

REACT Bulletin

A monthly summary of activities by REACT members in Tajikistan

Special November - December 2015 Edition including Examples of Disaster Risk Reduction in Tajikistan

COMMUNITY HAZARD PREPAREDNESS THROUGH EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS IN BARTANG VALLEY

It is widely known a 7.4 magnitude earthquake in 1911 caused a landslide which created the Usoi Dam that impounds Lake Sarez in Gorno Badashkan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO). Recognizing the failure risk this dam posed in 1998 Focus Humanitarian Assistance (FOCUS) began implementing Lake Sarez Risk Mitigation project with people from villages downstream the Usoi Dam. Activities included trainings on preparedness and awareness as well as the installation of the Usoi Early Warning System (EWS), in conjunction with the Usoi Department of the Committee of Emergency Situations (CoES), based on Bartang valley.

In order to increase the awareness of the risks and improve the response capacity of the local community, the Baiting Valley Usoi EWS, operating 17 years, has been rehabilitated and upgraded. This activity was implemented by FOCUS in consultation with CoES and with financial support of European Commission for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) through the DIPECHO VIII project.

The upgrade of the EWS was conducted through FOCUS' partnership with AT Communication Company, and enables communications to flow more strategically across various locations during emergencies. The installation of the HF Codan radio communication system allows upstream villages to send signals to trigger alarms about the Usoi Dam to downstream villages ranging from the actual onset of an outburst flood to a substantial increase in risk. This system allows the communication flow to take a mere 45 seconds, compared to 45 minutes with the old system. The HF radio system also remains the only communication mode available to tourists, guests and village residents to stay in touch with authorities during an emergency.



Usoi EWS Upgrade Work, Bartang Valley, GBAO

For more details, please contact Zarangez Pironova, FOCUS Communications Officer at: zarangez.pironova@focushumanitarian.org

REGIONAL CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR POTENTIAL EMERGENCY SITUATIONS ACROSS THE TAJIK-KYRGYZ BORDER

Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan (RCST), with the support of the German Red Cross, has begun development of a regional contingency plan for a potential emergencies which can cross the Tajik-Kyrgyz border and preparation for a Regional Cross-Border Simulation Exercise to be conducted in 2016. A workshop on developing a Regional Contingency Plan for Red Crescent of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan was organized in Khujand, Sughd Province, in November 26-27, 2015.

The workshop brought together disaster management stakeholders, including Kyrgyz Ministry of Emergency Situation (MoES) and Tajik Committee of Emergency Situation (CoES), local authorities, representatives of cross-border communities, Red Crescent volunteers and REACT partners.



Regional Contingency Plan Workshop,
November 25 - 26, 2015, Sughd Province.

Following the Regional Contingency Plan development process, RCST and the German Red Cross will organize a full-scale cross-border simulation exercise in October 2016. This will allow Tajik and Kyrgyz civil defence forces (i.e., MoES and CoES), Red Crescent Societies, and REACT partners to practice response measures. After the simulation, the Regional Contingency Plan will be endorsed by the National Red Crescent Societies of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

For more details, please contact Umed Saiduniev, DM Coordinator for Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan, umed.saiduniev@yahoo.com

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PREPAREDNESS WORKSHOP, 2-3 DECEMBER 2015

On 2 and 3 December 2015, the OCHA Regional Office for Caucasus, Central Asia and Ukraine facilitated a workshop on Emergency Response Preparedness in Tajikistan. The workshop introduced to participants the **Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) Guidelines** developed by the **Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Team on Preparedness and Resilience**.

The workshop was attended by no less than 25 participants from the Government of Tajikistan, United Nations system, REACT partners and donor agencies. Participants agreed to a number of actions for effective emergency response preparedness to respond to risks identified as having the potential to result in medium to large-scale emergencies in Tajikistan.

There was also agreement to prioritize and implement relevant minimum, and advanced preparedness actions, and develop contingency plans to enhance the level of preparedness for an effective and predictable response assistance. It was also agreed to conduct additional follow-up meetings on implementation of minimum and advanced preparedness actions and the contingency planning.



Group discussion at ERP workshop, December 3, 2015, Dushanbe

The newly introduced **ERP Guidelines**, available at https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/Emergency_preparedness_guidance-24Oct2014.pdf, replaces the Inter-Agency Contingency Planning processes to focus on optimizing the speed and volume of critical humanitarian assistance.

For more information, please contact Valijon Ranoev, UNOCHA National Disaster Response Advisor at ranoev@un.org

REACT Bulletin

Please send short reports on project activities or events, up to 200 words, with a picture, to REACT Secretariat in Dushanbe react.dushanbe@undp.org. *Items should be submitted by the first working day of the month for the **Bulletin**, which is issued on the 7th working day of the month.*

Electronic copies of REACT **Bulletins** can be found at http://untj.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=132&Itemid=565

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Questions and comments should be sent to react.dushanbe@undp.org.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION STORIES

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Project: Strengthening of Livelihoods through Climate Change Adaptation in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

Project partner countries: Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan

Project implementation area: Batken oblast (Kyrgyzstan) and Sughd oblast (Tajikistan)

Project objective: The livelihoods of the vulnerable rural population in selected communities in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are strengthened through climate change adaptation measures.

