you about “Women’s Voice and Role in Governance” Project, implemented by OXFAM, and about the Women and young leaders’ groups established under the project in a number of communities in Syunik and Tavush regions. Furthermore, due to these activities, the number of elected female council members in many regional communities has increased.

In Tavush region the main partner of the Oxfam in the given programme is the “Bridge of Hope” NGO, a project well-known for its efforts in supporting families with disabled members, as well as an organization protecting womens’ rights and

rights of mothers of disabled children.

In fact, the groups involved in protection of womens’ rights were established in most cases on the basis of the centres of child development, functioning in the region as a result of the joint cooperation of the Bridge of Hope NGO and Oxfam .

“Thanks to the project aimed at “Raising her voice” we have succeeded in combining women represented at community-level decision-making process and applying their capabilities with the purpose of raising the issues of vulnerable women and mothers of disabled children at the government level”, - Head of the “Bridge of Hope” NGO Susanna Tadevosyan said.

Change Starts with You

The stories told by different women illustrate the well-known slogan by the Oxfam

Varduhi: “ I am not alone...”

I am Varduhi. I live in Khashtarak village with my family. My son Ashot was a healthy and physically active child up to 3 years old, however after that age we faced several problems, such as difficulties in walking. We took him to Dilijan, he has undergone an operation, but there were no positive changes in his health condition. As he grew older, his condition got even worse. Both the child and all the family members were under constant stress. In this difficult situation the “Bridge of Hope” NGO was there to support us.

Prior to my child visiting the development centre, I felt myself isolated, as if his medical condition was only my problem, and I was all alone with my problem with no hope. However, when we started going to the centre, we met other children and their parents with problems similar to mine, and I realized that I

am not alone...The Bridge of Hope gives me strength, helps me to cope with the difficulties.

Ashot has good achievements at school, his favourite subjects are math and the English language. This year he took part and achieved the second rank in RA boccia (wheelchair race) sport competition.

Astghik : “I believe in myself”

I am Astghik from Achajur community. Frankly speaking, when in 2009 I was advised to go to the Bridge of Hope NGO to get a help with my daughter’s issues, I didn’t believe that they would be able to help me there, however, I decided to try. In fact, not only did I get a support in meeting my child’s special dietary needs, but the most important part for me is that I became more confident and managed to believe in myself and be more active. My current job in the recently opened musical school in Achajur (I was offered the position of school director by the community head) was also made possible by one of the Bridge of Hope projects. I am sure that if I had failed to become a part of the “Bridge of Hope” NGO activities I would still be just a caregiver-mother for my child....

Lusine: “I get a chance of helping people”

I am Lusine and I live in Dilijan. As other girls in my town I studied at a high school and after leaving it I was admitted to the YSU department of natural science. After



having graduated from the university, I started looking for a job, but similar to many others, I failed to find a job. However, I decided not to lose hope and try further.

So after my numerous attempts I visited the “Bridge of Hope” NGO Dilijan branch, and when I was told there that I could start working as a volunteer, I was happy that I would be at least able to use my knowledge and capabilities in helping people. After a while, I participated in computer classes organized within the OXFAM project frameworks. The courses lasted for 3 months, after which I was offered by the “Bridge of Hope” NGO branch head Susanna Matinyan to replace the centre employee, who was on maternity leave.

Currently I work in the position of a computer operator, and I also teach active women and mothers of village communities the same course, which I have completed myself. The course has enabled them to communicate with each other via Internet. I think that my dream came true, since I am able to help people.



Helping people to help themselves

Tomorrow will be better than today

...All the beneficiaries of the Sustainable Livelihoods Program of Oxfam GB Armenia – nine borderline, mountainous and remote rural communities of Tavush and Vayots Dzor regions. The programme assists the communities to efficiently use their agricultural resources and ensure sustainable incomes, as well as supports beneficial initiatives. Six agricultural cooperatives were created within the framework of the program; four of these were established for the management of the cold storage facilities.

Horticulture is the main source of livelihood of the residents of the villages of Zaritap and Herher, Vayots Dzor region. However, many farmers were unable to sell the entire harvest they grew because, due to the lack of refrigeration rooms, the harvest deteriorated after a while. This problem is in the past now.

