

**CHF**

Azerbaijan

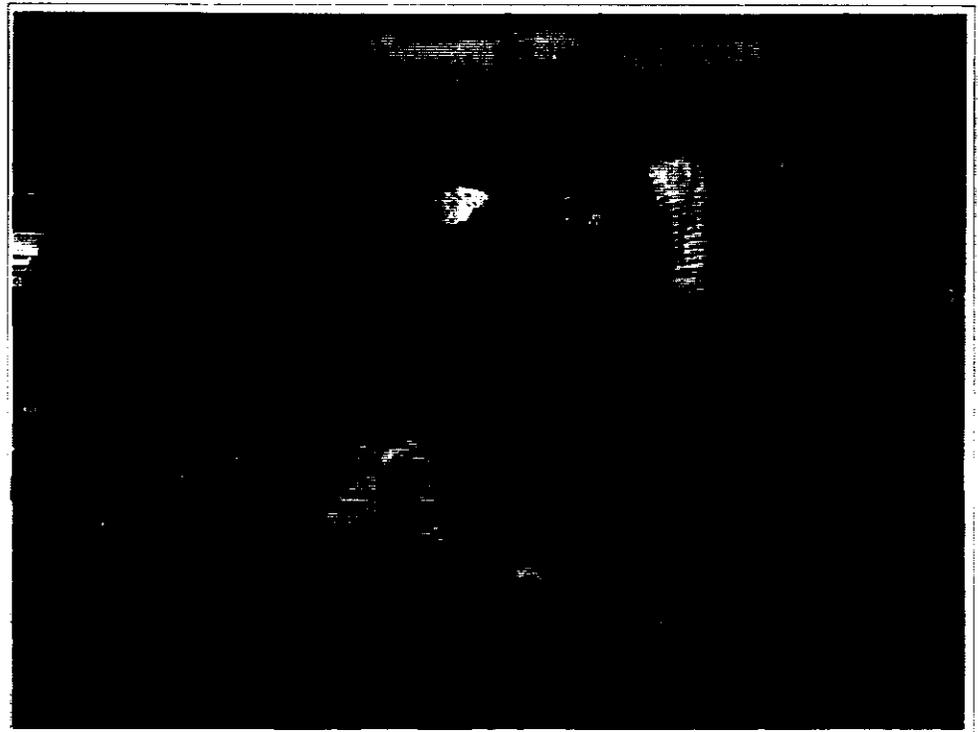


PD-ACA-141

# Social Investment Initiative

## Final Program Report

November 2002 - February 2004



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## **Executive Summary**

### **Life of Program: November 2002- February 2004**

During its 15-months of operation, CHF International's Social Investment Initiative (SII) directly contributed to internally displaced and conflict-affected persons' community well-being and self-reliance through implementing 60 demand-driven, highly participatory community projects. Through the SII, CHF supported community projects that increased social capital between local and IDP populations, reflected community priorities, were gender and environmentally sensitive, and significantly strengthened the organizational capacity and leadership within conflict-affected communities. CHF's SII program successfully engaged communities in identifying and managing sustainable solutions to community-wide priorities.

**Goal, Purpose & Objectives:** During the second phase of the Social Investment Initiative program, CHF International strengthened the overall impact and achieved all of the objectives and targets of the SII program. Through investment in skills, community management capacity, and expanding economic opportunity, CHF's second phase of SII enhanced communities' capacity to meet their own needs and laid the foundation for community-based economic development and democratic governance in the rural conflict-affected areas.

Through the second phase, CHF made greater impact on the overall goal of the Social Investment Initiative (SII):

***To build local organizational capacity of community groups and promote civic initiative through rehabilitating economic and social infrastructure on a demand-driven basis.***

CHF achieved the 5 original SII objectives and: 1) promoted the integration of IDPs into the socio-economic life; 2) generated employment through labor-intensive community projects; 3) shifted beneficiaries' perspective from short-term relief assistance toward longer-term sustainable development; 4) built communities' organizational capacity to prepare, implement and sustain community projects within a long term planning framework; and 5) sparked civic initiative and rewarded leadership.

The Impact Survey confirmed that the **purposes** of the SII program were also achieved. CHF's SII: 1) led the transition from humanitarian relief activities to longer-term sustainable development; 2) created trust and cooperation (social capital) amongst IDPs and local populations through collaboration on mutually beneficial and demand-driven community projects that improve the quality of life for all; and 3) supported community-driven projects that respond to community needs, develop leadership, significantly impact local economies and provide a framework for the cultivation of self-reliance and organizational skills within communities.

In the second phase, CHF built upon the core 5 SII objectives and laid further impact on: 1) building communities' capacity to self-manage the community project process and planning; 2) widening the sense of community from a village perspective to encompass the regional context; 3) laying the foundation for the development of community-based democratic governance; and 4) creating economic opportunities that will increase the sustainability of social investments made to date.

Overall, the impact of the SII program has been instrumental in transitioning assistance from relief to sustainable development in Azerbaijan. As a result of the SII, communities are more self-reliant, planning within a longer term framework, better able to develop their economic opportunities, taking a more active role in civil society, and building closer relations with government counterparts. The SII program was catalytic to partnerships between NGOs, government, community and the private sector that are critical to building sustainable development. The table below provides a snapshot of SII Program Activity and Key Impacts.

#### **Snapshot of Overall Program Activity:**

- 60 community projects implemented;
- 28% irrigation and drainage canal cleaning; 27% of communities prioritized electricity; 20% schools; 10% potable water;
- Average total project size was \$24,103; average size of CHF's share was \$11,644; average community contribution was \$8,666, of which average cash contribution was \$1,418;
- CHF's projects were highly integrated with over 60% of communities participating in the program having been

#### **Snapshot of Key Impacts:**

- 2,039 jobs created; 1,337 sustainable full time jobs created; 700 part time jobs;
- 60 community-implemented community projects with Long term Community Action Plans (L-CAPs);
- 100,000 additional people directly impacted;
- 2,138 person months of employment generated through labor-intensive project implementation;
- 4,949 community group members trained
- \$743,892 in leveraged community and third party contributions;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and 27% from IRC; the rest were either referred by DRC, IFES, IFRC, IMC, OXFAM, UMCOR, local NGOs, or were self-established communities;</li> <li>▪ 184,785 persons indirectly impacted with improved quality of life;</li> <li>▪ 4,949 persons trained and equipped with skills for self-reliance;</li> <li>▪ 46,303 women and 19,961 IDPs were directly impacted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Women's participation in decision making increased by 33%;</li> <li>▪ 138 community-funded initiatives were implemented within L-CAP;</li> <li>▪ 17% of communities trained other communities; 48 projects were implemented by communities jointly with other villages;</li> <li>▪ Collections to community funds increased by 57%</li> </ul>
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**Geographic Focus:** CHF focused its activities on conflict-affected communities with a significant population of internally displaced persons in the target areas of southern-central and urban Azerbaijan, specifically:

- 30 projects directly benefiting **40,331 persons** were implemented in the **central** area of: Agdam, Agjabedi, Barda, Ganja, Goranboy, Mingechivir, Ter-Ter, and Yevlakh;
- 30 projects directly benefiting **47,778 persons** were implemented in **southern** area of: Beylagan, Bilesuvar, Fizuli, Imishli, Sabirabad, and Saatli.

**Program Management & Partners:** CHF developed a decentralized accountable, flexible and transparent implementation structure; revised and enhanced its clear, readily understandable operational manual, the SII Social Outreach Strategy. Through partnership with local NGOs – UMID, ECOs, CDIG, and Sabirabad Agro-Consulting - CHF integrated substantial and targeted technical assistance specific to every level of community capacity. SII's technical assistance package provided a framework and incentives for sustainable and longer term community-based planning and organizational capacity; and focused special attention on the situation of women and the environment.

The SII technical assistance package was highly effective in increasing communities' self-reliance skills. In the area of environmental awareness, CHF found through monitoring that some communities even integrated the SII training into their school curricula. CHF/SII program's success and impact was reliant on a high level of coordination and integration into existing development strategies. CHF worked in dynamic ways with AHAP and other implementing agencies to ensure that communities were linked demand-driven resources.

**Sustainability:** There are a variety of sustainable outcomes from the SII program, including: the social investments and their sustainability plans; community capacity and leadership developed; government partnerships; working relations among multiple villages and across regions; long term community action plans in place; community funds functioning; and increased access of communities to resources.

Overall, CHF International achieved its overall goal and objectives. The impact exceeded targets set for the program and provided communities and international development agencies in Azerbaijan with best practices and lessons learned.