Location of the case: Kurush village, Spitamen district, Sughd oblast

For years Hoji Numonjon Aslonov, a resident of Kurush village in Spitamen district, has seen his land washed away by debris flows originating in the mountains of neighboring Kyrgyzstan. In recent years, due to extreme rainfall events and unusually high temperatures in summer the risk was further exacerbated. His and his neighbors' houses had already become under direct threat, however the Committee of Emergency Situations together with GIZ supported the local population with technical advice and construction materials to build a protection wall for their houses.



Within approximately 30 days the community members, led by Hoji Numonjon Aslonov, constructed a 300 meters-long gabion protection wall. In addition the community was provided with willow seedlings (that has strong and deep going root system) which they planted along the wall, creating additional long term eco-system based protection which grows stronger over time.

The protection wall has already been withstanding heavy mudflows several times since, showing its strength and effectiveness. Hoji Numonjon Aslonov takes good care of the trees, and by now they have already grown to a respectable size and prevent the foundation of the wall from being washed out. Feeling safe and secure again, he even started to use the area behind the wall by planting fruit trees for an additional contribution to his livelihoods.



During construction of wall



After planting of trees

Mercy Corps Tajikistan

“Weather-related disasters are increasing in strength and magnitude worldwide. Yet, if people and communities prepare for emergencies, they can reduce risk and damage, and save lives. In small villages in Central Tajikistan, simple measures like planting trees have helped stop floods, landslides and even avalanches. The implementing partner, Mercy Corps, has worked with communities in Tajikistan to build their resilience to disasters through one of the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department Disaster Preparedness projects (DIPECHO) in Central Asia.”

The Rasht Valley in Central Tajikistan with its 300 000 inhabitants stands out for its high incidence of natural disasters, in a country greatly prone to such events. Every year, flash floods, mudflows, landslides and avalanches result in fatalities and destroy assets and productive land.

This year was no different. On 20 July 2015, heavy rains combined with glacial run-off and created mudflows in four Rasht Valley villages. The mudflows ravaged everything on their path, leaving one young man dead and dozens injured. In the villages of Bedak, Halqarf, Pingdon and Mazori Bolo, more than 70 families lost their houses and were left with nothing but the clothes they were wearing when the mudflows struck. There is little information about the number of domestic cattle killed or hectares of cultivated land plots and orchards destroyed.

Mudflows and flash floods are the most frequent localized disasters in this region, damaging homes, property, irrigation systems and farmland. To increase the level of preparedness of the families who live in these high-risk zones, Mercy Corps and partner [Welthungerhilfe](#) have been supporting these remote communities by implementing the project 'Disaster Resilient Communities: A Watershed-Based Approach to Integrated Disaster Risk Management'.

This innovative project, funded by the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO), has increased the resilience of 29 target communities through child-to-child training, bio-engineering, early-warning systems and partnerships with the private sector.

“In previous years, when there were heavy rains, floods and landslides used to cover everything. But this year for example, along the contour lines we planted trees and the flooding has totally stopped. This method also protects our communities from avalanches,” says Asadullo Kavgov, a farmer.

UN World Food Programme in Tajikistan (WFP)

The World Food Programme in Tajikistan has been implementing DRR activities for a number of years. One of its best examples of a multisectorial intervention aimed to mitigate disaster risks is the Tree Planting Project in schools and communities, which aims to establish orchards on community land plots around schools.

The initial objective of the project, supported by the Japan Association of WFP (JAWFP), was to teach the Tajik children how to take care of their land plots and contributed to their nutrition through provision of complementary food items from school gardens to school meals. In parallel, JAWFP conducted an awareness raising campaign among Japanese schoolchildren about the importance of reducing of carbon emissions. The project has improved access to fruits for Tajik children, and provided a platform to learn about land conservation and the environment.

More recently, WFP has expanded its project in Sughd and Rasht Valley supporting tree plantation on communal lands and orchards that are maintained by the communities' most food insecure households, who will consequently have a more stable access to food. In addition to the orchards, WFP has supported strategic plantation of trees in crucial areas exposed to land degradation in the surrounding community, with the purpose of rehabilitating the environmental, and improving agricultural productivity and income for these rural communities.

Aziza, 8 year old school girl from Gharm, proudly shared her feelings with the WFP Field Officer: "I have learned that trees are important for the environment and to prevent mudslides when it rains a lot, and am looking forward to taste apples from my tree!"