



# Swiss Disaster Risk Reduction Programme in Kyrgyzstan 2007-2011

An Overview



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Швейцарское Бюро по сотрудничеству в Кыргызской Республике

*Cover photo: Community mobilization for riverbank projection work  
in Zerger watershed (photo by CAMP Alatoo)*

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# Abbreviations

ACTED	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
CAIAG	Central Asian Institute of Applied Geosciences
CARESI	Central Asian Republics Earthquake Safety Initiative Project
DRCU	Disaster Response Coordination Unit
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EFCA	Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia
GIS	Geographic Information system
GHI	GeoHazard International
GLOFs	Glacial Lake Outburst Floods
ILRM	Integrated Local Risk Management
IOM	International Organization for Migration
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
KESI	Kyrgyz Earthquake Safety Initiatives
LforS	Learning for Sustainability
MoES	Ministry of Emergency situations of the Kyrgyz Republic
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PF	Public Foundation
REACT	Rapid Emergency Assessment and Coordination Team
RCSK	Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan
SCO	Swiss Cooperation office
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SPCE	School of Professional Education
ToT	Training of Trainers
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations for Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization

## Foreword

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) plans to end its assistance to Kyrgyzstan from 2012 in the domain of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) after five years of presence in the country. This decision was taken recently based on the regional context results of the 2007-2010 cooperation for the Swiss development programme in the Central Asian region, in which DRR was viewed as one of the five main domains, along with health care reform, public institutions and services, basic infrastructure and private sector development. Within the new Swiss Cooperation Strategy for Central Asia 2012-2015, the Swiss DRR will continue to work in Central Asia with a geographic focus only on Tajikistan.

The overall goal of Swiss DRR assistance in the region is to ensure a safe life and sustainable livelihood by minimizing the effects of natural disasters through the appropriate use of natural resources. We focused our support on four pillars of activities: increased awareness for disaster reduction, increased capacity to analyze and manage risks and disasters, performance of risk assessments and contribution to disaster reduction and support to development projects.

We decided to release this overview with an intention that this paper could provide a brief description of the Projects implemented by numerous participants in Kyrgyzstan in the area of disaster risks reduction in 2007-2011 with SDC funding, which amounted to approximately 1 million CHF.

An important part of Swiss support for DRR was the promotion of internal and external dialogue thus enhancing networking with the numerous stakeholders in the field of disaster risks reduction. We endeavoured to contribute in a constructive manner to a harmonizing process between the authorities, donors and implementers.

We believe that the Projects which are mentioned in this publication have gained a number of achievements, leaving behind many invaluable benefits and outcomes such as: knowledge, skills, expertise and experience. Demonstrable progress and success can be recorded, which has supported national counterparts to develop a disaster risk perspective and the coordination systems required to effectively manage and reduce risk from the human, financial, technical capacity, community and civil society preparedness perspectives,. Each project promoted at least one of the five priorities identified by the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA).

Closing of the SDC presence in Kyrgyzstan for disaster risks reduction would not signal the end of Switzerland's relationship with Kyrgyzstan. Switzerland continues to remain involved in working with the Government, Civil Society Organisations and the people of Kyrgyzstan to respond to key development challenges. The Government of the Swiss Confederation considers emergency aid in the event of disasters, natural or man-made, is an important part of international cooperation and solidarity. In this regard, Switzerland signed with Kyrgyzstan emergency assistance agreements on April 10, 2008.

In concluding, we thank to partners in Government, donor partners, project partners and Civil Society Organisations for their great cooperation and strong commitment.



*Village plan presentation*



*The LforS workshop with community members*

## Awareness and Capacity Building on the Integrated Local Risk Management in Kyrgyzstan, Phases I and II

The project 'Awareness Building on the Integrated Local Risk Management' was implemented by the Public Foundation CAMP in two phases, in 2006-2010. The project was aimed at building and strengthening public awareness for risk management with a particular focus on prevention and preparedness, at the local level, in rural areas in the Kyrgyz mountainous regions.

Adaptation of the Learning for Sustainability (LforS) training module and its practical adaptation into the Kyrgyz context has been a success in Phase 1. Developed by the Centre for Development and Environment at the University of Bern in the 90s, the LforS is an innovative approach for facilitating group learning processes concerned with issues relevant to sustainable development. The main features of the LforS participatory and pedagogical tool are: group learning, learning in the local context, a multi-level and multi-stakeholder approach and active, process-oriented and situated learning.

