



AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

The Aga Khan Agency for Habitat participates in an emergency response drill and simulation exercise to prepare for natural disaster in Tajikistan



Darvoz, Tajikistan, 28 April 2018 – In collaboration with the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence (CoES) of Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast Division, and the local government including the police division and fire department, the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH) took part in a joint emergency management drill and simulation exercise to test preparedness for natural disasters and emergency

situations.

Tajikistan is vulnerable to natural disasters, including mudslides, flooding and avalanches, particularly in mountainous areas such as GBAO. Darvoz District was affected by heavy mudflows and flooding in July 2017, which partially destroyed nearly 30 houses in the villages of Shirgovad and Khostav, and resulted in damage to infrastructure, including the main highway connecting Dushanbe and Khorog. AKAH and the Government were part of a joint response team during this emergency.

In these isolated mountain areas, where road access can be a challenge during disaster response, community level preparedness is crucial to saving lives and protecting assets during emergencies. In Tajikistan, the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat has trained over 2,400 community volunteers to be first responders for their communities during natural disasters, such as the Barsem mudflows of 2015.

The drill and simulation exercise, held as part of the Government of Tajikistan’s National Action Plan for Emergency Situations and Civil Protection, assessed the extent to which emergency management agencies and the population of Darvoz District were prepared to deal with an eventual natural disaster such as a landslide or earthquake. First responders had an opportunity to test their skills and foster team building and interoperability through a series of events that unfolded in real time, including a fire at the camp for the internally displaced individuals. The exercise built mutual trust and reliance among the responders, an asset that will improve their ability to respond more effectively in real emergency situations. Participants included the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence of Tajikistan, AKAH’s trained Search and Rescue Team, AKAH Community Emergency Response Team volunteers and members of the local population.

Speaking at the event, the Deputy Director of the Regional Division of the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence praised “the great partnership and strong rapport between CoES and the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat”, built up over the years of working together and most recently “put into action during the Inter-Agency Simulation Exercise for Refugee Preparedness [held on 11 April].”

NOTE

The *Aga Khan Agency for Habitat* (AKAH), which merges the capabilities of Focus Humanitarian Assistance, the Aga Khan Planning and Building Services, and the Aga Khan Development Network's Disaster Risk Management Initiative focuses on preparing for both sudden and slow-onset disasters. AKAH works to ensure that poor people live in physical settings that are as safe as possible from the effects of natural disasters; that residents who do live in high-risk areas are able to cope with disasters in terms of preparedness and response; and that these settings provide access to social and financial services that lead to greater opportunity and a better quality of life. Initially, priority areas of AKAH will include Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic and India. <http://www.akdn.org/our-agencies/aga-khan-agency-habitat>

For further information, please contact:

Malika Giles

malika.giles@akdn.org

Read online: <https://www.akdn.org/press-release/aga-khan-agency-habitat-participates-emergency-response-drill-and-simulation-exercise>