## 1. Program Overview: CHF-SII Activities

CHF achieved the 4 objectives for the second phase of SII activities. Through SII, CHF:

- strengthened target communities' organizational capacity through implementation of follow-on community projects within **L-CAP frameworks with higher community contribution** requirements and more stringent planning and management requirements;
- created trust and cooperation (social capital) amongst IDPs and conflict-affected populations through collaboration on mutually beneficial and demand-driven social investments that **widened the scope and sense of community beyond the village perspective to the regional context**;
- developed and rewarded leadership and initiative that **lay the foundation for community-based democratic governance**;
- solidified the sustainability of social investments made to date by expanding **income-generating opportunities within communities** and orient communities towards economic development.

CHF/SII's program activities are organized within 3 program components: 1) *Community-Driven Projects*; 2) *Demand-Driven Technical Assistance and Training*; 3) *Information Exchange of Best Practice and Lessons Learned*. All activities are described in detail under each component in Sections 1.1-1.5 including gender and environment activities.

In section 2, impact and impact analysis is provided according to Intermediate Results. The accomplishments made against targets have been measured through CHF/SII monitoring activities and through the internal impact survey (please see Annex C for full report) that CHF conducted in January 2004. Below please find the CHF/SII workplan with quantitative impact numbers provided within the chart.



Gyrykhty community of Goranboy region signs a contract to implement irrigation system rehabilitation project with CHF/SII



## **1.1 Component: Community Projects ~ Activities**

As you can note from the above workplan, 60 community projects were implemented during this phase of SII. Of the 60 community projects funded: 17 irrigation systems/drainage canals were rehabilitated/cleaned; 16 electrical systems were built; 12 schools were rehabilitated/reconstructed; 6 potable water systems built; 2 sewage systems were built; 2 health clinics were rehabilitated; 2 community, children and youth centers/spaces were rehabilitated; 2 gas supply projects were constructed; 1 pedestrian bridge constructed/repared; and 1 poultry incubator was created. CHF found that the SII economic opportunity training impacted community prioritization. Communities prioritized more irrigation and drainage systems during this phase because of the economic impact it had on their community. The total value of CHF/SII projects is \$1,446,184 of which the community's share is \$520,005 (36%), others' share is \$223,887 (15%) and USAID/CHF's share is \$698,692 (48%). Of the \$520,005 community contribution, \$85,114 (16%) was made in cash.

Communities managed more of the process during this phase of SII. Communities directly managed design, procurement, implementation and maintenance of projects. In contrast to the first SII phase, communities utilized persons in their own communities to oversee all technical works. This built up more capacity within the community and gave them greater confidence to manage such projects on their own in the future.

The selection of projects supported during this phase was much more rigorous. A scoring matrix entailed that communities were competitively selected among other communities within the region and across regions. The selection criteria established high standards for community partnerships with government, leveraging, multiple community impact, and expanded economic impact.

During this phase, 15 communities that previously participated in the program were selected to implement a 2<sup>nd</sup> community project meeting higher contribution requirements (10% in cash; 30% overall). By participating a second time in the program, the community management skills were strengthened and the sense of community was widened. As leaders, these communities also served as mentors to surrounding communities within the region.

In addition to the community projects, CHF managed a number of activities that are related to the community project component including the following bullet points.

- **Revised Social Outreach Strategy (SOS)** – CHF took a variety of measures in order to improve CHF-SII processes and maximize impact in communities. The first and foremost of these measures is the revision and improvement of our Social Outreach Strategy (SOS). The SOS serves as an operational manual for SII activities and guides every aspect of our processes, outlines the community's roles and responsibilities, and provides the tools in our management systems. The SOS ensures all field offices follow the same operational guidelines and processes. The SOS was simplified from a 10 to 5 stage process that includes: 1) information and outreach; 2) community assessment; 3) project development; 4) project implementation; and 5) project close-out. The newly revised 5-step process allows more transparency and logical and simple steps that makes SII a more "community-friendly" process. The SOS clearly outlines the timing of processes to be taken in the implementation of SII, defines all roles and responsibilities, and provides methods for documentation and monitoring.
- **New Integrating Tools Developed for SII** - Based on lessons learned, CHF developed an organizational framework in order to provide appropriate technical assistance and systematically build the capacity of community groups in Azerbaijan. CHF developed a four-level classification system to distinguish between different levels of organizational capacity. This system serves as the framework for SII outreach activities. The characteristics specified for each level are not definitive, but rather guiding points for defining the appropriate levels of technical assistance for groups. Please see the table below that provides an overview of the characteristics of each level of organizational capacity and the number of communities that fall into each level.

<b>Level 1:</b> <b>Community-Established Group</b> Characteristics: low level of organizational capacity; minimal existing skills; perhaps INGO trained; no previous experience in implementing INGO-funded community projects; high level of initiative; local leadership demonstrated;	<b>Core 1:</b> Organizational Management <b>Core 2:</b> Vision & Planning <b>Core 3:</b> Sustainability/Maintenance Environment Basic Economic Opportunity/BDS ** Full Package	10
<b>Level 2:</b> <b>INGO-Mobilized Community Group</b> Characteristics: mobilized through PRA process; INGO trained; experienced in planning and implementing INGO-funded community projects; verified impact on sustaining social investments;	<b>Core 1:</b> Organizational Management <b>Core 2:</b> Vision & Planning <b>Core 3:</b> Sustainability/Maintenance Environment ** Full Package	35
<b>Level 3:</b> <b>SII Graduate Group – Basic</b> Characteristics: participated in SII program; maintained social investment; demonstrated use of planning and skills gained through training; taken on initiatives within LCAP; worked to include wider community;	<b>Core 1:</b> Organizational Management <b>Core 2:</b> Vision & Planning <b>Core 3:</b> Sustainability/Maintenance Environment Advanced EO and Community Contracting ** Refresher trainings as needed	7
<b>Level 4:</b> <b>SII Graduate Group – Advanced</b> Characteristics: Participated in SII program; maintained/improved upon social investments; built upon LCAP; leveraged external and internal resources; trained other communities; participated in regional events.	<b>Core 1:</b> Organizational Management <b>Core 2:</b> Vision & Planning <b>Core 3:</b> Sustainability/Maintenance Environment Advanced EO and Community Contracting ** Community Mentor Management Approach; CG prepares their own plans and manages process.	8

- Refined Selection Process** – CHF improved the transparency of SII's selection process during this phase of activities. A scoring system was developed to promote more transparency and allow communities more feedback on areas where they scored low and need to build capacity on. The highly competitive process also provides a **good demonstration effect** for other communities that have not actively mobilized their resources to meet their own needs. Only the highest scoring projects are selected each month based on targets and regional allocations. This approach also allows CHF to provide the necessary levels of assistance to community projects throughout the process. For example, if a community scores low on cost per beneficiary ratio, they are encouraged to expand the scope of their project so more people will benefit. If a community scores low on partnerships, they are encouraged to garner the support of municipal or ExCom officials. Please see the table below for the SII criteria matrix.

### **Selection Criteria Scoring Matrix**

<u>Selection Criteria</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Score</u>
<b>1. Project is Demand Driven to Community Priorities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of estimated costs is investing in-kind, in labor and cash;</li> <li>Community group initiated their participation in SII (ie filled out an application to SII with minimal assistance from external sources)</li> <li>Social investment project prioritized amongst a range of choices</li> <li>Strong community-wide participation in community meetings, survey and contribution</li> <li>Degree to which is community-wide priority and represents interests of youth and gender interests</li> </ul>		
<b>2. Beneficiaries</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost of benefit ratio (costs/number and direct beneficiaries)</li> <li>Promotes the integration of IDPs and conflict affected populations (project benefits community that significantly shares resources with IDPs)</li> <li>Extent to which project benefits women and youth</li> </ul>		

