

# Emergency, post-conflict and disaster risk reduction in Central Asia



Most Central Asian countries are susceptible both to natural and man-made disasters. Environmental issues are prevalent in the region, and political instability is a long-standing challenge in the region. In this context, IOM has conducted a variety of emergency, post-conflict and disaster risk reduction programmes in the region. IOM's priorities in this area are as follows:

- To support stabilization by developing and implementing measures to improve social cohesion between different ethnic groups, including information counseling and referral services
- To improve socio-economic opportunities for populations who are vulnerable to conflict including stateless people, minority ethnic groups and youth
- To encourage disaster risk reduction activities which will minimize environmental risk and associated emergency migration
- To improve national capacities to prevent, mitigate and respond to natural or man-made emergencies
- To be fully involved in preparedness activities and in the humanitarian cluster system and to actively work with other organizations to provide assistance to migrants and refugees in case of a humanitarian emergency

## Emergency and post-conflict activities

IOM is working to improve social cohesion in a variety of different ways. It addresses social cohesion among children by developing and implementing school programmes that support tolerance and conflict resolution. It also works with local governments, schools and NGO partners to implement these programmes. The programmes in-



clude: exchange programmes between schools in different regions, as well as interaction activities between mono-ethnic and multi-ethnic schools and opportunities for interaction between schools and communities. IOM works with the broader community to establish social cohesion through a variety of grassroots activities.

IOM Central Asia's emergency and post-conflict activities build on strong organizational experience in this area. IOM has experience in both natural disasters such as the Haiti earthquake and the Pakistan floods, as well as man-made disasters such as the conflicts in Iraq, Sierra Leone and the Balkans. IOM works with local communities, governments, education centres and those vulnerable to conflict to address underlying sources of conflict and provide a seamless transition between post-conflict activities and migration and development programmes.

## Disaster risk reduction activities

IOM will work in the field of disaster risk reduction with vulnerable populations and local authorities. It will work closely with a variety

of partners, including local governments and civil society stakeholders. IOM will conduct information campaigns through a variety of media outlets to inform the general population about how to protect against disasters and how to reduce disaster risk. It will also work to build the capacity of local governments and authorities through training programmes and assistance in infrastructure projects. IOM will also strengthen the capacity of communities to cope with natural disasters and conflicts through training and education about management of emergency situations.

## Peace-building among Youth and Children in Osh and Jalalabad Oblasts.

Violence, riots and clashes between ethnic groups broke out in Osh, Kyrgyzstan, on June 10, 2010, resulting in hundreds of deaths and thousands of people left homeless. This instability is the result of long-term tensions between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek ethnic groups in the Ferghana Valley. The tensions arose because of a variety of factors, which include lack of cohesion between ethnic groups in the south, high unemployment and low-quality education.

IOM's peace-building program will last for 12 months, throughout the year 2011. The objective of the program is to support stabilization in the Ferghana Valley by developing and implementing measures to improve social cohesion among youth and in the educational system. To achieve this objective, a variety of activities will take place. In the vocational training sector, rural vocational education schools will be provided with up-to-date equipment, teachers will receive tolerance training and employment centres will be set up for vocational training graduates. In the primary education sector, teachers will be provided with tolerance training, schools will receive tolerance and conflict resolution materials and an intensive tolerance program will be conducted at five pilot schools.

The IOM has significant experience in conducting vocational training. In the IOM's long-standing and highly respected counter-trafficking programmes, victims of trafficking are re-integrated into society through vocational training and education programs. The IOM hopes to build on its expertise and its strong relationships with grassroots NGOs in this peacebuilding programme.

## Providing legal assistance to people whose houses are damaged in

## the south of the Kyrgyz Republic

This 6-month project provides legal assistance to people and families affected by the inter-ethnic clashes which took place in June 2010 in the south of the Kyrgyz Republic (Osh and Jalalabad oblasts) through establishing consultation centers in the affected areas. These consultation centers are staffed with professional lawyers and notary officers who will provide legal counseling and assistance to hundreds of families who lost their properties during the inter-ethnic clashes. Particularly, the families receive assistance in restoring property ownership and identification documents destroyed during the riots. To successfully implement this project IOM has involved its partner NGOs in the south who run hotline and migration resource centers.

