

Reporting Agency: UNDP
Country: Armenia



PROJECT END REPORT

No. and title: 00058164 Strengthening of National Disaster Preparedness and Risk Reduction Capacities

Reporting period: September 2007 - December 2009

I. PURPOSE

In May 2006, following the UNDP/OCHA fact-finding mission, a comprehensive 3-5 year Programme Framework for Strengthening of National Disaster Management Capacities has been jointly elaborated with the Armenian State Rescue Service based on the priorities and need indicated by the Government and with the application of UNDP worldwide development experience in this area. The principles of the *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and communities to Disasters*, and adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Japan, were considered in the formulation of the Programme Framework.

In close consultation with the national counterpart and the BCPR's regional team, it was agreed to focus on concrete capacity building activities that can render visible results in shorter time spans and address remaining Framework components at a later stage. Thus, in 2007 UNDP launched the project entitled "Strengthening of National Disaster Preparedness and Risk Reduction Capacities". The project was instrumental in raising national awareness on the importance of disaster preparedness and risk reduction at the decision-making level, and promoting a culture of prevention through partnerships with the Ministry of Territorial Administration, Ministry of Emergency Situations and Armenian Rescue Service.

The project had two main areas: local level, community-based risk management activities in disaster-prone area of Ararat region, and enhancing public information capacity of the State Rescue Service. It was focused on promoting Crisis Prevention and Recovery in Armenia and contributing to the strengthening of national disaster risk reduction capacities. It was aimed at supporting national efforts for the establishment of the disaster preparedness and risk reduction systems, increasing the level of public awareness and education on disaster risk reduction.

II. RESOURCES

Total project budget is US\$356,000.00 [CPR TTF – US\$ 240,000.00 ; TRAC1.1.1 – US\$85,000.00]

III. RESULTS

The main outputs of the project were enhanced national capacities for disaster risk reduction on local level through piloting local level disaster risk management in Ararat region of Armenia, focusing on risk, vulnerability and capacity assessment, training of communities and local authorities, small-scale disaster mitigation projects, and strengthened public awareness capacities of the Armenian Rescue Services through capacity development of the Public Information Centre of the Armenian Rescue Service. More specifically:

In 2007 September-December, mainly activities of project set-up have been implemented. Various activities such as procurement of services, recruitment of staff, preparation of necessary materials (ToRs, RFQs, etc.) have been implemented during this period.

1. Piloting a Local Level Risk Management (LLRM) module in the Ararat Marz



The main objective of first activity (LLRM in Ararat) was to address disaster risk reduction at local community level. This complex, multi-component approach was piloted in Ararat marz of Armenia. The LLRM module included risk, vulnerability and capacity assessments which served as a starting point for further activities to reduce disaster risks. These two assessments were used to map main disaster risks in Ararat region, identify most vulnerable to disasters communities as well as with the extensive participation of communities and authorities identify small-scale disaster mitigation projects.

2008-

- a. A Risk assessment was conducted by “Geocom” LLC aimed at assessing the risks of four natural disasters - earthquakes, floods, mudflows and landslides that exist in Ararat Marz. Based on the assessment complex digital maps of natural disaster risks were developed and an electronic version of database of the mentioned hazards was created. Trainings for the regional ARS department staff were conducted on the use and update of maps and the database.
- b. A Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment was conducted by the Armenian Red Cross Society aimed identifying the most vulnerable to disasters communities. Initial assessment was done in all 93 communities of Ararat Marz out of which 40 most vulnerable communities were identified where an in depth assessment was carried out. The assessments served as basis for further steps in the project implementation.
- c. Trainings/workshops for Ararat Marz community members and local authorities aimed at increasing awareness on disaster risk reduction and preparedness and elaborating disaster response plans conducted. 90 people from 15 most vulnerable communities trained out of which 15 community leaders, 15 school directors, 10 heads of medical centres. Number of women was 30.
- d. Small-scale disaster mitigation projects identified based on the VCA recommendations and in close consultation with the regional Governor’s office and local communities. Two communities – Noramarg and Ditak were selected to implement cleaning and repair of drainage system. These water channels were not cleaned for long time and caused serious problems to surrounding communities. The clean up of a water drainage system of about 2,300 meters long in Noramarg and Ditak communities, and strengthening of a 400-meter long embankment were supported. It is important to note that community leaders and representatives were extremely cooperative and actually participated in the rehabilitation works. These activities will obviously reduce vulnerability of about 200 households and the school building in Ditak community that often suffers from seasonal floods.
- e. Public awareness material produced – one video film and video clip (social ad) on major disasters in Ararat marz and promotion of disaster prevention. Posters and other promotional materials printed and disseminated in the region. In collaboration with the Public Information Centre of the Rescue Service, and regional Governor’s office, the contest of children’s paintings and essays - “Disasters through Children's Eyes” was organized in the Ararat region and the award ceremony for winners arranged at the marking of World Disaster Reduction Day on 8 October 2008.