<p><b>3. Community Group Capacity (for SII Graduates refer to Table 2)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Activism and commitment demonstrated within community</li> <li>▪ Capacity of group to perform stages of the project process with minimal assistance</li> <li>▪ Capacity of group to maintain &amp; sustain social investment project plans</li> <li>▪ Roles and responsibilities are clear and defined within implementing group</li> <li>▪ Communication level of community group with larger community</li> <li>▪ Level of leadership existing within community</li> <li>▪ Youth represented in community leadership</li> <li>▪ Communities' demonstrated ability to maximize existing resources</li> <li>▪ Democratic and participatory methods have been used to select community group, solve problems and set priorities</li> </ul>		
<p><b>4. Long Term Community Action Plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community has defined vision for its development</li> <li>▪ Project fits within LCAP</li> <li>▪ Level to which maximizes resources within community</li> <li>▪ Project promotes reaching economies of scale</li> <li>▪ Project builds capacity and self-reliance within community</li> </ul>		
<p><b>5. Technical Feasibility Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project's risk (potable water potential)</li> <li>▪ Project's time constraints have been addressed (ie. Implementation adheres to harvesting and seasonal constraints, school use, etc)</li> <li>▪ Strength and feasibility of implementation steps presented in application</li> <li>▪ Benefits are measurable</li> <li>▪ Inputs essential to the project are addressed (ie. School or clinic has heating, furniture, etc)</li> <li>▪ Soundness of technical plans</li> <li>▪ Soundness of environmental impact</li> <li>▪ Project can be technically implemented by the community and unskilled labor with minimal external expertise</li> </ul>		
<p><b>6. Labor Intensity &amp; Economic Impact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Impact of project on expanding productive opportunities both direct and indirect (ie. Electricity for businesses, irrigation system or wheat mill rehabilitation)</li> <li>▪ Extent to which the project can be implemented by community themselves</li> <li>▪ Number of local persons employed on project implementation, operations and maintenance</li> </ul>		
<p><b>7. Sustainability and Maintenance Plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Soundness of plans for covering recurring of operations and maintenance</li> <li>▪ Responsibility for maintenance designated</li> <li>▪ Soundness of 3-5 year maintenance plan</li> <li>▪ Maintenance fund established in the community to cover recurring cost</li> </ul>		
<p><b>8. Partnership, Integration &amp; Coordination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Percentage of funds leveraged from other sources</li> <li>▪ Extent to which project plans build upon previous investments made within community group</li> <li>▪ Extent to which project fits within regional and sectoral strategies</li> <li>▪ Extent to which social investment project integrates other Implementing Partners</li> </ul>		
<p><b>9. Extent to which the integration with the neighbouring communities is</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Within the community – 0 points</li> <li>▪ Between two communities – 5 points</li> <li>▪ Among more than two communities – 7 points</li> </ul>		
<p><b>10. Number of IDPs – beneficiaries (their percentage within the total population)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ up to 10% - 1 point</li> <li>▪ up to 20% - 2 points</li> <li>▪ 100% - 10 points</li> </ul>		
<p><b>11. Extent to which the project provides economic opportunities (income)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Directly income generating spheres (incubator, food processing, textile) – 5 points</li> <li>▪ Economic facilitation (irrigation, drainage, and some electric projects) – 3 points</li> </ul>		
<p><b>12. Number of Beneficiaries</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ up to 1,000 people – 5 points</li> <li>▪ 1,000 – 1,500 people – 6 points</li> <li>▪ 1,500 – 2,000 people – 7 points</li> <li>▪ more than 2,000 people – 8 points</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Total (out of 70 points)</b></p>		

## 1.2 Component: Demand-driven Technical Assistance and Training ~ Activities

CHF designed a comprehensive technical assistance package for SII that: 1) enhanced the organizational capacity of communities; 2) transferred skills to the community to manage future initiatives on their own; 3) facilitated a common long-term vision within the community; and 4) strengthened the management structure. The SII TA package is comprised of a core package with links to optional fee-based services. The core curricula for SII training is divided into 3 parts: 1) Organizational Management; 2) Vision & Planning; 3) Sustainability and Maintenance. Through CHF/SII **4,949 community leaders** were trained. In order to maximize the impact of technical assistance, the core package is tailored to the community's organizational capacity level and is provided at the most appropriate stages of the SII process so that knowledge gained can be practically applied. Please see the text box below for further details.

### CHF – SOCIAL INVESTMENT INITIATIVE – TRAINING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PACKAGE

#### Core 1: Organizational Management

- A. Topic: Organizational Management (OM): Covers a variety of topics related to building the organizational capacity of community groups, including:
- Leadership & Management: series of workshops that address leadership characteristics, roles and responsibilities of community group, participation and representation, conflict-resolution, management structure, democratic decision-making, and negotiation and presentation skills.
  - Gender Balance: specifically targets women in community; empowers them to identify priorities and voice their issues within the community.
  - Communication: assists community group in communicating with larger community and stakeholders with whom they need to communicate to improve their effectiveness and ability to address community priorities.
- B. Method: Conducted in 2-3 hour segments in highly participatory roundtable discussions facilitated by CHF/SII Program Officers.

#### Core 2: Vision & Planning

- A. Topic: Long-term Community Action Plan (LCAP) training shifts emphasis from externally-funded project interventions to a longer-term planning framework within which a project is one part. The L-CAP also serves as the integrating framework for coordination with other partner activities. The LCAP:
- Captures the cross-sectoral investments made within the community in the last 3-5 years;
  - Integrates the short to long-term priorities within the community and region;
  - Identifies all natural, technical and human resources located and existing within the community/region; maximizes usage of community assets to support community self-reliance and long term planning;
  - Identifies and plans for the future needs through the development of a Long-term Community Action Plan;
  - Analyzes economic opportunities that exist within the community and identifies ways of expanding productive opportunities.
- B. Method: UMID is subcontracted to provide 2-day training on-site.

#### Core 3: Sustainability

- A. Topic: Sustainability & Maintenance (SM): Trains the community on how to develop comprehensive plans that ensure project sustainability including maintenance responsibilities and plans for covering recurrent costs. This training helps communities to organize their funds in order to separate out and plan for recurring costs of their project's maintenance.  
Environmental Awareness (EA): Builds community awareness on environmentally sound practices. Two Environmental Action Plans are developed: 1) organizes regular activities and promotes a healthy community environment; and 2) identifies mitigation measures for construction related activities.
- B. Method: SM: UMID subcontracted to provide 2-day training on-site.  
EA: ECOS partner subcontracted to provide 1-day training on-site.

#### FEE-BASED SERVICES

- A. Topic: Community Contracting: Provides communities with tools and knowledge on how to manage the process of competitive bidding, procurement, accounting and recordkeeping, and managing community funds with transparency.  
EO/Business Development: Depending on the level of participants, business services are provided to interested business persons in the community on the advanced or basic level. Services are oriented on building entrepreneurial skills through training on financial analysis, recordkeeping, marketing, and business planning.
- B. Method: Sabirabad Agrobusiness Consulting and CDIG subcontracted to respond to demand-driven requests; 1-2 day trainings; 5,000AZM per participant, conducted on-site.

- **Competitive Contracting to Local NGOs for Community Services.** CHF strategically structured its approach to build the capacity of existing local organizations to deliver demand-driven services and technical assistance to SII communities. CHF's LNGO partners were competitively selected to provide different services of SII's technical assistance package. During this phase of SII, CHF contracted LNGOs through a competitive RFA process including:
  - UMID for Long term Action Planning and Sustainability/Maintenance services;

- ECOs for environmental awareness services;
- Sabirabad Agrobusiness Consulting for business development services; and
- ACDRTRC for community contracting.

### **1.3 Component: Information Exchange and Best Practice Dissemination ~ Activities**

The purpose of CHF's third component is to spark civic initiative, reward leadership and facilitate active participation. CHF achieves this objective through a variety of interventions including: publication of the *SII Highlights* bulletin on community interest topics; facilitation of **cross fertilization** community visits; **regional capacity building workshops**; and **national conferences** that allows community to exchange experience and expertise across regions on demand-driven topics. In total, **799 community leaders and government officials** participated in SII information exchange activities. CHF leveraged support from Exxon Azerbaijan Operating Company LLC (Exxon Azerbaijan) to enhance the impact of the SII's information exchange activities under the "*Community Leadership Exchange Network*" project. CHF/SII conducted 20 cross fertilization visits, 2 Capacity Building Workshops and a final National Community Leadership Conference in partnership with the local NGO, Azerbaijan Community Development, Training & Resource Centre (ACDRTRC). Brief information on each activity conducted is provided below.

- **SII Highlights Disseminated**– CHF published a bi-monthly bulletin that focused on highlighting leading communities, relevant resources for organizational capacity building, and information on the SII program. During the life of the program CHF published and disseminated **1,600 copies of *SII Highlights*** among communities, partners and government agencies. In addition to the Highlights bulletin, CHF gathered press cuttings from Baku papers with information that was relevant to communities. The press cuttings allowed rural communities who lack newspapers to access information. In order to attract more women to the program and promote leadership amongst women, CHF developed a "Women and Leadership" brochure that highlights the stories of different women leaders from communities. Please see Annex D for editions of SII Highlights.
- **Community Cross Visits Facilitated** – ACDRTRC conducted 20 cross fertilization visits (CFV) under the SII program. The purpose of the CFVs was to share experiences and develop partnerships among communities across the regions and across regions (central and southern). The CFVs provided a valuable opportunity for communities to meet with each other and explore a variety of issues. Participants discussed their development goals and explored the possibilities for further collaboration in the future. Each of the cross visits brought together community, municipality and ExCom representatives from 3 communities to discuss community driven topics of the common concern, exchange experiences on leadership and lessons learned. Topics included gender, environment and sanitation, cooperation with local government units, management & sustainability, educational outreach, long-term planning, engineering & procurement, economic opportunities, and conflict resolution. Communities in the implementation stage of SII hosted those in the project development phase of similar projects. Approximately 25 community members a month participated in cross-visits. These one-day visits involved 2-6 communities and consisted of a half-day roundtable discussion in the morning and community site visits in the afternoon.
- **Regional Capacity Building Workshops**- The issues defined through ongoing cross visits were then taken to the regional level. CHF-SII conducted 4 Regional Capacity Building Workshops (RCBW): March 27, 2003, Barda; April 10, 2003, Imishli; September 03, 2003, Barda; and September 15, 2003, Imishli. RCBWs were led by community leaders themselves, discussion topics were selected by communities themselves and participants of the workshop took upon their own initiative to participate in the conference. In all, the RCBWs brought together conflict-affected community group members, leaders and municipality members from 212 communities, providing a forum for all participants



to share community experiences and achievements. This interactive, peer-level exchange strengthened participants' capacity to address their communities' needs and significantly increased their interest in, and dedication to, partnering with other communities in future initiatives. One of the main benefits of this kind of information exchange is that community groups acquire knowledge from their peers, instead of from international or local NGOs, which leads to greater coordination between communities and promotes self-reliance.