## Disaster risk reduction

International Organization for Migration implemented the project "Capacity building of local authorities and communities in the areas of Kyrgyzstan affected by natural disasters" within DIPECHO programme funded by European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Directorate General (CHO). The main goal of the project is to reduce the vulnerability of the population in the risky areas, awareness raising, capacity building of local authorities in the area of planning and preparedness.

Within the framework of the project, with financial support of the Swiss Cooperation Office, Central Civil Defense Courses have been

modernized. IOM has equipped the Training Courses with modern technical equipment in accordance with international standards. IOM has also provided necessary literature, visual aids and training modules.



## Information Campaign

Together with NGO partners IOM conducted a broad information campaign in 50 schools in the Kyrgyz Republic. These schools were located in regions vulnerable to natural disasters. Pupils and teachers learn how to behave when a natural disaster occurs, as well as how to render first aid. NGOs together with school administrations, children and their parents conduct non-structural mitigation works, such as fixing furniture and hanging items, removing hazards from lighting units and equipment and isolating explosive substances.

Strengthening of co-ordination mechanism among Ministry of Emergency and Scientific Institutes

IOM has supported the initiative to create a Scientific and Technical Council on improving coordination mechanisms between the Ministry of Emergency Situations, scientific institutes and other interested agencies of the Kyrgyz Republic in terms of prevention and relief of emergency situations.



## **Strengthening Disaster Response Capacities of the Government of Tajikistan**

This nine-month project, starting on 1 January 2011 and ending on 1 October 2011, is designed to support the Government of Tajikistan (GoT) to found a robust disaster response coordination mechanism by establishing an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) under the CoES and strengthen capacities for education and training of the concerned state structures.

Through the advancement of the EOC and development of customized trainings, the project will contribute to GoT efforts to develop effective mechanisms and operational capacities to adequately streamline procedures related to disaster management and proactive response to natural calamities. This project will help the GoT harmonize and enhance intra-service and inter-agency coordination mechanisms

for disaster response. The project also envisages provision of necessary equipment and infrastructure improvement support for the EOC.

## **Assistance to Ex-Combatants, Amnestied Detainees, Internally Displaced Persons and Unemployed Youth - Entrepreneurship for Peace/ Reintegration of Ex-combatants, Amnestied Detainees, Unemployed Youths and Internally Displaced Persons**

This IOM programme in Tajikistan aimed to promote peace building by assisting communities and the Tajik government to ensure that individuals identified to be at risk of reverting to illegal armed activities, drug trafficking and other destabilizing undertakings would be given the attention and encouragement to develop productive and self-reliant enterprises for the benefit of themselves and their communities. The programme took place between 1 November 2002 and 30 April 2004.



## Capacity building of local authorities and communities in the areas of Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan affected by natural disasters

Considering that the area of Turkmenistan is affected on a regular basis by different types of disasters such as earthquakes, mudslides, flooding, salinity, hot winds which all have a devastating effect on the livelihoods of vulnerable people, this project provided vulnerable rural populations of Turkmenistan with increased awareness and preventive capacity towards natural disasters.

This project took place through 2008 and 2010.

This project included disaster preparedness activities based on active involvement of local authorities and communities in the disaster prone areas for better preparedness to the potential disasters. To achieve this goal, activists from a number of local communities attended training for trainers on disaster preparedness and in turn trained the broader audience at the DP committees established in their communities. Additionally, educational materials were developed for extra curricula classes in disaster prone areas. Standardized Training Modules and Handbook on Mitigation Works were developed, approved and introduced for the representatives of different focus groups, particularly from the number of local authorities and rural population. Meetings and dialogues were conducted on the subject of risk reduction with all stakeholders and mitigation works will be conducted in several schools in the Lebap province.

