

## SASAKAWA AWARD CANDIDATE NOMINATED BY “ARNAP” DISASTER RISK REDUCTION NATIONAL PLATFORM OF ARMENIA

### 1. Please fill out this section only if you are nominating an institution

**Institution name:** Crisis Management Center (CMC) and Rapid Response Service “911” of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of RA (MoES)

**Address of headquarters:** Davidashen IV district, 109/8 A. Mikoyan Str., Yerevan 0054, Armenia

**Email:** [mes@mes.am](mailto:mes@mes.am)

**Date of creation:** September 4, 2011

**Main fields of activity:**

It ensures round the clock emergency information provision to MoES, other concerned ministries and agencies, as well as in case of emergencies and during the population defense and civic protection events accepts the alarms, organizes warning and response activities, manages and eliminates the consequences.

**Name and title of chief executive officer:** Hovhannes Khangel'dyan- the Head of Crisis Management Center (CMC)

### 2. For those submitting nominations, please provide your details

**Nominator's name:** Movses Poghosyan

**Address:** Davidashen IV district, 109/8 A. Mikoyan Str., Yerevan 0054, Armenia

**Email:** [arnap@mes.am](mailto:arnap@mes.am)

**Present position:** Executive Director of Disaster Risk Reduction National Platform (DRR NP) of the Republic of Armenia (2011- to present)

Previous posts and functions:

1. Office director of the German Red Cross provincial branch subsidiary in Armenia (2003-to present)
2. Head of the First Aid training methodological center of the Armenian Red Cross Society (1996-2010)
3. Founder-commander of the "Spitak" rescue team (1989-1996).

3. In less than 400 words, please describe the remarkable and innovative effort carried out by the nominee to reduce the impact of disasters and build disaster resilience under the theme "Shaping the future".

The Ministry of Emergency Situations of RA (MoES) has initiated and implemented a process of involving the disabled people in the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) System. Aiming to contribute to the building of a healthy society without any differentiation between strong and weak, without downgrading the disabled and considering everyone full member of the society, the MoES launched the initiative "Turning Vulnerability into Partnership"<sup>1</sup>. It managed to bring people together through achievement of four basic pillars required for the integration of people with disabilities (PWD) into Disaster Risk Management (DRM) framework: common understanding of special needs of disabled people; common perception of their involvement in DRM; common sense of shared responsibility and commonly agreed measures relevant to their needs and capacities.

MoES was the first federal body, which brought the disabled people with disorders of musculoskeletal system to public service, aiming to provide them with an opportunity to adapt to and be fully integrated in the social, political and cultural life of the country.

By order of the Minister of Emergency Situations, the staff of Crisis Management Center and Rapid Response Service "911" was supplemented by more than 30 people with musculoskeletal problems in wheelchairs<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>Turning Vulnerability into Partnership (Attachment 1) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2podpDiQtk4>

<sup>2</sup> Full-fledged members of MES family <http://mes.am/en/news/mes/official-news/5668-2014-02-18-164416>

To enhance the efficiency of the disabled employees the whole territory of the Ministry was adapted accordingly to meet their needs, including the building of wheelchair platforms, specially designed elevators, sanitary systems and other facilities. The working hours and the attendance schedules were also adapted to their capacities<sup>3</sup>.

The Ministry also solved the issue of transportation of the disabled employees from home to work by obtaining specially equipped, mechanized vehicles.

Given the fact that during the natural disasters people with disabilities are considered most vulnerable they were involved in DRM planning, policy development, population management, disaster data collection, monitoring and rapid response management processes.

Interviews conducted on competitive basis for recruitment revealed that PWDs did not have higher education, as the educational institutions had no relevant environment for their mobility.

Therefore, the Crisis Management State Academy, which is an educational institute for training and upgrading of specialists in crisis management, acknowledging the importance of education of people with disorders of musculoskeletal system jointly with the MoES, DRR NP, UNDP, the Baden-Württemberg regional school of German Red Cross and other organizations concerned has established a modern and well-equipped multi-functional complex, where obtain practical knowledge and skills dispatcher-operators of emergency response services, as well as PWDs and other specialists working in the system<sup>4</sup>.

The educational complex is fully adapted to the needs of PWDs and it will start functioning in 2015 providing PWDs an access to free education.

The MoES on its own examples showed that considering PWDs vulnerable is a misconception. The truth is that the latter can be equally involved in the process of DRM, as an indispensable part of the society. Through this initiative were broken the existing stereotypes and was laid foundation of the new partnership culture with PWDs.