2009-

- f. Training/workshops were held for Ararat Marz community members and local authorities in 25 most vulnerable communities (of the 40 most vulnerable communities based on the Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment report) and 4 community centres (Artashat, Vedi, Ararat and Masis) of Ararat marz. 174 people were trained out of which 25 community leaders, 30 school directors, 25 heads of medical centres, 20 representatives of Artashat, Vedi, Ararat and Masis municipalities. Number of women was 52. This was aimed at establishing and strengthening a connection between communities and community centres and would allow the latter to better understand and be aware of community needs (risks, the level of public awareness, etc.) and find solutions jointly. All 40 most vulnerable communities identified in VCA have been covered in these trainings.



Taking into account recommendations from the specialists and trainers of the CMSA to train qualified trainers in communities to organize activities for ensuring high level of public awareness as well as help community leaders plan and organize population protection activities, Training of Trainers (TOT) trainings were conducted for 17 most vulnerable communities and in 4 community centres (Artashat, Ararat, Vedi and Masis). The trainings were held in relevant groupings of communities from Ararat, Vedi and Masis regions. A total of 60 participants (21 women) took part in the trainings. The participants of TOT training were selected from the previous training (Community leaders and local authority training.”

- g. The methodological manual that was developed and published for the ToT course was considered by project stakeholders as very effective. CMSA of ARS asked for additional 60 copies of the TOT manual to distribute to Regional Departments of Education, Territorial Administration and Rescue Service in all regions of Armenia. Governor of Ararat asked for providing the region with additional 100 copies of the manual for the distribution in all schools of the region. Additional copies were published and provided to the regional schools. In addition, the Department of Education of Ararat Regional Administration has taken over the commitment of using the mentioned manual for trainings at schools where they are going to add disaster prevention and preparedness as a compulsory subject into school curriculum.
- h. Department of Territorial Administration of the Ararat Regional Administration has taken over the commitment for all communities to plan and allocate funds for DRR in the local budgets.
- i. Small-scale disaster mitigation projects were identified based on the VCA recommendations and in close consultation with the regional Governor’s office and local communities. Field trips were organized, discussions with relevant authorities from Ararat Marzpetaran and a specialist meliorator were held based on which it was decided to implement small-scale disaster mitigation projects in Ranchpar, Arevabuyr, Aygepat and Sipanik communities of Ararat Marz. Within these projects, a mudflow channel in Aygepat community of about 500m, a drainage system in Ranchpar community of about 1000m and a drainage system in Arevabuyr community of about 1500m were cleaned and a soil dam of about 1000m in Sipanik community was built. These communities shared the cost (more than 20% of the total cost) for the mitigation works.
- j. Public awareness published materials have been distributed in all communities of Ararat marz, including the Marzpetaran, schools, medical centres, etc. A methodological manual has been developed and published for the TOT course. The manuals have been distributed to all TOT participants, Ararat Marzpetaran department heads. ARS has distributed two copies of the manual to each Rescue Service and Education Department in all marzes.

Total number of distributed published materials is:

- Books on 5 topics (Natural Disaster in Ararat marz, Disasters in Armenia, Emergency Channel, Media in emergencies, behavioural rules in time of disasters “ Who I am, What I am”) - 3700
- Posters - 3000 – “Landslides”, “Gas at Your Place”, “Floods”
- Booklet -1500 – “Armenian Rescue Service”
- Calendars – 3500 – table and wall calendars with the paintings of the winners of the competition “Disasters with My Eyes” and pocket calendars with ARS rescuers
- Films and Social ads on DVDs – 550 -
- Films - “What Is an Emergency Situation”, “Disaster Risks and Emergency Situations in Armenia”, “Earthquake”, “Landslides”, “Attention, there is Fire”, “The state System of Emergency Management-ARS”, “Main Disaster Risks in Ararat Marz of Armenia”
- Social ads – “Those Who Are Informed Are Protected”, “Man Made Disasters”, “Are We Ready to Encounter Earthquake?”, “Earthquake Protection”, “Flood”, “Safety Measures, Prevention and Preparedness Actions in Ararat Marz of Armenia”
- Methodological handbook (manual for DM focal points) - 345