Participants were very active during the **discussion group sessions**, and developed step-by-step guidelines for each topic that could be used by other community groups to increase their ability to act more effectively on behalf of their communities. Some of the most interesting topics of conversation during the discussion sessions centered on the following issues:

- ✓ *The importance of expanding economic opportunity through community development initiatives;*
  - ✓ *How to communicate and disseminate knowledge gained to the community at large by the community group;*
  - ✓ *Providing transparent information within the community on a regular base;*
  - ✓ *How to build transparency in contribution fund management and increase contributions;*
  - ✓ *What mechanisms will sustain community funds and increase their size;*
  - ✓ *How to partner with municipalities – should they be external partners to the community group or be part of the community group?;*
  - ✓ *Democratic elections for community group members and their impact on community cooperation- what should the term be for each role; how should they be elected, etc;*
  - ✓ *Leveraging external resources: funding, technical assistance, information, shared resources with neighboring communities, and municipalities, among others.*
- **National Conferences.** CHF/SII strategically designed a "scale up" of information activities from the grassroots of cross visits to the national level conferences. Each activity built upon the other and encompassed the participation of as wide a leadership base as possible. The 4 RCBWs were linked to 2 large-scale national conferences: the National Capacity Building Conference held in May 2003 and the National Community Leadership Conference held in October 2003. Approximately, 130 community leaders took part in the CHF/SII national conferences. Please find details on both of these conference activities below.

#### National Capacity Building Conference, May 2003

On May 7, 2003, CHF/SII facilitated the first community-led National Capacity Building Conference. The conference brought together over 160 community leaders and municipal and government officials from across the south-central conflict-affected region with CHF staff members and representatives of several other NGOs. The purpose of the conference was to promote an inter-community dialogue about experiences related to community development and self-reliance. In addition, the inclusion of development practitioners and government representatives facilitated an exchange of information from various perspectives.



The forum was the first of its kind for communities from a wide range of districts, spanning from Bilesuvar in the south to Mingechevir in the north. Community representatives used the opportunity to discuss a number of critical topics, including environmental issues in community development, relations with government and municipal entities, strategies for pursuing economic opportunities and cooperation among communities. The conference sparked civic initiative and built leadership within communities participating in CHF's Social Investment Initiative program.

The efforts of the communities themselves determined the success of the conference. The communities prioritized possible topics while attending CHF's two Regional Capacity Building Workshops held in March and

April 2003. Community leaders, selected for their expertise in particular areas, presented their experiences to other communities. Their presentations were followed by group discussions on the topic. This interactive, peer-level exchange strengthened the capacity of the participants to address the needs of their communities and increased their interest and commitment to partnering with other communities in future initiatives.

In addition to the community presentations, guest speakers at the event provided the participants with new perspectives and raised their awareness of available resources. "The whole process of electing leaders and identifying those priorities are words of the most important aspects of what you will do. And all of you will do that in a different way. One of the things that you should be doing is sharing how you did it with all of your colleagues," said Mr. William D. McKinney, USAID/Azerbaijan's Country Coordinator, when addressing the community representatives.

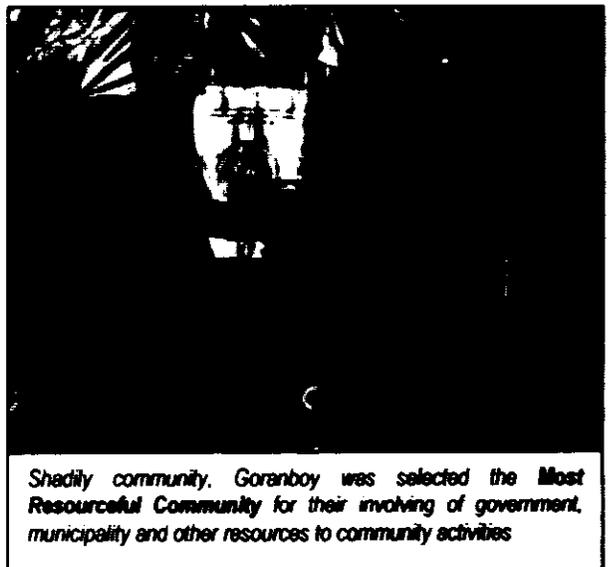
Other local and international NGOs and government agencies gave presentations throughout the day about a number of different resources available within the region relevant to the development efforts of the communities. A representative of IFES spoke on cooperation with municipalities, and a member of the local NGO Aran described the paralegal services that their organization has to offer. A representative of Save the Children Azerbaijan spoke about their Community Empowerment Network, and an official from the Samukh Regional Department of Agriculture described the support which intermediate government institutions can provide communities.

The activities of the conference resulted in a highly productive day for all involved, through which participants made valuable contacts and learned pertinent lessons. The large majority of community representatives evaluated the day's proceedings positively and reported that they intended to apply the information they had gained, both to improve the development of their own communities and to promote integrated, sustainable development regionally.

#### National Community Leadership Conference, October 2003

On October 24, 2003, CHF International, in partnership with its local partner, Azerbaijan Community Development Research, Training and Resource Centre (ACDRTRC), facilitated a large-scale and first of its kind National Community Leadership Conference (NCLC) in Imishli. CHF achieved its goal for the NCLC to *celebrate community leadership, review outcomes from past events and define a vision for the future, promote discussion and exchange amongst community leaders.*

The conference brought together more than 150 community leaders, municipal officials, government representatives, and international and local NGO representatives from across 14 regions of Azerbaijan. This conference was the culmination of a series of regional workshops and exchange activities that have been implemented in the conflict-affected regions of Azerbaijan through CHF's SII program and activities implemented through the "Community Leadership Exchange Network" project sponsored by Exxon Azerbaijan.



*Shadily community, Goranboy was selected the Most Resourceful Community for their involving of government, municipality and other resources to community activities*

Community leaders from across the country that participated in the SII program since 2001 represented their community achievements in attending the conference. The conference activities recognized community leadership, highlighted community development initiatives and provided information on the government's program for poverty reduction and economic development. Communities displayed their achievements through creative exhibits that lined the walls of the large conference hall. Communities interacted and exchanged expertise while presenting their exhibits to each other. Community exhibitions included carpets, clinic roster of patients paying fees for service, long term development plans, wheat varieties and small models of community centers.

Special guest speakers, Mr. William D. McKinney, USAID Country Coordinator, and Mr. Mehman Abasov, Head of Azerbaijan's Secretariat for Poverty Reduction and Economic Development, delivered keynote speeches at the conference. After keynote addresses, participants broke out into smaller discussion groups on government relations, economic opportunity and community fund management. The day's events concluded with an awards ceremony for outstanding achievements in different aspects of community leadership such as community fund management, most resourceful and best economic initiative.

CHF-SII's National Community Leadership Conference was an important step forward in advancing community leadership and self-reliance in Azerbaijan. For the first time in Azerbaijan, leaders from 14 regions exhibited and shared their community achievements and experiences.

**Government Awareness Workshops:** CHF together with its partners, Save the Children and IRC conducted first of its kind workshops for government officials from the central region of Azerbaijan on social investment and community development in Barda and Imishli on February 19, 2003 and February 27, 2003. The event brought together municipal officials and community councils from the regions and highlighted examples of successful government-community partnerships. The workshop successfully achieved its objective to raise awareness with government of community development activities of INGOs. The workshop was the beginning of the activities aimed at facilitating the partnerships between community and government at all levels that are essential to the sustainability of social investments made to date.

#### 1.4 Environment Activities & Impact

CHF/SII competitively selected ECOS, as the provider for Environmental Awareness services offered with the 3<sup>rd</sup> part of CHF/SII core training package. From March to September 2003, 1044 community members were trained on environmental awareness. This training included outlining realistic goals for the improvement of their environment, identifying resources and responsibilities according to community abilities. This training was provided only to communities new to SII. SII "graduate" communities received an empty booklet of Environmental Action Plans and filled them out independently to reinforce their knowledge of environmental planning and awareness. The implementation of the Environmental Action Plans was monitored during the post-project monitoring visits.

