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GENDER BALANCED
PUBLIC AWARENESS
EXPERIENCE IN
ARMENIA

The effect of the Spitak disastrous earthquake

- The disaster took over 40 % of the territory of Armenia with million population.*
- 21 towns and regional centers, 324 villages were ruined partially or wholly.*
- Many educational, health and cultural centers were ruined.*
- There were over 25 thousand victims, more than 19 thousand people became disabled, 530 thousand people were left without shelter.*
- The damage caused by the earthquake amounts to nearly 10 billion USD*

The gender specific effects of the earthquake in Armenia

Many families became gender unequal, due to the loss of husbands or wives, which caused many socio-economic and psychological problems.

The loss of children, relatives, houses, life in contemporary houses (up to now), and the loss of jobs led not only to men's but also to women's poverty.

The winners of the UN World Disaster Reduction Campaigns



The UN 1999 World Disaster Reduction Campaign. “Prevention Pays”, International Photo Contest (the photo on the seismic culture class in the Gyumri schools)



The UN 2000 World Disaster Reduction Campaign. Drawing Contest the theme of “Disaster Prevention, Education and Youth”



The UN 2004 World Disaster Reduction Campaign. Artwork of Meline Sargsyan is included in the ISDR Calendar – “Learning to Live With Risk”



“Riskland” game in schools of Gyumri



The 2004 UN Campaign, Learning from today's disasters for tomorrow's hazards as a good practice for successful disaster reduction activities

In frames of the Campaign the following were implemented:

- Trainings dedicated to disasters and protection skills for 120 pupils from 11 to 14 years old from 4 schools and “ISDR Extracurricular Art Center”. 9 artworks were sent to Geneva to the International art contest for young people. The artwork of Meline Sargsyan has been selected for inclusion in the ISDR Calendar – “Learning to Live With Risk”.
- 4 poetry brochures for children (author Hrant Matevosyan) were issued in Armenia on the topic of “Natural disasters and how to be protected from them”. After learning the poems by heart, children were increasing awareness by telling those to their parents, relatives, friends and neighbors.
- Children wrote essays, related to the topics of the Campaign. Best 5 essays were printed in the newspapers, which allowed many readers to learn what measures can be taken to reduce risk.
- “Riskland” game for children was translated to Armenian and was played in 2 schools.

Meeting with the heads of regional governmental structures





Community empowerment through learning.
Meeting with community members in Gyumri



Conclusion

In order to develop gender sensitive policies and measures focused on environmental management and mitigation of natural disasters we are recommending the following:

- *In countries with high seismic risk, through the Ministry of Education to include seismic protection courses in the school curriculum, as a measure of seismic risk reduction.*
- *In formal and non-formal education to include education games, interactive information products, writing essays, drawings and learning poems, while creating educational materials for disasters risk reduction.*
- *Enhance women's participation as specialists in spheres where men dominate greatly (in disasters survey, academic field, emergency service, civil protection), which works with different levels of government system providing jobs on saving human lives and disaster affect reduction, where also men dominate greatly.*
- *Enhance women's participation in governmental structures at all levels.*
- *Use the capacities of media representatives and utilize print, radio and television in the creation of a new image of a woman.*
- *More respect to women's human rights in emergency situations.*
- *Raising awareness of urban population and rural community on disaster reduction through collaboration of the governmental institutions, working in the sphere of natural disasters risk reduction with women run NGOs with possible application of their capacities for implementation of different programs.*

All our experience and recommendations in the sphere of earthquake mitigation from a gender perspective will be an opportunity to enhance the preparedness level of the country and its population as regards to strong earthquakes, which in turn, will reduce the costs of earthquake effects liquidation, will lead to sustainable socio-economical development.



Thank you !