k. Local Level Risk Management (LLRM) impact survey and lessons learned study was conducted to assess the effectiveness of this complex approach to manage disaster risks on local level and community level; the objective was also to identify major observations, including constraints and lessons learned from this experience and suggest options for improvement of similar projects in future. The study was carried out by a local NGO 'Communities Association of Armenia' and the report was produced based on the findings of the survey.



1. Study tour for experience and knowledge sharing with the representatives of local self government, regional administration, regional rescue service departments and civil society organizations of Tavush and Lori regions of Armenia on disaster risk management on local level was conducted with GTZ. The purpose of the study tour was to share lessons learned and experiences gained during the implementation of UNDP-supported LLRM module in Ararat region to consider them for further implementation of similar projects in their regions. A short documentary film has been created on the study tour. As a result of this study tour an inter-regional cooperation was established among relevant institutions and authorities.

2. **Strengthening of information management capacity of Armenian Rescue Service (ARS) aimed at promoting public awareness activities on disaster risk reduction on national level.**

This activity was aimed at **strengthening capacities of Public Information Centre (PIC)** of the Armenian Rescue Service by providing technical assistance to make the Centre functional as well as encourage and promote use of media sources for public awareness and education. Following activities were accomplished and aimed at enhancing information management capacity of the PIC.

2007 –

In depth needs assessment of the Public Information Centre (PIC) of the Armenian State Rescue Service (ARS) was initiated by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) mission in Armenia. The assessment was funded by OSCE and was conducted under the framework of the project. The objective of the assessment was to identify main directions for the future strategic development of the PIC. The assessment gave an overview of past and present functions of the Center and provided recommendations for future actions for the project.

2008-

- Professional audio-visual equipment procured for upgrading technical capacity of the PIC;
- Strategic planning expert was provided to assist in the elaboration of a Strategic Plan of Action for the PIC; The Plan was developed based on the series of workshops and with the participation of the PIC staff and the ARS management;
- Design and development of PIC's public web-site (www.emergency.am) supported;
- Educational video films (7 topics – as mentioned above) and social ads (6 topics – as mentioned above) on disaster risk reduction and preparedness issues produced;
- Promotional materials books, posters, booklets and calendars printed (as mentioned above)
- A quality data connection established between the Armenian Rescue Service and the Public Information Centre to enable the latter with a good quality data connection and a strong link with its Head Office of ARS on Pushkin Str., Yerevan. This direct link between the main ARS office and the PIC is of utmost importance to ensure uninterrupted flow of information.

The above mentioned films have been broadcasted by 2 national channels and by local channels of all regions of Armenia. "Emergency Channel" PIC has its programme broadcasted by "Shant" TV once a week (with a repetition next day) and during the year the films are also being broadcasted.

The above mentioned films have also been distributed to Departments of Education of all Regional Administrations of Armenia to be used during disaster risk reduction trainings.

2009-



- a. English language classes provided to the staff of the Public Information Centre of the Armenian Rescue Service. The objective of the course was to provide Media English language training for the PIC. This would enable staff members to communicate in English in the sphere of media, have correspondence with international organizations and understand the language of media and public relations.
- b. Management training provided to the PIC director and 3 staff members. The objective of the course was to provide training of management, in particular information management, time management, staff management, motivation and leadership which would enable the staff and the director of the PIC to manage their work more effectively and efficiently.
- c. Training on proposal writing, presentation skills, motivation and main functions of management was provided to the PIC staff. The objective of the course was to provide training for 4 PIC staff members, which would enable them to work on implementation of the strategic plan and writing proposals on their own.
- d. Trainings on international cooperation and fundraising were conducted for the PIC staff. The main objective of the training was to enable the staff understand ways of international cooperation and be able to implement fundraising projects on their own.
- e. An electronic archive was created for all the existing published materials, films, documents, posters and other materials of the PIC. This enabled PIC to keep materials in a more systematized way, easily update and use as well as to have a library for large audience.
- f. Media training for the mass media and ARS representatives (20 people) of Ararat marz was conducted. The main objective of the training was to enable the mass media representatives understand how to manage information in time of disasters, i.e understand what emergency situation is, how to provide correct information to avoid/prevent panic among the population, cooperate with the ARS and other state agencies in communication.
- g. A quality data connection (Internet) was provided to the Armenian Rescue Service and the Public Information Centre to enable the latter with a good quality data connection and a strong link with its Head Office of ARS on Pushkin Str., Yerevan. This direct link between the main ARS office and the PIC was of utmost importance to ensure uninterrupted flow of information. As per earlier agreement, the UNDP project covered the cost of the connection until end of August 2009, while the PIC/ARS, would take over the coverage of the data connectivity after this date. Nevertheless, based on a request from the PIC/ARS and the availability of funds, UNDP project covered the cost for another 3 months (September-November 2009) after which the costs were fully covered by the PIC/ARS.

