

Medical Units in the Ardzagank Project

Context and problem statement

The Caucasus region is located within one of the most active sections of the Alpine-Himalayan and Balkan-Carpathian seismic belts, causing Armenia to be particularly prone to almost all types of natural disasters (except oceanic ones). The earthquake of 1988 in Armenia caused extensive death and damage. About 25'000 were killed and 15'000 were injured by the earthquake. In addition, 517'000 people were made homeless. Apart from earthquakes, frequent landslides and floods occur on a smaller scale.

The Government of Armenia has committed to take action according to the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 and to reduce disaster risks, with the objective to become more resilient to and cope better with the hazards that threaten development gains.

Overall goals

This component is a part of the "Ardzagank: Support to the Decentralized Disaster Response Structure" project, which aims at shifting from a centralized to a decentralized disaster response structure by strengthening the crisis management capacity at the local level. Decentralized rescue forces are established, trained and equipped.

The goal of the "medical unit component" of the project is to contribute to the development of the medical response capacity during disasters through setting up operational emergency medical groups, which can move at the disaster site and perform their tasks professionally without endangering either themselves or others. Teams are provided with a balanced skill set and must be capable of supporting and collaborating with fire fighters trained under the core "Ardzagank" project as well as other Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) units.

Strategy and approach

Experts agree that 40% of rescued disaster victims (especially trapped victims) have a better chance to survive if timely outreach acute medical care is provided. In general, this is the task of the country's Emergency Medical Service (EMS), which aims at providing emergency medical care on the spot or timely transporting victims to the next health post or hospital.

Project area	Nation wide
Duration	2009 - 2011
Budget	CHF 300'000
Partner	Ministry of Emergency Situations

The most common and recognized EMS type are ambulance services. Therefore, this component of the Ardzagank project aims at achieving a fully functional medical response system by creating integrated medical units, thus ensuring compatibility between rescuers and medical staff during emergencies. In this first phase the project is implemented in the districts of Tavush and Vayots Dzor. The two districts were selected due to their high frequencies of building collapses, floods and fires observed.



Training of trainers on intubation techniques.

Outcomes of the phase

Emergency Medical Units are set up, 4 in Tavush and 3 in Vayots Dzor districts, and are capable to support and to collaborate with fire fighters and other USAR teams.

Key outputs of the phase

By the end of 2011:

- An appropriate implementation model is developed.
- 7 Emergency Medical Units are established.

- 140 members of medical teams are trained on accessing disaster sites and perform their tasks professionally without endangering either themselves or others and to cooperate with other rescue teams.
- Essential equipment and consumables are supplied.

Target group

Doctors and nurses

Partners

- Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES)
- Ministry of Health (MoH)
- Grigor Lusavorich Medical Centre (GLMC)
- Crisis Management Academy (CMA)

Contact and Information

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