



### New Exhibition Space at the Akhalkalaki Museum

The non-entrepreneurial (non-commercial) legal entity the Museum of Akhalkalaki and the Kumurdo Eparchy was founded in 2012 by Metropolitan Nikoloz. He collected and created unique archeological, geological and ethnographic exhibits.

Entry to the museum is free of charge. Funding for utility and other bills and salaries are from the budget of the Patriarchate. Since the financing is limited, however, the museum has been unable to develop its infrastructure even though the number of visitors has been increasing every year. In addition to the exhibits, another reason for the popularity of the museum is its exact copy of the Shroud of Turin, known as the Fifth Gospel in Christianity. The copy is kept in a chapel which was built especially for the copy of the shroud.



Employees: 3 locals  
Total budget of the project: GEL 153,789.18  
EU share: GEL 123,762.22  
Co-financing: GEL 30,026.96



“A lot of pilgrims come to visit us, not only from Georgia but from other countries as well. It should be noted that our Shroud of Turin has a specific certificate which proves that it is an exact copy of the original. The chapel that was constructed for keeping the shroud was painted by Davit Sulakauri who used one of the most complicated and ancient methods which is well-known as encaustic painting,” said Nino Murtskhvaladze, the Director of the Akhalkalaki Museum.

According to Nino Murtskhvaladze, Metropolitan Nikoloz grew up in a family of artists and he had a wonderful collection of paintings created by famous Georgian artists. Most of them were presents given to his father. The collection also included items by the famous artist-ceramics specialist, Givi Pachuashvili. The Metropolitan gave his personal collection to the Museum and so you can explore the work of Elene Akhvlediani, Lado Gudiashvili and Davit Kakabadze. These treasures require specific attention and conditions in order to preserve them and so the Museum addressed the LAG for support, a social project was prepared and it was selected for financing from the European Union.





“We used the grant amount to construct a second floor for the building which is equipped with an infrastructure for lighting, temperature control and security. The exhibition space has already hosted artworks of famous Georgian and Armenian artists and visitors can explore them free of charge,” said Ms Murtskhvaladze.

With the rehabilitated infrastructure, the Museum has employed three more locals.

The Museum is one of the most important institutions which contributes to social development. It is always open to the public and unlike other galleries it is not oriented on gaining financial benefits.

Having this kind of cultural center in Akhalkalaki is vital for the region since the municipality is sorely lacking places and spaces such as the Akhalkalaki Museum. It will promote the popularization of the ancient city of Akhalkalaki and help to attract more tourists while also raising the cultural tastes and interest of the locals.

*The initiative has been financed by the European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD) through the project of promoting new approaches in Rural Development in Akhalkhalaki.*

*Project is being implemented by the Department of Rural Development and Vocational Education (DRDVE) of the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA). Project Partners are Mercy Corps, Elva - Community Engagement and West Cork Development Partnership.*

*The European Union supports agriculture and rural development of Georgia through the programme of ENPARD, which has been implemented in Georgia since 2013. The total budget is 179.5 mio EUR. The main goal of the ENPARD is to reduce the rural poverty. The main priority of the first phase of the program was to support agricultural development, whereas the main aim of the second and third phases is to promote economic opportunities and capacity building of people living in the rural areas. For the additional information, please follow the link: [www.enpard.ge](http://www.enpard.ge)*