<b>Community Member Comments on Environmental Training</b>	
•	<i>"We gained new knowledge on environmental impact," mentioned Arash community from Yevlakh.</i>
•	<i>"We learned information about how to not pollute our environment."</i>
•	<i>"We gained very good knowledge on environmental issues which we didn't know," mentioned Mahesli Garje community from Garje.</i>
•	<i>"We gained extra knowledge on preventing environment pollution elimination."</i>

#### Key impact highlights include:

- 30 communities planted 14,000 trees contributed by ADRA;
- As a result of the training, many communities coordinated garbage disposal strategies, have taken steps to eliminate standing water near settlements thereby reducing the risk of malaria infection, and used information presented in the environmental trainings to safely dispose of asbestos during project construction. Some communities incorporated the knowledge gained through the training into their school curricula.

#### **SII Environmental Impact - Case Study**

*Ashigli 1 is a new SII community located in the Beylagan region. The leader of this community visited Holland through an international organization and gained several new ideas on agricultural practices, especially in the arena of animal husbandry. The community hosted a cross-fertilization visit in August 2003, organized by ACDRTRC within the framework of CHF/SII. Visiting communities were Turakli and Yukheri Alhtechi communities of Sabirabad. The main topic of this visit was environmental awareness within the framework of community economic development projects. "This visit made a significant impact on the environmental awareness of the participating communities," said the leader of Ashigli 1, Sadullah Eyvazov. This community was currently implementing a drainage canal rehabilitation project with CHF/SII. Practical discussions focused around methods of treating canal waste, eventually using it as fertilizer for new crops, an important step in environmental conservation and economic development. Associated with the increased crop production that the drainage canal would elicit, the community planned for a future high-quality bakery enterprise to further enhance economic development. Another important result of this cross-fertilization visit was an agreement that was struck with local government officials. After the visit, community group members had a meeting with local government officials and agreed to impose penalties on each person not following community environmental regulations or otherwise damaging the environment through their activities.*

## **1.5 Gender Activities & Impact**

CHF/SII significantly developed women leadership within the community. By increasing women's role in decision-making, prioritization, and project implementation, CHF/SII has contributed to expanding opportunities for women.

CHF conducted a number of activities to ensure that women had access to the resources that CHF/SII offered and opportunities within the community that CHF/SII supported. Activities included: a women and leadership brochure to attract more women to taking an active role within their community; discussing the role of women during cross visits and workshops; and integrating women's input into SII activities. According to the MIS, 53% (46,303) out of 88,109 direct beneficiaries were women, out of this, 1,726 women participated in trainings. In the second phase of SII, 247 women took an active role within Community Groups and 8 women served as the leaders of their community.



A major impact of the SII program is the promotion of women leadership in community development and decision-making. Throughout this phase of the program, women have become more active in all stages of the process, and a growing number have assumed leadership roles in their communities. Women make up the majority of Community Group members in a number of communities in both program regions, and in the Southern Region alone, five communities have selected female Community Leaders. The community of Boyuk Behmenli in Fuzili is an excellent example of this changing face of community leadership in Azerbaijan. The women of the community first became acquainted with CHF when they joined CEEOP's Regional Handicraft Association as some of the founding members. Encouraged by their success in this program, the community enrolled in the second phase of SII. During Organization Management training sessions, this 6,000-member community elected a dynamic female leader and 11 out of 16 female Community Group members.

### According to Impact Survey Data, key impacts include:

- 34% out of 120 survey participants were women; the majority of them felt that the assistance/ services provided by CHF/SII program led to the positive changes in women participation in community initiatives;
- The above point is reinforced by the fact that the number of women participating in decision making within their communities increased by 33% since CHF/SII community project;
- The majority of respondents (74 out of 118) indicated that there were changes in women representation in community group since participating in CHF/SII; the number of women participating in community group regularly, with new initiatives rose dramatically by 90%, up from 1 before CHF/SII to 68 out of 74 since participating in CHF/SII;
- Balchili community group in Yevlakh is composed of 50% female membership and women have been substantially involved in leadership roles within the community. As a result of their leadership, a potable water project was selected, as the previous water source within their community was particularly detrimental to the health of women and children.

## 2. CHF-SII Impact & Accomplishments

### 2.1. Consolidated Chart of Accomplishments

INDICATORS				
CHF/USAID #1: Number of community groups organized	60	60	107%	CHF Definition: Number of groups that successfully complete Stage 2 of the SOS. MOV: Letters of Approval for SII Community Applications
CHF/USAID #2: Number of direct recipients disaggregated	100,000	88,109	88%	CHF Definition: Number of beneficiaries who are directly impacted by the SII project; beneficiaries can be counted more than once if benefiting from more than one intervention; beneficiaries should be disaggregated by project type. MOV: PRS document
Men	50,000	41,806	84%	
Women	50,000	46,303	93%	
IDP	50,000	19,961	40%	
Conflict-affected	50,000	68,148	136%	
Health	NA	23,328		
Community Development	NA	47,827		
Economic Opportunity	NA	16,954		
CHF/USAID #3: Value and percent of community contribution to community projects	\$506,997; 25%	\$520,005; 36%	102%	CHF Definition: Amount contributed by community both in-kind and in cash and the percentage of the total cost covered by this contribution; plus all in kind and in cash contributions from external sources. MOV: PRS document, Project Close out document (includes Community Contribution Timesheet)
Community - in cash	\$35,500; 7%	\$85,114; 16%	239%	
Community - in kind	\$91,260; 18%	\$434,891; 84%	476%	
labor		\$101,440		
materials		\$92,445		
Other		\$241,006		
External contributions - in cash		\$2,244		
External contributions - in kind		\$221,643		
CHF#4: Number of individuals trained	1,500	4,949	330%	Total number of individuals trained in any or all of the SII core and fee-based trainings. MOV: Training Participant Lists
Men	750	2,878	384%	
Women	750	2,071	276%	
IDP	750	1,028	137%	
Conflict-affected	750	3,921	523%	
Community Groups	60	78	130%	
CHF#5: Number of community groups that demonstrate use of operation and maintenance training skills	40	44	110%	This is the number of community groups that have kept their project operational and maintained after completion. MOV: Monitoring document
CHF #6: Number integrated communities that link IDP and conflict-affected through a project	80	68	85%	Community projects that involve both populations in the planning and implementation and provide a mutual benefit. MOV: PRS document
CHF #7: Number of communities SII expands coverage to	50	53	106%	Number of NEW communities (not SII graduates) that CHF outreaches to that submit an Expression of Interest form. MOV: Core Selection Criteria Checklist
CHF #8: Number of people that participated in conferences, issue-based workshops, and cross-fertilization activities	500	976	195%	MOV: Information Exchange documents
CHF/USAID #1: Number of jobs created	800	2,039	255%	A new job that resulted from USAID-sponsored interventions (SII projects); job equals 20 hours a week for 12 weeks. MOV: Project close out document
Men		1,667		
Women		373		
Part-time	600	700	117%	
Full-time	200	1,337	668%	
CHF #2: Number trained in Economic Opportunity		284		CHF Definition: number of participants who attend SII demand-driven training "Economic Opportunity." MOV: Training participant lists
CHF#3: Number of individuals that report an increase in access to support services		N/A		CHF Definition: Increase in number of individuals with improved access to support services (school, hospital, etc.). MOV: Impact Survey

