

DRR project, Phase I: Prevention and preparedness at local level

Context and problem statement

Particularly remote and mountainous regions of Georgia are frequently affected by natural disasters such as floods, landslides, mudflows, avalanches and earthquakes causing considerable losses. All efforts aimed at improving the situation of the local population are jeopardized when a disaster hits. Having signed the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) the Government of Georgia shows institutional commitment regarding DRR. However, achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial and focus mainly on reconstruction and compensation after a disaster and on a centralized preparedness system. Particularly communities and local authorities of remote mountainous regions lack awareness, specific knowledge and funds for an appropriate disaster risk management. This implicates that prevention measures are barely carried out and people in emergency situations can't be rescued due to insufficient capacities in basic rescue and to the absence of a mountain rescue system.

Key results and insights from previous phases

SDC is active in the field of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) since 2002. From 2009 to 2010 SDC implemented a community based DRR project in Tsageri/Lentekhi in strong collaboration with the two municipalities, i.e. communities, local authorities and fire fighters/rescuers. The project aimed to strengthen local efforts on prevention and preparedness. Through software measures such as participatory risk assessment, awareness rising campaigns, trainings and policy dialogue activities with the local stakeholders a local disaster management strategy was set up. Hardware measures such as (bio-) engineering structures were implemented to prevent floods and river erosion and local fire fighters/rescuers were equipped and trained for basic rescue.

Overall goals

The overall goal of the project is to save lives and reduce economic losses due to natural disasters by supporting the prevention and preparedness efforts on the local level. The interventions shall enhance capacities of communities and local authorities of 6 selected municipalities in remote mountainous regions to cope with natural disasters and increase their resilience regarding disaster risks.

Strategy and approach

The present project is based on lessons learnt from the past DRR project (2009/10 cf. above). The project (phase I) focus on the local level and will pass over to a second phase with intervention focus on the regional level. The project is self implemented by SDC counting on strong collaboration with governmental partners (local authorities, fire fighters/rescuers, communities, regional

Project area	Georgia
Duration	2011 - 2012
Budget	CHF 450'000
Main partners	6 Municipalities of Racha-Lechkhumi and Samegrelo-Upper Svaneti region

rescue bases and different Ministries), communities and other experts. The two project outcomes focus on prevention and preparedness and tackle all five principles of the HFA. In the field of prevention software measures such as awareness rising campaigns, policy dialogue with local stakeholders, capacity building for risk assessment and planning of mitigation measures aim a better understanding and increased capacities of local authorities and communities to deal with natural disasters. Hardware measures such as (bio-) engineering structures reduce risks of particularly vulnerable locations. In order to improve a decentralized preparedness system rescuers receive training and equipment for basic rescue and mountain rescue.



Gabions as an example of local risk reduction measure to prevent river erosion and flooding.

Outcomes of the phase

- Prevention: Local authorities and communities have a more comprehensive understanding of disaster risks and their capacities to reduce the risks by preventing natural disasters have increased.
- Preparedness: More better equipped and trained teams are available for basic rescue and mountain rescue.

Key outputs of the phase

Prevention:

- Local authorities and communities know the risks of natural disasters (considering gender specific

vulnerabilities and coping capacities) and use appropriate tools to manage and plan necessary (prevention) measures to reduce risks

- Local authorities are better linked to regional and central level and enabled to lobby for their problems and needs in DRR
- Engineering prevention measures are implemented and according know-how is transferred to local stakeholders

Preparedness:

- 4 fire fighter/rescue stations are trained and equipped for basic rescue
- 4 municipalities have improved their communication system for emergency situations
- Selected rescuers from municipal, regional and central level are equipped and trained for mountain rescue.

Target group

The main target groups are the 6 municipalities of the project area (i.e. population, authorities, fire fighters/rescuers). Additionally rescuers of regional and central rescue bases and other governmental partners of regional and central level are involved in the project. The final beneficiary of the project is the population of the project area representing roughly 119'000 persons.

Partner

6 Municipalities, 2 Governor's Offices, Emergency Management Department, Min. of Environment and Protection, Min. of Regional Development and Infrastructure, Caucasus Environmental NGO Network, Swiss Alpine Rescue Center.

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