Water to Promote Food Security in Varzi-Kanda Village, Tajikistan
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Background

Varzi-Kanda is a small village located in west south of Tajikistan. For many years, the village has been facing issues with water and food security. There are about six-hundred inhabitants in the village, who make up around one hundred households. There is a lack of employment opportunities in the village, or in the country in general. In order to provide basic needs for their families, the majority of men leave to work in Russia. Sadly, many men do not return. Many die while working in hazardous conditions or get killed if they demand a salary of their employers. Hence, many women become single parent and struggle to find ways to raise their children. Furthermore, the majority of people live below the poverty line and experience severe malnutrition, because they lack resources and tools to have food security. This is a widespread issue in the country. According to USAID, “In Tajikistan, nearly half the population lives in poverty. A disproportionate percentage of women are undernourished and more than 30 percent of children younger than five years old suffer from stunting”. For instance, this village is landlocked and relies on pumped water from other places, though they do not have tools to bring the water to the village. The village needs financial assistance to install water pump which would supply irrigating water to the village to foster agricultural practices and food production.

Project Targets

The purpose of this project is to bring water for irrigation to enable agricultural practices in the village. Water is essential to food security. Due to the lack of irrigation, people cannot grow nutritious crops and are not able to have healthy diets. Moreover, the village relies heavily on rainfall to water trees and fields, which has drastically decreased over the past years. The village has plenty of arable land to utilize for agriculture to produce food. They need irrigation systems to be able to increase their crop fields. The project aims to provide tools and resources for villagers to produce nutritious food for community. The supply of water will increase the productivity and stability of agricultural activities, which ultimately results in food security. In addition, many women will be able to gain financial independence, as the majority of farmers in the country are female. In the future, it will give men an incentive to stay home and work on their farms.

Methodology

The water would be pumped from the Margedar River that is located in the north part of the village about 1000-1200 meters away. It would be pumped into the water channel that is located at the top of the village. It would be distributed to households through subchannels. To ensure efficient use of water, people would have to take turns to irrigate their fields. The water pump that will be purchased is able to pump water at a rate of 130 -180 m³/hr.

Timeline

Pre-arrival (March to May)

- Discuss with an engineering group to provide a complete execution plan of the project that encompasses the following:
  - A thorough assessment of the location and efficient way to bring water from the Margedar River to the village
  - Complete list of equipment and materials necessary for the project
- Discuss project plans with the head of municipality and preparation for project execution
Projects for Peace

- Clean the water channel, gather volunteers from the community to help in the process
- Get government approval for electricity conduct and project implementation (write letter)
- Find contacts and connect with potential agricultural experts to join and train people how to cultivate crops and efficiently use of the land and water

Arrival (May 20th)
- Meet engineers to go through the process and make daily working schedule
- Start shopping the equipment and materials
- Arrange transportation to deliver the materials to the village from the city
- Meet the municipality and announce the commencement of the project

Start of the project (June 1-20th)
- Prepare the place for the project
- Assemble people to support the project
- Installment process
- Help households to improve their irrigation system

Completion of installing process (June 21-25th)
- Assessment tests of the pump
- Test the water distribution to households

Training Week (June 26 - July 10th)
- Bring agricultural experts to provide training for emerging farmers

Sustainability

The project would be implemented by the specialists in the country, who have successfully completed similar projects. The top-quality materials will be purchased to ensure durability and warranty to serve the purpose. Consistent irrigation systems will open so many doors for farmers to diversify their cultivation, which will increase food options. A training week will help people become more educated about innovative and efficient agricultural practices. Gaining more knowledge can help farmers to attain productive harvest and sell some of their product in markets, which can result in potential source of income.

Experience

I am Amina Fatkhulloeva, from Tajikistan. I am a UWC RCN Alumni. Currently, I am studying at Concordia College. I am majoring in International Business and Finance. I am fortunate to have the opportunity to study in these two great institutions that prepare me to become a responsible individual who dares to bring change into communities and be a proactive leader in the world. Two years ago, I was privileged to win funding for my “Youth Space” project from Oslo Foundation. It was a valuable experience to be a project leader and be able to implement my ideas in the real world. I gained a rich set of skills on how to execute a project and be ready for any unexpected situations. In the implementation process of the project, I discovered my passion to work towards improving and developing communities.