



Civil Society Organization Rushnoi

Project Title: "Climate Change and Adaptation Impact on Conservation, Recovery and Reproduction of Gene Pool of Horticultural Crop Native Varieties. Establishment of Agro-Forest Nursery Using Native Varieties. Use of Skills and Best Practices in Mountain Horticulture at Rainfed Slopes"

Project's Primary Objective: Restore the gene bank of local varieties of endangered fruit crops.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION BACKGROUND

For many centuries ancestors of farmers in the Rasht Valley have domesticated wild fruit crops, improving their properties and qualities. Practice shows that local varieties of fruit crops are best adapted to the severe climate and water deficiency. Moreover, it is these varieties that are significantly more resistant to local pests and plant diseases. However, unique local varieties of fruit crops suffer gradual extinction today. This is partially caused by illegal and uncontrolled logging. Another cause is the introduction of imported fruit crops to fill the market with more attractive horticultural products.

It is important to note that Rasht is one of the land-poorest districts in the valley. Most of the rain-fed lands are located on the slopes of hills and piedmonts. The land degradation and desertification processes have gained momentum over the recent years, thus negatively affecting the well-being and development of local communities. CSO Rushnoi sees the solution to this problem in the application of traditional and up-to-date knowledge and peculiar agro-technical methods, reforestation and establishment of new orchards using local varieties of fruit crops.

KEY PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

An important stage of the Project implementation was the establishment of a nursery on 0.5 ha of land in Jafr village. Now the members of the Kuhsori Acham Dekhkan Farm will grow here local and wild varieties of fruit crops, including some varieties of apples and pears as well as almonds, apricots and nuts. The seedlings of local crops are best adapted to local climatic conditions. In the nursery they will be grafted and taken care of, and thereafter they will be given to the population and planted on slopes. Today the nursery employs eight local specialists.

The Project has planted 1,500 apple, apricot, pear and nut seedlings on 10 ha of land in the Jafr gorge. Their planting involved about one hundred local residents who actively participated in establishing the orchard. The seedlings were planted amid thorn-bushes in order to protect them from small cattle. This method also allowed avoiding additional expenses on a fence. The preservation of the restored orchard will be ensured by two foresters who were provided with a horse, binoculars and a tent to that effect.

PROJECT PHOTO:



Land preparation for establishment of new orchards on the slopes of Sanghi village

PROJECT DATA:

Project Donors:
The Small Grants Programme of the Global Environment Facility, UN Development Programme

Other Project Partners:
The Christensen Foundation, the local communities of Jafr and Boki Rahimzoda jamoats of Rasht district

Geographical Coverage:
Jafr and Boki Rahimzoda jamoats, Rasht district, the Republic of Tajikistan

Project Beneficiaries and Stakeholders: Population of Jafr and Boki Rahimzoda jamoats of Rasht district

Project Duration:
June 2012 – July 2013



KEY PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

To expand the experience and technique of cultivating rain-fed lands on slope locations, during the Project it was agreed with the residents of Nimchak, Jarf and Sanghi villages that new orchards on 3 ha of land in total would be established there. To this end the seedlings of local varieties of fruit crops were used. Special agro-technical methods, including contour plowing (using bulls) and mulching, were applied to prepare the slopes for the planting of the seedlings. To support the local population's initiative, CSO Rushnoi has provided the owners of new orchards with wooden poles, metal grids and wire for fencing the sites as well as with seedlings of local varieties.

To enhance the Project focus group's awareness and knowledge in the field of applying new horticulture and farming techniques, as well as conserving local varieties, CSO Rushnoi staff conducted practical workshops in the field and provided continuous advisory support to all interested persons. The organization's representatives repeatedly presented the Project implementation progress and outputs at the meetings of local authorities. A number of articles about CSO Rushnoi activities and local communities' efforts on agrobiodiversity conservation have been published in the district Mass Media, and Safina TV Channel has shot a documentary about these activities.

PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

The cultivation of the degraded rain-fed lands on slopes and the establishment of new orchards using local and wild fruit crops contribute to improving the environment and enhancing the well-being of the local communities. The established nursery already provides those who wish with the seedlings of local fruit crops. CSO Rushnoi intends to use proceeds from the sale of the seedlings to continue works on restoring local varieties of apples, pears, apricots, almonds, nuts, etc.

The new orchards on slopes will stabilize the soil, inhibit the land degradation processes and increase the content of beneficial microorganisms in the soil. The local population will be provided with jobs and new livelihoods. In a short time the Project implementation will directly benefit 72 residents of the jamoat. Thus, this Project not only significantly contributes to the local agrobiodiversity conservation and facilitates the adaptation to potential effects of climate change but also improves the living standards of the local communities.

It is pleasant to note that Mr. Mirzosh Akobirov, Head of CSO Rushnoi, was declared the best horticulturist of Tajikistan in 2013 and was awarded a corresponding medal. The results of the local fruit crop conservation and crop productivity enhancement activities were also distinguished by the President of the republic Emomali Rakhmon during his visit to Rasht in 2013.

PROJECT PHOTO:



Establishment of nursery- seed's planting of local horticultural crops.



Community mobilization for planting of seedlings in Jafr village.



President of the Republic of Tajikistan, highly appreciated the achieved results of CSO Rushnoi activities in the agricultural exhibitions of Rasht district.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT PLEASE CONTACT:

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