CHF#4: Number of groups linked to lending institutions		23		CHF Definition: This is the number of groups who have applied to lending institutions; this includes both groups that were and were not approved for loans or other micro-finance products; MOV: Monitoring document
CHF # 5: Number of short term jobs created		667		CHF Definition: All jobs that received payment related to the project vendors, site superintendents, contracted/paid labor, drivers, equipment operators, etc. These jobs end when the project ends; MOV: PRS document (estimate) and Project close-out document (actual)
CHF#6: Number of long term jobs created		1,740		CHF Definition: New jobs created as a result of the project that are long-term (more than one year of employment); MOV: PRS document (estimate) and Project close-out document (actual)
CHF #7: Number of PM of paid employment		2,138		CHF Definition: All labor paid to work on community project (i.e., vendors, superintendents, skilled labor, contractors, etc.) using PM calculations; MOV: PRS document (estimate), financial reports (actual)
CHF #8: Number of clients applying knowledge gained resulting in increased productivity and profitability		74		CHF Definition: Communities that have received the EO/BD training and started or expanded a business that has increased its income or production capacity and/or increased the number of employees hired to manage the extra production. MOV: Impact Survey
CHF/USAID #1: Number of community development projects completed	60	60	100%	CHF Definition: Number of SII projects completed; type specified. MOV: Project Status Report, Project Close out documents received
Economic Opportunity		11		
Health		11		
Community Development		38		
CHF #2: Number of community groups that develop and/or complete self-funded initiatives identified in LCAP		46		CHF Definition: Communities that have paid for, organized, and implemented a community project that they had identified during the LCAP training and have documented in their LCAP plan; MOV: Monitoring document
CHF #3: Number of community groups linking to external resources		47		CHF Definition: Community groups receiving grants, training/technical assistance, or credit from NGOs, sharing resources with other communities to implement initiatives, receiving support from or coordinating with local government authorities, etc., after the completion of the SII project; MOV: Monitoring document
CHF #4: Number of completed projects that are joint initiatives with local government, combining multiple villages, and/or significant partnerships		58		CHF Definition: SII community projects that are planned and/or implemented by communities with the involvement of local government, municipalities, multiple communities, or multiple NGOs; MOV: PRS document, Project Close out document
CHF #5: Number of maintenance funds in place and functioning	60	17	32%	CHF Definition: Number of community groups that maintain a fund to sustain the project and is verified to be functioning in one month post project monitoring visit. MOV: Monitoring document
CHF #6: Number of democratic structures governing communities set in place and functioning	60	47	35%	CHF Definition: Number of community groups that demonstrate a continued use of democratic methods in local decision-making and is verified in one month post project monitoring visit. MOV: Monitoring document
CHF #7: Number of community groups with improved organizational capacity		60		CHF Definition: All community groups that receive Community Contracting training and are at level 4 as well as all groups that display an increase in their ability to manage community issues; MOV: classify all groups in beginning of the program and re-classify at the end and count the number of community groups that have reached a higher level; Core Criteria Selection Checklist, Training participant lists, Impact Survey
CHF #8: Number of people trained in outreach, awareness, leadership or advocacy skills		2,087		CHF Definition: All participants of organizational management training; MOV: Training Participant Lists for OM Series
CHF/USAID #1: Utilization rate of health facilities		95,495		CHF Definition: Increase in number of people using facilities after SII intervention; MOV: SII Community Application answer to be inserted into PRS document for "before" and project close-out document will give "after," both entered into PT database
Men		46,792		
Women		48,702		
CHF #2: Utilization rate of education facilities		28,625		CHF Definition: Increase in number of people using facilities after SII intervention; MOV: SII Community Application answer to be inserted into PRS document for "before" and project close-out document will give "after," both entered into PT database
Men		14,026		
Women		14,598		

## **2.2 Narrative ~ Key Accomplishments & Impact**

CHF/SII impact has been measured through a variety of mechanisms including CHF/SII monitoring activities, independent partner reports, activity evaluations, and the impact survey (please see Annex C for full report) that CHF conducted in January 2004. Below please find a narrative summary of program impact, accomplishment, and outputs organized according to Intermediate Results.

### **IR 3.1.1 Vulnerable Communities Better Able to Meet Their Own Needs**

The second phase of CHF's SII program made considerable impact against USAID's Strategic Objective for humanitarian assistance. In particular, CHF's SII program made strong impact in making communities more self-reliant in meeting their own needs. This impact is measured in a variety of ways, but one major indicator for CHF is the amount of resources the community is leveraging in order to implement community improvements. The increasing percentage indicates that communities are working together more and pooling resources an increasing level of resources towards the ultimate goal of meeting 100% of the costs. During this phase of SII, communities contributed 36% of the overall costs. In addition to the quantitative impact figures according to indicators described above, CHF/SII activities made the following impacts.

Through information exchange activities, numerous active discussions took place on the development and implementation of projects focused on economic opportunities. In its recent activities, CHF/SII is finding increasingly strong interest in these sorts of projects, with the hope of giving a long-term sustainable source of income for their communities. The 100% IDP community of Yasti Yol in Agiebedi region, explained their creative efforts to generate income selling dairy products to a nearby processing facility and direct those revenues to the implementation of further projects. Building on this success, the community implemented a project with CHF/SII to irrigate nearby fields and sell animal feed to the nearby dairy facility.

The cumulative impact of the regional workshops and national conferences include: the exchange of different approaches from different districts to the same issue such as municipality involvement in community issues; developing relations among communities and across regions; innovations such as using the community fund as a credit were shared among communities; learning about the benefit of different types of projects; and creating a level of trust on the regional level that will facilitate them reaching important economies of scale.

The main impacts of the national conferences was promoting open discussions of community issues on the national level and promoting sustainable and integrated vision for the future. The major outcomes of the NCLC event are: a vision for community leadership was developed; communities became more aware of their role in the government's SPPRED; community leadership and partnership was reinforced. Through these events, the foundation was laid for future integration among community leaders through dissemination of contact information for each leader.

According to Impact Survey data, the most significant impacts that SII trainings had on the community leadership group and community (in order of most frequent responses): 1) participation of women to decision-making; 2) established roles for community leadership group members; 3) planned within a long-term framework; 4) increased community awareness on positive environmental practices; and 5) improved ability to sustain and maintain social investments. Through SII, 4,949 individuals were trained, 42% of trained were women, and 21% IDPs; 13% of communities participated in fee-based BDS trainings and gained skills and knowledge to address economic opportunities in the future which indicates increased orientation toward economic development.

#### **IR 3.1.1.1 Increased Access to Economic Opportunities & Support Services**

CHF-SII projects were **labor-intensive** and resulted in **2,039 jobs created**. Of which, 1,337 were full-time jobs and 700 were part-time jobs. Of these, 373 jobs were created for women. Of the jobs created, 667 jobs were short-term and 1,740 jobs were sustained. In all, 2,138 person months of employment were generated.

Beyond job creation, CHF-SII's approach has also served as catalyst for communities to begin to address and develop their economic opportunities. More communities than ever before prioritized projects, such as irrigation, that would increase local productivity or serve as a source to build their community fund. The bullets below show some examples of how SII projects increased economic opportunities within communities.

Both communities in Asigly 1 in Beylagan and Varkhankend in Sabirabad are engaged in agricultural activities. Due to lack of water or soil salinity only 1/3 of arable land is being used. The projects are now nearly finished and people can use all of the land productively for vegetable production and other crops.

CHF-SII Beyler school project created new long-term full-time jobs in Saatly where 2 new teachers were hired. Nesimikend in Bilasubar has hired a guard/maintenance worker for their electricity project and are paying his salary from their community fund.

As a result of rehabilitation of the pre-existing artesian well and drilling of the new one, Tek Chinar and Imamgulubeyli communities were able to irrigate 190 hectares of land. Thus, Tek Chinar possesses 80 hectares of land shares and 40 hectares of individual yards; Imamgulubeyli community has 70 hectares of arable lands. Individual farmers have planted wheat, cotton, sunflower, onion and alfalfa in 150 hectares of land, as well as potato and dates in 40 hectares of land. Upon completion of "Potable and Irrigation Water Supply" project with SII the Tek Chinar Community group succeeded in implementing two self-financed projects in July: rehabilitation of the artesian well transformer (\$100) and installation of the new artesian well pump (\$700).

#### According to Impact Survey Data:

- 46% of survey participants reported EO to be the most important type of technical assistance to communities' future development;
- 41% out of 111 respondents rated economic situation in their communities as "4" AFTER CHF/SII, as compared to 2% BEFORE CHF/SII;
- 56% of 103 respondents reported that SII projects had both direct and indirect impact on expanding productive opportunities;
- 27% of Business Development training participants applied knowledge gained through: planning business, decreasing costs, and having access to finance.

#### IR 3.1.1.2 Communities Organized to Address Self-Defined Needs

CHF encourages communities to address the priorities they can on their own. Therefore, communities track community initiatives in their long term action plans and implement them while working with CHF to address projects with which they need external assistance. Below are examples of how CHF's SII program has galvanized communities to address their self-defined needs.

- Upon completion of their electrical project with SII, Yeni Dashkent in Barda during the months of July and August 2003 has implemented 4 community-financed projects: rehabilitation of the artesian well transformer (\$230); artesian well pump rehabilitation (\$80); water canal cleaning (\$20) and the partial renovation of the school (\$100) using their community fund. Additionally, in July 2003 the group has applied to Save the Children to implement "Irrigation System Rehabilitation" project.
- Narimankend community of Sabirabad region, has followed their long term community action plan closely. In accordance with this plan, they managed to implement 2 projects from 3 planned priorities.
- Upon completion of their electricity supply project with SII, Varvara Community Group in Yevlakh has rehabilitated the local park (\$260) and repaired one of pre-existing transformers (\$120). The local municipality became more actively engaged in community initiatives.
- Communities have become skilled in leveraging resources to complete their projects. Since the start of rehabilitation activities in July 2003 in Askipara secondary school, the local municipality has contributed more

#### **Comments from Communities on Economic Opportunity**

*"It is impossible to implement and manage EO projects without the knowledge which we got from this training,"*  
member of Yesli Yol community from Agjebedi.

*"Revitalizing economic livelihoods in the community will make big changes in the community life."*



*Before rehabilitating their irrigation system, Narimankend community in Sabirabad could only use 1/3 of 1,200 ha of arable land.*

than \$500. Additionally, in September 2003 Terter Regional Education and Health Department has provided the school with 75 sets of desks and chairs.