Last October the opening ceremony of the storage centre for fresh fruits and vegetables took place in the village of Zaritap. The day was a double holiday in Zaritap: the farmers were celebrating both the Harvest Day and the opening of the storage centre which they called “the big refrigerator”.

The storage centre is a chamber of 140 cubic metre capacity, equipped with refrigerators. It can ensure the cold storage of over 40 metric tons of agricultural products.

There are 400 households in Zaritap village. The residents told that formerly they had to sell the harvest at a price lower than the normal market price, to be able to sell it before it spoils. “Quite often we have had to throw the harvest away. As there was no cold storage facility, the fruit appearance

deteriorated, and people would not buy them”, says Nune Abrahamyan.

Whereas, given the opportunity to use the refrigerator, the farmers will be able to gain greater profits from horticulture. “We can keep Simirenko apples in the refrigerator all the way to the month of May: if there is a demand in the market, I can sell them”, says Anzhik Margaryan.

Sofi Avagyan, a resident of the village of Herher, said that they cultivate some 50 apricot trees; they always sold the harvest from these trees at a low price, to keep it from spoiling. “Now there is a refrigeration facility: we’ll keep the fruit there and sell it for a better price”, Sofi said.

Shmavon Azatyan, Chairperson of the Cooperative for the Administration and Management of Refrigeration Facilities added that to use the refrigerator, the villagers should only pay for the electricity – up to ten Armenian drams per kilo monthly.

The storage centre was established by Oxfam and within the framework of the Water to Market Project of the Millennium

Storage centre in Zaritap village

Challenge Account-Armenia state non-commercial organisation (SNCO).

Margarita Hakobyan, the Country Director of Oxfam GB Armenia, noted in her speech that the construction of this refrigerator is only one component of their five-year Sustainable Livelihoods Program. Between 2010 and 2015 four thousand farmers from 40 remote communities of Tavush and Vayots Dzor will receive support under this program.

Ara Hovsepyan, Head of the Millennium Challenge SNCO emphasized in his speech that the farmers will be able to receive large and sustainable incomes through the program.

It is also noteworthy that another storage centre had been commissioned in Aknaghbyur

Health for all

Lifesaving SMS

It is always pleasant, when someone is concerned with your health and sends you an SMS message telling you where medical help is available and is it free of charge or not. Don’t you agree? And who knows maybe such SMS messages, sent on time, could save someone’s life.


“I’m very excited by these SMS messages because in our community there is no information telling people about their health rights. If it wasn’t for SMS and hot line consultations supported by Oxfam, we’d have no opportunity to enforce our health rights. Two years ago my son underwent surgery and I was asked to pay extra money. If I knew about this hot line at that time, I would not have paid and instead applied for support”, – Sofa Avagyan told us, project beneficiary from Zaritap community in Vayots Dzor marz “. Sofia is one of the recipients of the SMS health campaigns to raise beneficiaries’ awareness on health rights – these alerts are delivered directly to their mobile phones.

This campaign is only a small component of Oxfam GB’s project on “Community-Based Primary Health Care in Borderline Regions of Armenia”. This project has been implemented since 1995 in 140 borderline communities of the Republic’s five regions. Through Preventive Health funds created within the scope of this project, medical supplies and hospital treatment have been made available to the socially vulnerable people in the community. Only during these past two years (2009-2010), Oxfam has invested 40 million AMD in the organization of primary health care centers in remote borderline villages, in supplying the necessary equipment, nurses’ training and free medical consulting.

For this project, Oxfam’s main partner is “Support to Communities” NGO. “Within the past 15 years our major achievement is that in the remote regions of Armenia, people’s attitude towards their own health has been changed”, says Karen Arakelyan, President of the “Support to Communities” NGO.

community of Tavush region earlier, which will serve the households of Lusadzor, Khashtarak and Lusahovit communities as well. “This is a big progress for our communities which inspires even bigger hopes for the future”, says Hrach Sargsyan, a beneficiary of the programme.

Arman Gharibyan

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