Phase 2 of the project was implemented within the Zerger River basin, Uzgen district, Osh Oblast, which includes three Ayil districts with a population of 20,000. This high mountain area is subject to various natural disasters such as earthquakes, landslides, rock falls, mud flows, avalanches, floods and droughts that cause significant economic damages and hamper the sustainable development of the communities. The CAMP Alatau performed a natural and socio-economic assessment of the Zerger area, the results of which were further used to assess natural disaster risks. In order to coordinate disaster risk management in the Zerger river basin, the Coordination Council was formed of community members, rural rescuers, local self-government, rayon state administrations and CAMP Alatau.

In the course of phase 1, a total of 12 trainers have been prepared as LforS facilitators through special ToTs, which were conducted for the Ministry of Emergencies, UNDP, ACTED, Red Crescent Society, and Kyrgyz Academy of Management.

As a result of the two phases, 25 LforS trainings were conducted over the course of four days for the communities, raising their awareness on integrated local risk management (ILRM) approaches, along with exhibitions of thematic posters and information materials and educational videos were released.

In both phases, the Project supported community-run initiatives in implementation of 18 small scale measures in the villages of Batken, Osh and Jalalabad Oblasts which promoted the sustainable use of natural resources, improved the livelihoods of rural communities and contributed to income generation, focusing on prevention and mitigation of disaster risks in local settings.



*A school under construction with SDC support*



*Inauguration ceremony of the newly reconstructed building of the school "Alykulova" in Kyzyl-Tuu Village of Papan Municipality of Osh Oblast, September 2009*

## Improving the Preparedness and Resilience of the Rural Community in Kyzyltuu Affected by the December 2007 Earthquake in Osh Region of Kyrgyzstan

In September 2009, the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) completed the construction of the “Alykulov” school building in the village of Kyzyltuu of Papan Municipality, Uzgen Rayon. The decision to construct the new school building was based on the recommendation of the MoES and the results of field assessment visits. The original school building was found to be badly affected by the December 2007 and January 2008 earthquakes that hit the southern Kyrgyz region of Osh Oblast and immediate actions were required in order to avoid potential risk to the lives of the students and of the teaching personnel.

The new school building was constructed following all the required architectural norms, with a particular focus on the elements of seismic-resistant design and insulation. The project also encompassed a wider replication of anti-seismic construction technologies in the regions. In order to facilitate the dissemination of the new technologies, demonstrations were organized during the construction phases involving representatives of the municipal authorities, specialists from MoES and the District Department of Architecture as well as local masters and builders. Such on-site demonstrations help masters and builders acquire a thorough knowledge of community based, affordable, construction techniques and strengthen the local capacity with knowledge of earthquake-resilient construction that could serve as a model for an affordable earthquake-resilient, energy and resource efficient, school reconstruction in rural areas, built with local materials using local human resources.

The project endeavored not only to build a new school but also to improve response mechanisms to natural disaster and enhance the preparedness of the population of Kyzyltuu village to natural hazards.

The head teacher of the school, Mr Ali Maksutov, commented that “If the new building had not been built then the learning environment would have been very hard. We only had one building left in which to teach and were operating on three shifts a day with 740 pupils and 62 teachers. The community members are very happy that we have this new building.”



*KESI information materials*



*During the school information campaign*

# Kyrgyzstan Earthquake Safety Initiative Project

In 2007-2008, the SDC partnered with the Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan (RCSK) in an extension of geographic coverage of the Central Asian Republics Earthquake Safety Initiative Project (CARESI) to Kyrgyzstan. Developed by GeoHazard International (GHI), the CARESI materials help raise awareness of the earthquake risks and identify the affordable, effective solutions.

Under the Kyrgyzstan Earthquake Safety Initiative Project (KESI), the CARESI basic disaster awareness education materials were adapted and translated into Kyrgyz and Russian languages. More than 134,000 of such visual information materials were produced and disseminated across the country among the school staff and children, hospitals and government personnel as well as members of the general public in Kyrgyzstan. Seminars and trainings have been organized for all participants of the awareness campaign.

The RCSK together with the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Kyrgyzstan developed and launched a video clip on national television, covering how to behave in case of an earthquake, fire, accidents and landslides.



*Traning center entrance*



*Conference hall*

## Capacity Building of The Ministry Of Emergency of the Kyrgyz Republic in Providing Training Services

In May 2009, the Ministry of Emergency Situations in the Kyrgyz Republic officially inaugurated its new Training center of civil protection courses with participation of high officials, national and international NGOs, donor community and media. The training is designed to train state officials, Local Governments, specialists from Government Ministries and Agencies, rescue groups and individuals in the area of emergency management and response.

The opening of the centre fitted well into the Ministry's strategic plan and its priorities in implementation of the Kyrgyz law on «About the Civil Protection» No.39 of 20 July 2009, focusing on one of the main priorities is public preparedness for the different emergency situations.

