

## Firemen in Community (Subproject of “Ardzagank”)

### Context and problem statement

Located in one of the most active sections of the Alpine-Himalayan and Balkan-Carpathian seismic belts, the southern Caucasus region is in high to very high risk zones for damages by earthquakes. The severe earthquake of 1988 claimed about 25'000 deaths, caused 15'000 injured and 517'000 homeless people. Moreover on a smaller scale, there are floods, mudflows and landslides occurring in mountainous parts of the country. The Government of Armenia, signatory country of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005 - 15, has committed to take action to reduce its disaster risks and to become more resilient to natural disasters. Since 2002 SDC is engaged in disaster risk reduction (DRR) projects in Armenia, mainly supporting decentralized rescue capacities of the country. Further, in 2008 SDC chose Armenia together with Georgia as one of seven pilot areas to develop, implement and assess a specific DRR programme.

### Key results and insights from previous phases

From 2006 to 2010 SDC implemented the project “Ardzagank” supporting the decentralized disaster response structure by strengthening the capacities of the rescue system at the local level (district). Fire fighters and volunteers were trained and equipped as local rescuers. In 2007 a pilot project of “Firemen in Communities” was initiated in 3 districts (Tavush, Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor). Based on positive results from the pilots, it was decided to implement the project in all districts, once the training cycle of the core project “Ardzagank” is completed.

### Overall goals

The project is strongly linked to its core project “Ardzagank” with the objective to strengthen a decentralized disaster response system under the overall goal to reduce losses of lives and livelihoods due to natural disasters.

“Firemen in communities” in particular aims to strengthen decentralized capacities of the Armenian Rescue Service (ARS) through public education and awareness rising campaigns and public consultations by further utilization of skills developed under the core project.

### Strategy and approach

Losses of disasters can be substantially reduced if people are familiar with a culture of prevention, appropriately informed and enabled to increase their resilience. This requires the collection, compilation and dissemination of relevant information and knowledge on hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities.

<b>Project area</b>	Nation wide
<b>Duration</b>	2008 - 2010
<b>Budget</b>	CHF 111'000
<b>Main Partner</b>	Armenian Rescue Service (ARS)

The project is aligned with the Hyogo Framework of Action, promoting the use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience to natural and man-made disasters at various levels (HFA priority no. 3). Through specific trainings and public awareness rising campaigns the project promotes the following key activities in the field of information management and exchange and public awareness:

- Provision of easily understandable information on disaster risks and protection options, especially to citizens in high-risk areas, to encourage and enable people to take action to reduce risks and build resilience.
- Promotion of the engagement of the media to stimulate a culture of disaster resilience, community involvement in sustained public education campaigns and public consultations at all levels of society.



First aid training for school children rising awareness and building capacities

### Outcomes of the phase

- ARS has functional public awareness focal points in communities. i.e. two fire-fighters in each of the 62 fire station are appointed as focal point.
- Fire-fighters are recognized as reliable source of information on all disaster related topics among the population.

### Key outputs of the phase

- 124 fire-fighters are trained on basic principles of information provision, communication with the local governmental bodies, population and schoolchildren.
- Public awareness campaigns are organized in communities by fire fighters and community members participate in disaster prevention related initiatives.

### Target group

Local fire fighters

### Partners

Armenian Rescue Service (ARS, under the Ministry of  
Emergency Situations)  
Emergency Channel Information Agency

### Contact and Information

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