

CITIZENS OF TOPOLNICA RESOLVED THEIR CRUCIAL PROBLEMS



Enough water for all households



New school for 40 students

TOPOLNICA, SERBIA – In the last two years, the Community Revitalization through Democratic Action (CRDA) program encouraged citizens of Topolnica to take active part in enhancing living conditions in their town. So far, two of the biggest local problems have been resolved: water supply was provided for all citizens and the school was renovated! CRDA program activities are funded by USAID and in east and southern Serbia, they are implemented by CHF.

Topolnica is 10 km from the Danube. The River Porecka flows through the village, while streams flow down the mountains of Miroc and Homolj, and until recently, there was no water supply system in the village. Residents used water from a well as drinking water, as the level of underground waters is about 2-10 meters beneath the surface. However, due to wastewaters coming from a copper mine in Majdanpek and the use of fertilizers, both the river and underground waters are contaminated. Shortly after that, there was recorded development of diseases that so far have not been registered in this region, such as nephritis and hepatitis B.

Residents of Topolnica started works on construction of a water pipeline, a lot of material was provided and water reached the centre of the village. However, the works were suspended, as the community itself could not have afforded further works. Following the first success on school reconstruction within CRDA

program, hardworking residents of Topolnica established the completion of water supply system as priority so that cooperation with USAID and CHF continued. They were ready to fund more than 50% of the remaining works.

Miroslav Petrovic and Slavoljub Raskovic, both Community Development Council (CDC) members, were the leading forces in terms of new works. An agreement was soon reached, since residents of Topolnica are easy to agree with each other.

On April 2003, thanks to involvement of residents of Topolnica in the CRDA program, the project was implemented and all households now have water. Subsequently, residents organized themselves and they alone funded reconstruction of a road that was damaged during construction of the water pipeline.

During works on the water pipe line, elderly households were relieved from labor, and some of them were exempted from paying fees for connection to the water pipeline. Now, 80% of the households are provided with sanitary facilities.

Slavoljub Raskovic says "if there was no American money, residents of Topolnica would still be dragging water in canisters from springs in the mountains", while Miroslav Petrovic says that residents of Topolnica "blessed the day when USAID and CHF introduced CRDA program in their community".