SWISS NGO DRR PLATFORM

CARITAS Schweiz Suisse Svizzera Svizra

Disaster Risk Reduction and Integrated Watershed Management in Muminabad, Tajikistan

Country/Region: Tajikistan / Central Asia
Timeframe: Phase 1: 2011 – 2014; Phase 2: 2014 - 2016
Beneficiaries: Population of the Obishur and Chukurak watersheds (76,000 people)
Key words: integrated watershed management, sustainable land management, governance
Contact: jniederberger@caritas.ch

1. Context & Rationale

- Muminabad is one of the poorest districts in Tajikistan with 60% of the population living below poverty line.
- Recurring disasters (debris flow, landslides and flash floods) affect livelihoods and strain government budgets, causing losses of app. 200,000 CHF annually.
- People's vulnerability to these hazards is partly due to ineffective land management (overgrazing, deforestation and mono-cropping), unfavorable topography and weak governance (post-Soviet).

2. Intervention approach

IWSM aims at reducing disaster risks for the population of two watersheds through the introduction of sustainable land management (SLM) practices and the improvement of livelihoods. Participatory and inclusive governance processes are supported to strengthen ownership and sustainability. These resulted in the development of organised land user institutions and five interventions in order to reduce water runoff:

Pasture Management

→ Improve pasture land and organize users

Conservation Agriculture

→Improve soil fertility and increase available fodder

Agroforestry & Tree plantation

→ Improve tree coverage and provide livelihood opportunities

Energy Efficiency

→ Reduce resource consumption and improve health conditions

Mitigation Infrastructure

→ Enhance protection from flooding

3. Success factors

- The integrated approach showcases **co-benefits of risk reduction**, environmental protection and livelihood improvement.
- Visible positive impacts of IWSM-approach on DRR and livelihoods encourage communities to engage in SLM and energy efficiency practices.
- Investments through the **participatory mechanism** of "Project Trust Fund" (PTF) trigger contribution of communities and leverage the project investments.

4. Lessons Learnt & Challenges

- **Culture of prevention as a longstanding goal:** Acting before than after a disaster happens requires a change in mindset, which has grown throughout many years of cooperation between Caritas, the people and the government of Muminabad. One remaining challenge is the longterm governmental budget allocation to DRR and SLM.
- **Inclusion for good local governance**: Inclusive institutions and governance processes are key to enable all actors to commit themselves to flood management. However, communities' involvement in taking over governance processes is a big challenge.

5. Entry points for scaling up

- Build on the **strong evidence of SLM** and energy efficiency benefits experienced by communities.
- Develop an **inclusive, participatory and stakeholder-driven watershed governance system** to sustain disaster prevention and sustainable land use processes.
- **Embed the local approach in national policy-making** in order to make a difference nationwide (e.g. IWSM project in Muminabad takes part in the larger Swiss Initiative for IWSM in Tajikistan).

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