Located in the Leninskoye Village, Alamedin Rayon, the training is center is equipped with learning facilities and aids and staffed with personnel, ready to deliver a menu of courses to the learners, designed to enhance both technical and practical knowledge, skills and competencies for disaster preparedness, emergencies management and response and mitigation of emergencies' consequences. The center also provides excellent facilities for conferences, meetings and other events, with catering services and residential accommodation.

The training center has been made possible as part of the project, which was implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and through co-funding from the MoES, which undertook the major interior renovations of the center.



*Deployment of REACT to assess the situation after the landslide in the Batken oblast in 2009*



*The coordination meeting, May 16, 2008*

# Enhancing Coordination for Disaster Response in the Kyrgyz Republic

As implemented by the UNDP together with MoES, the Project “Enhancing Coordination for Disaster Response in the Kyrgyz Republic” was intended to strengthen overall cooperation and coordination for disaster response between the Government, UN Country Team, Red Cross & Red Crescent Movement and other major participants in this field to be able to respond adequately and effectively to possible emergency situations.

Thanks to the support of SDC and resources pooled by other partners, the project established a number of important structures for disaster preparedness in the country. These include the Disaster Response Coordination Unit (DRCU), DRCU Secretariat, seven sector groups, and two Rapid Emergency Assessment and Coordination teams (REACTs).

- The DRCU is a high level forum with a mandate to coordinate the efforts of UN Agencies, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and local and international NGOs in disaster preparedness and response. The DRCU is a member of the Kyrgyz Republic’s Inter-Ministerial Commission on Disaster Management. In disaster conditions, the DRCU is the mechanism through which the UN Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator coordinates international response to the disaster.
- Seven sector groups have been established under the DRCU to improve sector-specific coordination of disaster preparedness and response. The sector groups, each with defined membership of UN organisations and partners and based on the global cluster system, are Education and Child Protection (led by UNICEF); Water and Sanitation (UNICEF); Health (WHO); Emergency Shelter and Camp Management (Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan); Food Security (WFP); Early Recovery (UNDP); and Protection (OHCHR).
- Two Rapid Emergency Assessment and Coordination Teams (REACTs) have been established in the north and south of the country to provide joint assessments of humanitarian needs in emergencies. The teams, made up of staff of UN organisations, the Red Crescent Society, and other international and local NGOs, have been equipped with essential equipment (including laptop computers, satellite telephones, etc.) under the project, as well as vehicles by their agencies, and have been trained with the support of OCHA’s regional office.
- The DRCU Secretariat was set up to facilitate establishment of the disaster response coordination mechanism and to provide ongoing support to the DRCU, sector groups and sector lead agencies, and REACT teams.



*Workshop in process*



*Participants of the workshop*

## International Workshop on Glacial Lake Outburst Floods

An international workshop, took place on May 20-21, 2008 in Bishkek organized by the Central Asian Institute of Applied Geosciences (CAIAG) and mainly sponsored by the SDC. The special focus was on “Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) in Central Asia”.

34 GLOF related specialists from 11 countries, representing research institutions as well as hazard concerned organizations, gave with their presentations and their lively contributions in the framework discussions of the workshop. Very valuable indications on the degree of GLOF related dangers were discussed in particular regions of Central Asia and the present status of competence and activities of regional and international institutions and organisations to monitor and manage water driven mass flows in high mountain areas. Applications of present and near future satellite remote sensing mission data, air-borne imagery and modern in-situ measurement techniques for the GLOFs related monitoring were presented, but also existing problems and deficits in scientific, technical and organizational means were intensively discussed.

The workshop concluded with the agreement of all participating experts on eight recommendations, dealing primarily with intensifying regional monitoring and applied research activities. This is to be achieved by establishing a steering group and working groups on specific tasks including a unique data base operating along international standards, developing monitoring tools for change detection of glaciated regions and mitigation measures in highly vulnerable valleys.

## Small Action Grant Line Disaster Risk Reduction Domain

In 2007-2011, the SDC launched a small grants program to provide funding for small-scale interventions in the area of disaster risks reduction, targeting disaster reduction issues, response assistance and prevention and preparedness initiatives. Approved proposals under this program were funded up to a maximum 20,000 USD and ranged in duration from a few months to nine months in maximum.

