



### Demonstration Plots in Four Villages of the Akhalkalaki Municipality

Setting up demonstration plots is quite popular worldwide as a part of agricultural development and it has great importance. Mainly, demonstration plots are used for experiments where farmers are able to test new crop varieties by planting them on small plots and then evaluate the risks and the benefits associated with a particular crop. If one of the crops succeeds, then the farmers can choose to plant it in the bigger area and so the development of new crop begins. Introducing this practice into the Akhalkalaki Municipality is vital given that the local people are mainly engaged in potato growing which is done with traditional and old-fashioned methods and techniques.

“Farmers are always afraid of experiments or changes. They are scared to spend money without gaining any results and benefits from new crops. That’s why they refuse to develop organic farming and prefer to use the old methods that they are well aware of. So, we decided to prepare a project entitled Increasing Productivity and Efficiency in Agriculture, aiming to set up demonstration plots and apply for the grant competition announced by the European Union,” says Nana Zurabishvili, Chairperson of the non-governmental organization – World.



Employees: 2 locals  
Total budget of the project: GEL 52,923.00  
EU share: GEL 38,250.00  
Co-financing: GEL 14,673.00



The project received a grant within the ENPARD program. GIPA and LAG supported the project in setting up seven demonstration plots in four villages in the Akhalkalaki Municipality; namely, Koteliani, Azmana, Bezhano and Vachiani. Carrots, onions and potatoes for making into potato crisps were planted.





The World NGO procured the irrigation system and accessories, rehabilitated the existing infrastructure and organized two manure farming activities.

“Mainly, we are paying attention to organic manure for the demo plots. We do our best to explain its importance to the farmers and make sure that they understand how useful it is. We have given them hybrid carrot seeds. They are able to use our planting machine as well.

We are quite happy with the harvest received from the demonstration plots. Although, it should be mentioned that hail did cause some damage. We expect better results next year. We hope that the locals will plant carrots and onions as well and won't only be oriented on potatoes. This is important for regional food safety too,” said Nana Zurabishvili, adding that the locals are now much more interested in organic farming as a result of this successful initiative. As a result, a Farmers' Association has been newly established aiming at planting carrots.

*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)*