



*Agriculture  
Food Security  
Livelihoods*

## GEORGIA



*Ilia with his wife Nani and their harvest*

### Spotlight Story

## Restoring a family's lifeline

**Tbilisi, Georgia** – Two kilometres from the border of South Ossetia lies the village of Ditsi (42°12'34"N 44°1'46"E), which was on the front line of the conflict in August 2008. Upon fleeing the residents of Ditsi had to undergo forced changes to their lives, with their harvest damaged or completely lost in the fighting.

Ilia Markozashvili, a 50-year-old farmer who provides for a family of three, found his vegetable garden completely destroyed upon his return in September 2008. "I own 1 hectare of fertile land, which is more than enough for growing vegetables to sell and for our own use. I expected to harvest 60 tonnes of tomato and cucumber last year but the land was completely destroyed due to the conflict and we had no choice but to escape out of fear. When we returned after a month, we could hardly recognize our land and all the harvest was obliterated" he said. Ilia was hopeless.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) project "Emergency provision of agricultural inputs and support to the agriculture sector", funded by the Italian Cooperation, is working to protect the agriculture-based livelihoods of vulnerable farming households in conflict-affected areas. FAO worked with its partners to assist households in diversifying diets and improving overall household nutrition through the distribution of quality vegetable seeds and fertilizers to 7 369 households in 22 conflict-affected villages. Ilia has already harvested 100 kg of tomatoes, 150 kg of cabbage, 800 kg of cucumbers, 1 000 kg of carrots and 1 500 kg of beetroot from the seeds the program provided him. There is still a great amount of vegetables to be harvested in the coming weeks.

*"I have regained my agricultural activities and have hopes for a better future."*

**Bringing  
back  
agriculture,  
providing  
food  
security.**



*Ilia's young relatives enjoying the carrots*

More than fifty training sessions in modern vegetable planting and growing techniques have been completed to date, which have been instrumental in helping to enhance vegetable production and thus improving food security during the post-conflict recovery period. Currently, farmers are being trained in crop cultivation, harvesting, storage, conservation and marketing of vegetables. Ilia has been regularly participating in the training programmes and has found the techniques immensely useful.

As Ilia notes, "Having gone through all difficulties, I have realized that I have become strong. With FAO's assistance, I have returned to farming activities. I harvested an enormous amount of vegetables this year from the seeds that were provided to me. I have regained my agricultural activities and have hopes for a better future."

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*Ilia's land*