



THE INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

A Z E R B A I J A N

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The **INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE (IRC) Azerbaijan Program** has shifted its emphasis to long-term projects aimed at increasing the development capacity of communities, municipalities, and local NGOs. The IRC's goal is to help communities find sustainable solutions to local economic, health, infrastructure, and agriculture problems through a multi-sector community-based development approach. The International Rescue Committee has provided relief and development assistance for internally displaced persons and war-affected communities in Azerbaijan since 1994. Drawing on IRC's Program Framework Model, IRC Azerbaijan works towards incorporating participation, capacity building, promotion and protection of human rights, partnerships, and holistic programming into its programming.

INTEGRATED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (ICDP) Advances sustainable improvements in the social and economic well being of conflict-affected populations in more than 120 communities of six southern regions of Azerbaijan by building their capacity for self-reliance through mobilization activities and the implementation of community driven micro-projects in health, agriculture, economic development, and infrastructure. Using a proven Community Participatory Assessment process, IRC brings all members of a community together to identify and prioritize their development needs. Elected community leadership groups are trained to assess resources, develop proposals, manage project implementation, and plan for project sustainability. Through IRC's local NGO partners, municipal councilors and community leaders are provided with joint training on the roles and responsibilities and status of local government in Azerbaijan. Mobilized communities and municipalities are encouraged to link with one another, local NGOs, and regional resource centers to design and implement cluster wide development projects.

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM Assists community members to establish profitable and sustainable agricultural production and processing systems in order to improve food security, increased farmer income and assist in the building of integrated rural market chains in nine target regions. In conjunction with local farmers and entrepreneurs, the IRC is establishing demonstration farms (combining a greenhouse and fields for fruit and vegetable production), ten producer groups for joint marketing activities, and establishing a small-scale fruit and vegetable processing facility. Additional support is provided to local farmers through access to modern machinery from regional Agricultural Resource Centers and increased access to quality information through trained agricultural extension workers.

BIBI HEYBET COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT Enables sustainable social and economic development for the urban community of Bibi Heybet through multi-sector, community-based initiatives that strengthen community institutions, build capacity, and improve social and physical infrastructure.

IMPROVING LIVELIHOODS FOR IDPs Working with IDPs is a key element of the IRC's work. Through the Improving Livelihoods Project, IRC assists in the formation of agricultural production groups and introduces new cultivation techniques to Bilasuvar camp farmers. IRC is also working with IDP communities in Lachin Wintergrounds to create a potable water distribution system in line with Sphere Standards and to establish a community based Water User Committee to sustain the potable water system without external support. Project activities promote improved sanitation facilities among vulnerable families through provision of single family latrines, vector control, and hygiene kits.

NATIONAL NGO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IRC builds the capacity of five national NGOs (NNGOs) to effectively manage and implement community-based development projects while simultaneously mobilizing 24 communities along Baku-Tbilis-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline corridor to assess and address their priority development needs. Through a training and practice rotation, five partner NNGOs learn both to manage, monitor, and report on sub-grants and to implement integrated community-based development projects.

AZERBAIJAN BUSINESS ASSISTANCE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IRC assists micro and small businesses in addressing the issues that hinder business growth in rural Azerbaijan, namely the need for technical advice at the farm and firm level, administrative impediments to business development, deteriorating infrastructure, and lack of cooperation among rural stakeholders. The project encompasses two components: building the productive capacity of targeted communities through training, technical assistance, business advocacy, and grants, and, secondly, establishing a system, comprised of Marketing Centers and community groups for the sustainable collection, exchange, dissemination, and application of market information.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM Empowers 33 communities along the eastern section of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline to mobilize internal and external resources to improve their living conditions by addressing self-defined socio-economic concerns working through multi-sectoral, elected community based organizations and municipal councils.

US EMBASSY AMBASSADOR'S FUNDS IRC supports community based groups and local authorities to improve the health situation of community members in the Sabirabad region in close proximity to a malarial swamp through the implementation of swamp clean-up and drainage project.

PROGRAM STRATEGY

Through its on-going program activities, IRC Azerbaijan continues its commitment to increasing the development capacity of communities, municipalities, and local NGOs by providing them with the skills and assistance to address their own priority needs and find sustainable solutions to local economic, health, agriculture, infrastructure and social problems through a participatory community development approach. In addition, IRC Azerbaijan is positioned to strengthen its activities in areas of economic development and agricultural programs, through its programs aimed at working with rural producers and entrepreneurs to improve production techniques, foster market linkages, and build technical and business skills to support the development of strong regional based enterprises with links to the commercial supply chain.

OPERATIONS

STAFFING

IRC Azerbaijan operates with 8 expatriate staff and 120 national staff.

BUDGET

In the 2005 fiscal year, IRC Azerbaijan has an operating budget of \$6,442,799. Funding for IRC Azerbaijan programming was provided by USAID, USBPRM, U.S. Embassy in Azerbaijan, USDA, Azerbaijan International Operating Company (AIOC), Exxon Mobil, Stichting Vluchteling (SV), and Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Southern Caucasus Pipeline Companies (BTC/SCP). Thus far, donors for the 2006 fiscal year include USAID, U.S. Embassy in Azerbaijan, USDA, Exxon Mobil, SV, AIOC and BTC/SCP.

OFFICES

IRC Azerbaijan has 5 operating offices: Baku, Imishli, Kurdamir, Lachin Wintergrounds (Agjabedi), and Bibi Heybet (Sabayil).

CONTACT INFORMATION

IRC Azerbaijan is pleased to share any additional information about its current programming or concepts for future projects.

Bharat Devkota, Country Director	*	bdevkota@theIRC.org
Amir Omanovic, Deputy Director	*	amir@theIRC.az
Pam Flowers, Grants and Information Manager	*	pam@theIRC.az
Ismayil Tahmazov, Grants and Information Officer	*	ismayil@theIRC.az

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