The SDC has emphasized the importance of undertaking training and capacity building initiatives for emergencies and assisted the Ministry of Emergencies in this area. With SDC support, personnel of MoES could participate in numerous training programmes and events related to disaster risks reduction held outside Kyrgyzstan. Under this programme, small grants were provided to the grass-root level organisations and Civil Society Organisations for small-scale projects involving practical efforts to improve disaster risk management in the communities and deliver measurable results in natural disaster risk reduction. Among them were:

- Through a forestation project, ACTED addressed the problems of land degradation and habitat loss in Karajygach and Akjol Ayil Okmotus of Aksy District, Jalalabad Oblast.
- The Hospitals Association of the Kyrgyz Republic provided assessment of non-structural risks in 21 selected hospitals throughout Kyrgyzstan and provided recommendations for reducing such risks.
- GIS-based mapping and assessment about the Zerger watershed were undertaken by the Public Foundation ECO-GIS in order to collect information with the regard of its socio-economical situation, livelihoods, natural resources, existing and potential hazards which make the local communities more vulnerable.
- The needs for community preparedness in disaster management were addressed as part of the project which was implemented by the Public Foundation “EcoFond” in Ogonbaev and Balbal Villages of Talas Rayon.

- An education campaign, launched among the schools and various community groups for early warning and search and rescue, was formed and strengthened at village level.
- The Public Foundation “MKM-Spas” carried out a wide range of the community-based activities among the villagers and schoolchildren of Ak-Kiya Village of Kochkor Rayon, thus raising their awareness on disaster preparedness and risks reduction.
- Kyzylsuu Village of Karasuu Rayon of Osh Oblast was covered by the project of the Public Foundation “Alternativa”, under which risks mapping, planning and preparedness, educational initiatives including early warning systems were implemented with the involvement of local authorities, villagers and schools
- The project by Public Foundation “Shoola” which was implemented in Issyk-Kul Oblast, enhanced risk management capacity of local self-help committees of targeted Rayons including schools. The committees created risk maps and contingency plans, installed early warning systems and implemented small-scale mitigation projects.
- The University of Central Asia’s School of Professional Education (SPCE) in partnership with CAMP Alatau developed training modules for the local self-government staff in the areas of sustainable pasture management, natural hazards risk mitigation at local level and energy efficiency and renewable energy sources.
- The project of the Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia (EFCA) was targeted at improving the situation for more than 6,000 persons with disabilities affected by the June 2010 violence.
- A week-long summer camp which was carried out in Gorniy Orel children’s sanatorium (located not far from Sulyuktu City) by Public Foundation “Insan-Leilek”, brought together about 60 school children leaders from four schools across the Batken City and neighbouring villages. Participating children received knowledge about basic disaster preparedness principles combined with leadership skills.

# List of SDC funded projects in DRR area

	Title of the project	Project duration	Implemented by	Swiss contribution
1	Awareness and Capacity Building on the Integrated Local Risk Management in Kyrgyzstan	Phase 1: November 2006 - March 2007  Phase 2: December 2008 - November 2010	Public Foundation CAMP Alatoo	80'620 CHF  99'195 CHF
2	Improving the Preparedness and Resilience of the Rural Community in Kyzyltuu Village, Osh Oblast	September 2008 - August 2009	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED)	116'000 CHF
3	Kyrgyzstan Earthquake Safety Initiative Project	July 2007 - January 2009	Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan	135'555 USD
4	Capacity Building of the Ministry Of Emergency of The Kyrgyz Republic in Providing Training Services	August 2008 - February 2009	International Organization for Migration (IOM)	100'000 CHF
5	Enhancing Coordination for Disaster Response in the Kyrgyz Republic	June 2007 - February 2010	UNDP Kyrgyzstan	63'625 USD
6	International Workshop on Glacial Lake Outburst Floods	April 2008 - July 2008	Central Asian Institute of Applied Geosciences (CAIAG)	25'225 USD
7	DRR Small Grants line	June 2007 - October 2011	Various NGOs	103'000 CHF



The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) has been active in the field of disaster risk reduction (DRR) for many years. DRR is one of the four priority areas of its Humanitarian Aid Department of SDC.

SDC's approach to disaster risk reduction is based on three strategies:

- DRR is selectively mainstreamed within SDC and considered an aspect of several thematic priorities. It must be taken into account in all countries that are at a high or considerable risk of disaster and/or in activities (projects) with a spatial relevance (i.e. with an impact on land use).
- SDC assists partner countries, civil society and communities with targeted activities for the reduction of the disaster risks (hazards and/or vulnerability) of the poor.
- SDC supports the international DRR system and institutions at regional and global level which aim to reduce risk in disaster-prone developing countries.

SDC is implementing targeted DRR programmes in seven different countries or regions, namely South America (Peru and Bolivia), Central America (mainly Nicaragua, Honduras), Central Asia (Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan), South Caucasus (Georgia and Armenia), Bangladesh, Middle East (Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, OPT), and Morocco. In addition to those integrated programmes, individual projects have recently been and are implemented in Colombia, Belarus, China, India and Pakistan (the latter ones mainly for Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) support; together with the rescue service of the Swiss Armed Forces).



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