- According to monitoring evaluation assessment communities implemented over 200 projects worth \$240,000 since the SII project within their Long-term Community Action Plans. Over 44% of these community projects were funded by communities, and the rest were joint projects with other communities, municipality, ExCom and NGOs.
- According to Impact Survey Assessment, CHF/SII community project significantly affected the way in which decisions are made within community:
  - ✓ AFTER CHF/SII decisions made by the leader, community group and municipality/ ExCom recommendation decreased dramatically,
  - ✓ General vote at community meetings and community-wide surveying increased by 37% and 35% respectively.

### **IR 3.1.1.3 Communities Have Access to Better Quality Services**

Two communities have prioritized the rehabilitation of health facilities. Upon completion, these projects will positively affect the health services available to 1,030 persons. Boyuk Behmenli community in Fizuli started the reconstruction of clinic with out-patient and maternity wards that will serve the neighboring villages as well. IMC will introduce the medical insurance scheme to a clinic in Ahmedabad village rehabilitated by CHF/SII. Twelve communities have chosen to repair or reconstruct their schools. These will improve educational conditions for 5,693 persons.

- Two communities in the project implementation phase have rehabilitating the local healthcare facilities. The clinic in Ahmedabad will serve for 2,546 people through insurance service. The insurance will be identified by IMC. The hospital in Boyuk Behmenly community will have maternity department which will help women in getting better treatment and consultation.
- The school project will impact young people with high education standards through comfortable conditions in the schools. The Educational department and ExComs are providing schools with new equipments. Orclu, Telishli school in Imishli, Beyler in Saatly regions are good example for appropriate projects.
- Communities are also still actively seeking out additional resources from their government counterparts and external sources. After nearly a year, Khaldan community in Yevlakh received equipment and support from Yevlakh Health Department totalling \$3,500 for their newly constructed clinic serving 22,000 persons.



*The population of Ahmedabad village, Sabirabad receives treatment and tests in the long-expected local clinic.*

### **Cross-cutting Impact Analysis & Trends**

Closer collaboration with Government. CHF's information exchange activities are facilitating that important discussions are held on topics such as collaboration between local governments and communities. In each of the visits, community group representation included presence of municipal or Executive Committee officials. One important result of the cross-fertilization visits, and implementation of SII in general, is that the relations between government and communities have been strengthened. As community members come to understand the influence that they can wield at the local level in relation to government, they are increasingly expressing community needs and demanding increased government services and engagement. In parallel, local government officials from selected areas across the region are seeing community groups as an important avenue to gauging public opinion and favor within local communities. Practically, cross visit participants discussed barriers to community/ government collaboration, and measures that can be taken to address them. Serving as one example, Tap community of Goranboy region demonstrated this success through collaboration in its work to rehabilitate a gas system. The ExCom provided gas specialists to inspect the gas pipes and the municipality provided transportation.

Government workshops also established closer relations between government and communities. Attendees discovered many areas for collaboration in the future. The head of Nizami municipality of Ganja region offered the suggestion that municipalities should direct a certain portion of their financial resources towards building the well-being of the communities. The speaker suggested that the municipalities support the communities that face challenges with cash contribution required to implement CHF/SII projects. Ganimat Garashov, the head of Yevlakh municipality, presented the example of successful partnership between communities and the Yevlakh government and municipality in which the government supported a clinic rehabilitation implemented through CHF/SII by contributing \$6,000 in cash towards the project that serves 17 villages with over 20,000 in population in Khaldan.

Communities Take More Responsibility for Project Implementation. In the cross visits relating to engineering, there were several practical exchanges that took place. One particular example includes floor reinforcement technologies recently employed by Beylar community's school rehabilitation project in the Saatli region. Participants also took strong lessons from the Ashigli 1 community in Beylagan region, which recently implemented a drainage canal rehabilitation project substantially deeper than conventional canals.

Intercommunity Integration: The SII program strongly advocates the integration of communities, sharing of experiences (especially with new communities), and pooling of resources to promote sustainable economic development. A tangible outcome of one of the cross-fertilization visits was discussions that were initiated between community representatives regarding the potential of future visits and integration, independent of CHF. Additionally, the integrated communities Varkhankend and Garalar of the Saatli Region emphasized their positive experiences with integration through a large-scale drainage canal project, and future ambitions.

According to Impact Survey Data, 89% out of 105 respondents indicated that BEFORE CHF/SII they either did not interact, rarely interacted or interacted but did not share resources with surrounding villages and communities. This number decreased to 0-4% AFTER participating in CHF/SII, with communities either organizing cross visits and exchanging information (51% out of 105) or pooling resources to achieve common aim (32% out of 105).

Other examples of intercommunity integration include the District Committees (Block Associations) in Mingachevir that had not worked with any INGOs previous to the CHF/SII. Nevertheless, during the last 3 months, CHF started to work with four of them, allocating about \$60,000 to implement various social infrastructure projects. Besides, these District Committees have built a good reputation in Mingachevir and actively started to build new relations with other INGOs. As an example, CHF assisted Ukduz, Nur, Mingachevir and Dostlug communities to establish contacts with IRD. Implementation of SII-funded projects helped the municipality, District Committees and IFES to build good image in entire Mingachevir, as well as strengthened relations between Mingachevir ExCom, Municipality, District Committees, IFES and CHF. In August 2003 Mingachevir Municipality has formed an independent monitoring group to monitor the progress of SII funded projects. The purpose of the group is to regularly collect info about projects under implementation and provide operative support when needed.

Cardinal changes have been observed in the activities of the Yevlakh Cluster Community Council. Board members of the Community Council were replaced with those community leaders who were involved to project implementation with SII. Head of the Yevlakh ExCom has allocated rooms for Community Council in the center of Yevlakh city. SII projects in Yevlakh have encouraged the regional municipality to speed up the process of formation of new District Committees.

One of CHF's selection criteria is the integration of multiple villages of the project's benefits. Most of the projects supported during this phase of SII have benefited more than one village and increased cooperation between villages. A trend that is happening as a result of this support and promotion is that communities are coming together to support even larger goals. Below are 2 examples of projects that are serving a "cluster" of villages. CHF would like to note that this is not imposed upon communities but is a natural development due to coordination and cross fertilizing community experiences within the regions.

- In Shadly of Goranboy, the communities that are stretched along 2 sides of a river are coming together to implement a large scale (148-meter in length) bridge over the Kurakchay River. This project was the highest priority for all villages in the area and all are contributing to its construction. The project also has the support of the Head of the Goranboy ExCom. The level of contribution from Goranboy ExCom and municipalities of four villages reached \$2,600.

- **Pashabeyli** community in Aghdam has started the implementation of the first cluster level "Community Center Construction" project with the involvement of four neighboring communities. The level of the community in-cash and in-kind contribution reached \$7,600 and overall contribution from communities is approximately 35% of the total project costs.

### **3. Integration & Coordination**

CHF achieved a high level of integration and coordination on the international development agency, implementing partner, and community levels. Please find below examples of each level:

#### **3.1 Agency Level**

On the agency level, CHF's SII was intended to compliment and build community capacity to participate in the World Bank funded Social Fund for the Development of IDPs (SFDI). CHF facilitated the "graduation" of community groups to a level at which they could access additional resources such as those of SFDI and other development agency funding. Nine communities that participated in CHF/SII went on to be funded by SFDI. Since the beginning of SII Program CHF has sent copies of letters of interest to SFDI in order to make them aware of successful active communities in area of SII activity and letters of regret to inform about cancellation of SII grant. In total SFDI received 210 letters of interest and around 300 letters of regret within frame of SII program. Project Overviews were distributed weekly to SFDI. In Urban region, SFDI donated school equipment to four SII/Urban schools totaling to \$33,490. The equipment includes desks, chairs for students and teachers, blackboards, a computer, UPS and electrical oil radiator to each classroom. SFDI also implemented projects in nine SII communities, five in Central and four in Southern regions totaling to \$ 276,886.