IV. OBSERVATION/LESSONS LEARNED

In the implementation of the project activities close cooperation has been established with regional departments of Ararat Marzpetaran such as Armenian Rescue Service, Education, Territorial Administration and Agriculture. Specialists from the mentioned departments have been actively involved in the LLRM pilot project.

A close cooperation has also been established with the Crisis Management State Academy of Armenia which has provided highly qualified trainers for conducting community and TOT training in most vulnerable communities of Ararat Marz. As a result of successful cooperation it was agreed between the CMSA and communities that instructors of the TOT will have ongoing re-qualification trainings at the CMSA once or twice a year.

Inter-community teams of instructors have been established for close cooperation amongst communities and the Department of the ARS of Ararat Marzpetaran. Organization and coordination of the team work was supported by the ARS Department of Ararat Marz.



Cooperation of local and regional authorities (Territorial Administration, Education and Rescue service branches) and communities was very constructive and much appreciated by UNDP. This was very obvious during the discussions on selecting small-scale mitigation projects in communities as well as during the organization of the series of trainings for disaster management focal points.

As a result of trainings organized in 2008, the idea of organizing Training of Trainers (for disaster management focal points in number of communities) was born and actually implemented in 2009. The reaction and cooperation of these community representatives was very positive as they showed big interest and enthusiasm in helping out their own communities in future.

Project monitoring and impact survey results showed that there are no separate lines for disaster prevention in community budgets. Nevertheless, there are reserve funds that make 5-30% of the total budget which can be used accordingly for prevention activities. LLRM showed that disaster prevention can be achieved. This became a basis for all 40 most vulnerable communities to plan disaster prevention activities through their reserve funds mentioned above. In cooperation with UNDP performance budgeting project seminar has been conducted in Artashat, Vedi, Ararat and Masis communities of Ararat Marz to consider disaster risk reduction in local budget planning. These 4 communities also plan their disaster reduction activities through their reserve funds.

Trainings and cooperation with communities showed that there were not enough training materials available in schools and generally in communities. Films, handbooks, posters and other informative materials were provided by the project to schools and other institutions in communities. In addition, provided materials were more effective and interesting for the participants than just providing a theory through presentations. Home assignments given to the participants revealed many important issues that had not been considered before. Thus, interactive way of training proved to be very effective and informative. Additional copies of the methodological handbook were required by Ararat Region, which was printed and distributed to all schools.

Involvement of various independent specialists besides representatives of the Department of the ARS of Ararat Marz in small scale mitigation projects proved to be more effective and time saving. Specialists were very objective and effective in finding out areas of need for mitigation projects and this was also value for money.

On-job trainings and provision of a technical advisor for the PIC proved to be very effective for the PIC staff. On-job coaching is sustainable and provides long-term use of the gained knowledge for the staff members.

Study tour for experience and knowledge sharing with the representatives of local self government, regional administration, regional rescue service departments and civil society organizations of Tavush and Lori regions of Armenia on disaster risk management on local level conducted with GTZ was initially not planned by the AWP. As a result of cooperation with GTZ it was decided to organize this kind of study tour as the latter was also implementing similar projects in Tavush and Lori regions. The study tour proved that information sharing is very important exchange of experience and best practices.

V. FINANCIAL IMPLEMENTATION as of December 31, 2009¹



Project 00058164				
Donor	Planned Budget in US\$	Expenditure as of 31 Dec 2009	Balance	Utilized
CPR TTF	240,000.00	240,000.00	0	100%
TRAC 1.1.1	85,000.00	83,300.00	1,700.00	98%

¹ The final figures will be available at the end of March 2010.