#### **3.2 NGO Level ~ AHAP Implementing Partners & Others**

The CHF/SII program's success depends upon the foundation built by our partners. This program could not have functioned efficiently without high levels of coordination with other implementing partners. SII is a uniquely designed program that was able to synthesize and build on the multitude of lessons learned from different approaches in different areas in the AHAP strategy that divided regions and sectors. CHF/SII had the opportunity to draw upon the core competencies of AHAP partners in the delivery of the SII. Some of the mechanisms that CHF used to integrate and coordinate its activities at this level is provided below:

- **Open Society Institute- Assistance Foundation/Azerbaijan** donated 2,400 Biology books and 2,200 English language books with notebooks that were disseminated to 30 schools in central, 19 schools in southern and 5 schools in urban regions. The books were distributed by the number of teachers and children of 10 and 11 grades for Biology books, and 7 grades for English language books.
- **ADRA** donated 14,400 trees to 30 communities in central and southern regions to provide more environmentally sound practices in rural areas.
- **Counterpart International** assisted two communities that CHF/SII worked with. The organization donated \$4,500 worth school equipment for one classroom of 1<sup>st</sup> grade pupils in Samed Vurgun community, Agjebedi. Samed Vurgun community rehabilitated their school building with CHF/SII assistance. Counterpart International also provided Khaldan hospital in Yevlakh rehabilitated in the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the SII program with equipment and medical instruments worth \$41,347.
- **INGO Integration:** Seventy two percent (43 out of 60) of CHF/SII funded communities were referred by NGO partners. Out of 60 communities: 41 referred by AHAP= 68%; 22 referred by SC= 37%; 17 referred by IRC= 28%; 2 referred by IMC= 3%; 3 referred by local NGOs= 5%; 8 other NGOs= 13%; 4 communities referred by CHF/SII= 7%.

#### **Examples of Highly Integrated Projects:**

- Clinic Construction in Ahmedabad, Sabirabad region. Partners: CHF (financial and technical assistance), and IMC (training and medical equipment);
- Clinic Construction in Boyuk Behmenli, Fizuli region. Partners: CHF (financial and technical assistance), and IMC (medical equipment);

- Electrical Supply Project in Tezekend, Beylegan region. Partners: IRC (construction of milk processing unit), and CHF (financial and technical assistance);
- Electrical Supply Project in Mahmudlu 1, Fizuli region. Partners: IRC (construction of canned goods production unit), and CHF (financial and technical assistance)

#### **4. Sustainability**

- Community Capacity. CHF successfully built the capacity of community groups to prepare, implement, and sustain social investments that have community-wide support requiring no external assistance. The organizational skills that communities acquired through participation in the program are one of the major sustainable outcomes of the program: these communities have been equipped with the ability to solve their own problems in the future. Communities invested 36% of the total project value. Their willingness to invest their own resources shows the program's sustainable impact on shifting perspective to sustainable development.
- Establishment of Long-term Community Action Plans. The LCAP is an asset-based approach to identifying community priorities that focuses on what the community itself can achieve through mobilizing resources that currently exist within the community. The purpose of the L-CAP is to shift the emphasis from a single project intervention funded externally to a long-term development framework that incorporates internally funded and managed projects. The LCAP process informs communities about the processes involved in community planning which ultimately builds social capital within communities and contributes to sustainability. According to monitoring activities, 93% of communities have begun to work on or have implemented the next priority defined in their LCAP since the completion of the SII project.
- Project Sustainability. Each community has prepared a viable plan for the financial and operational maintenance of the infrastructure or service improved within their community through the SII process. Mechanisms such as fees for service, establishment of a Maintenance Fund, local tax resources, and ongoing fundraising are discussed and included as appropriate. For infrastructure projects, this operational plan identifies the person(s) responsible for the physical maintenance and appropriate compensation, establishes a schedule for maintenance activities and inventory replenishment, and transfers the skills necessary to determine any project's operational, maintenance and financial needs. On average, 10 sustainable jobs were created per community project, many of them to support maintenance activities.
- Community Contribution Funds. Community or maintenance funds were established in each community that implemented a project with CHF/SII. The goal of the fund is to ensure that the project's recurrent costs are leveraged and covered by the community. Through the CHF/SII process, communities learned how to mobilize funds from the community at large and maintain general funds that can be used to sustain existing infrastructure and implement prioritized community initiatives. Under CHF/SII, communities met 5% cash contribution requirements for the first time - communities actually exceeded the required amount with 16% contributed in cash! Cash contributions provided communities with experience in leveraging local resources and built confidence in and support for the maintenance of community funds. In the June Capacity-building Conferences participants noted that the tools developed by CHF for communities (such as the needs survey and fund expenditure logs) boosted community confidence in community funds and were critical to transparent and safe financial management. Community or maintenance funds are sustainable elements of the program. In 100% of SII communities, funds continue to be collected, maintained and managed by the community group. This fund functions as a small-scale informal savings account for the community.
- Community Access to Resources. There are a plethora of international and Azerbaijani development institutions functioning currently in Azerbaijan. The community groups supported through CHF/SII are equipped with the tools and information on how to access additional resources; close to 27% of SII communities have already succeeded in doing so. Graduate community groups also now have the organizational skills to plan and use available community resources to address community priorities.

## **5. SII Success Stories**

### **Conflict-affected Boyuk Behmebli is Rebuilt With Women Leadership Fizuli, Azerbaijan**

The liberated village of Boyuk Behmebli in Fizuli benefits greatly from the leadership of women, namely Ms. Gulshan Aliyeva. Ms. Aliyeva exhibited her strong leadership skills when she was faced with the extraordinary hardships of becoming internally displaced in 1993 when her village was destroyed. Formerly Deputy Director of the education department of small village school, Ms. Aliyeva now manages the local Community Employment Center with 50 staff members, serves as president of the Karvan Handicraft Association that brings together 400 handicraft artisans from across the region, and in the past year was elected leader of the Boyuk Behmebli community group. In the coming year, Ms. Aliyeva hopes to bring her leadership skills to another level and be elected to the Boyuk Behmenli municipality and serve 1,300 peoples' interests.

"When we reoccupied our village we found much of the infrastructure destroyed. But some things, including the school I used to work in could be rehabilitated. So I took the initiative to mobilize the villagers and government to rescue the school building from collapse. This was one my first real acts of leadership in the community. Soon after, I found all the villagers around me asking for my advice," says Ms. Gulshan Aliyeva. She established a working team of returnees, involved them to the rehabilitation work, and collected equipment for the school from other abandoned administrative buildings in the area.



This initiative is the reason why local women voted for Ms. Aliyeva to be manager of the Community Employment Centre in Boyuk Behmenli when an international organization began working in the village. Ms. Aliyeva proved to have inexhaustible energy. The villagers began to see that she was a reliable person and effective decision maker. For these reasons, she was elected president of the 400-member Karvan Handicraft Association that spans six regions of Azerbaijan. In the short year that she has been president, she has made market linkages for the association resulting in approximately \$5,000 in association revenue and got the association officially registered. Thanks to her initiative, products of the association are now displayed throughout Baku at local souvenir shops.

When Ms. Aliyeva learned about CHF's Social Investment Initiative program she seized the opportunity to rehabilitate the dilapidated infrastructure. She worked with the community to establish priorities which turned out to be the hospital rehabilitation. The experience and skills gained through participating in the SII made the community confident that they could independently address their needs. The scope of the project at first intimidated the community. The community did not know that they could manage such a large project. The project's implementation equipped the community with new knowledge on organizational, procurement and environmental issues. Recognizing that they could not achieve sustainability without partnership, Ms. Aliyeva took the initiative in building partnerships with local governmental agencies and other INGOs. As a result, the municipality made in-cash contributions to the community project and provided significant amount for the sustainability fund to maintain the hospital. The local Executive Committee and IMC provided the hospital with new equipment.

Being the leader of IDP and conflict affected community Mrs. Gulshan Aliyeva is very skilled in conflict resolution. As Ms. Aliyeva put it in her words, "for me, the main trainer is life. And I faced a number of life challenges and conflicts. I am well-trained." This year, Boyuk Behmenli community will hold municipal elections. Villagers fully support Mrs. Gulshan Aliyeva's nominee; and display their trust in her. She is sure that with the support of Boyuk Behmenli community she will take her leadership to a higher level.

c. Cooperative Agreement Budget Realignment

Does the Cooperative Agreement require budget realignment according to the actual expenses?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_X\_\_\_ No

d. Match

Does the Implementing Partner for this Cooperative Agreement commit match?

\_\_\_X\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, reported match status is as follows:

Committed Match Amount	Total Reported Match	Comment
\$506,997	\$795,694	Over by \$288,697

**6.2 Compliance with Cooperative Agreement Terms**

**a. Title to and Care of Property**

Assets, unspent supplies and loan capital and their disposition plan is as follows:

Assets/Unspent supplies & loan capital	Quantity	Condition at the time of Cooperative Agreement close-out	Current Fair Market Value	Requested Disposition Plan	Comment
1 Laptop IBM	1	Good	\$2,000	To be used in future CHF programs	CHF got the approval from USAID to retain title of property
2 Multimedia Projector Toshiba	1	Good	\$1,900		
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>\$3,900</b>		

\*In accordance with USAID regulations of disposition of non-expendable property CHF International has got the approval to retain title of property (see attached USAID Letter)

**b. International Travel**

Total number of trips approved: \_\_\_ 8 \_\_\_

Total number of trips utilized with the approval of USAID: \_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_

International travel under Cooperative Agreement is as follows:

Number of International trips planned	Amount of budget approved	Actual number of international trips	Actual expenses for international trips	Comments
8	\$20,180	4	\$9,683	