<sup>3</sup> New lift adapted for emergency workers with musculoskeletal problems  
([http://mes.am/en/news/mes/official-news/10031-h-56566#9395-IMG\\_9516](http://mes.am/en/news/mes/official-news/10031-h-56566#9395-IMG_9516))

<sup>4</sup> A New training center for dispatcher operators  
(<http://mes.am/en/news/mes/official-news/7238-2014-05-16-08-52-29>)

4. In less than 100 words, please describe how the nominee's work is funded.

**Annual budget and sources of income:** The overall budget for 2014 is 1, 051, 300.00 USD. From the mentioned amount:

- 942, 800. 00 USD was allocated from State Budget for CMC per year, from which *96, 550.00* was allocated for disabled people (about 10% of CMC budget).
- 42, 500.00 USD was allocated from donations for construction of *wheelchair ramps*, adaptation of lavatories
- 66, 000.00 USD was funded by UNDP, DRR NP and Save the Children

The main funding sources for disabled people are as follows: salaries from state budget - 45%, donations - 21%, grants - 32 %.

**REQUIRED:** Please describe in less than 800 words the initiative that is being nominated to reduce the impact of disasters and build disaster resilience, what the results are to date, who are involved, and the level of outreach. State the challenges you are confronting and the solution you have proposed.

The employment of disabled people in Armenia is a major problem. According to the statistics, as of January 1, 2014 the number of disabled people reached to 186,384, of whom 67% were of working age with only 8-9% having employment.

For many years NGOs were the only organizations dealing with disability related issues, whereas the governmental organizations were continuously avoiding to be part of the process. At the same time the NGO activities and programs without support of the state institutions, relevant policies and good will could not play a decisive role for efficient solution of the employment problem of the people with different disabilities.

Fund for Disaster Risk Reduction National Platform (DRR NP) represents the MoES Crisis Management Center (CMC) which is the internal structural subdivision of the Operational Management Department of MES Rescue Service. Within the scope of its power the MoES CMC ensures round the clock emergency information provision to MoES, other concerned ministries and agencies, as well as in case of emergencies and during the population defense and civic protection events accepts the alarms, organizes warning and response activities, manages and eliminates the consequences.

Disabled people staff is actively involved in various units of CMC. It is trained to accept the emergency alarm calls, participate in operational management, as well as in translation of original materials, dissemination of information, posting information on the official webpage of the MoES, situation simulations referring to monitoring and forecasting fields, video editing and other related activities. All the staff members have a title of a "Rescuer". Head of the PWD staff of CMC system, having personal musculoskeletal disorders, deals with coordination and solution of administrative issues related to PWDs and is involved in relevant meetings of the Ministry participating in the decision – making, implementation and management processes.

### Implementation

Highlighting the problem of providing jobs to PWDs and making them partners, the MoES launched the "Turning Vulnerability into Partnership" initiative<sup>5</sup>. At DRR NP a thematic group was created to offer solutions to the PWDs' problems<sup>6</sup>. The group enrolled specialists and experts from different ministries and organizations, including the Ministries of Social Welfare, Education and Science, UNICEF, UNDP, World Vision - Armenia, Save the Children, as well as NGOs dealing with disability related issues, such as Pyunik, Unison NGOs and others. The process was led by the MoES of RA. The package of all the necessary documents was developed by the thematic group. It includes the ToRs, hiring requirements, also the technical tasks and plan of action for adaptation of the CMC area to the needs of the disabled. From the members of the thematic group was formed a

<sup>5</sup>"Turning Vulnerability into Partnership initiative" photos (Attachment 2)

<sup>6</sup>Thematic group for disabled people (Attachment 3)



committeeto conduct interviews andwas organized the recruitment process on the competitive basis.

Seriousproblems arosein terms ofadaptation of the surroundings for the disabled people, which demanded profound studyofsimilarsuccessfulexperiences ofother countries andinstitutions.

The results of the study were summarized and jointly with the partners were undertakensteps towards adaptation of the environment and construction. Later was conducted aThree Month Training Course for the recruited PWDs with assistance of the MoES specialists. Upon accomplishment of the course the working activities of the newly recruited PWD staff started. The PWD employees are involved in all socialactivities, as wellas the DRR decision-making processes. Presently measures are undertaken towards decentralization and mainstreamingof this experience into the regions.The regional CMCs have already started the recruitment process of the PWDs on the competitive basis.

The major issue of PWDs higher educationwas undertaken by the Crises Management State Academy, where the activities towards adaptation of the CMSA building to the needs of the PWD students have started already.

### Main Achievements

- ✓ Precisely shapedpolicyand availablepolitical will of MoES, where morethan 30 PWDs have received jobs already, also further stepsare taken for opening new job opportunities.
- ✓ In Crises Management Centre of MoES the PWDs are widely involved in management processes, they are participating in the workshops, seminars and qualification upgrading trainings.
- ✓ Within the frame of DRR NP was established a thematic group of PWDs which deals with identification and regulation of the problems and needs of the PWDs through involvement of local and international organizations concerned.
- ✓ The MoES ground floor is fully adapted to the PWDs requirements, special conditions are created in the gym for PWD fitness trainings and exercising.

**REQUIRED:** Please describe in less than 400 words, the financial implications of the initiative that has been nominated. If feasible, describe what level of funding has been invested so far and how you plan to use the award money to support the initiative, if you are the successful candidate. If you do not intend to use the award money for this purpose, state how you plan to use it.

### Further Steps

The outcome of this initiative implemented resulted in the creation of culture to focus on the problems of the handicapped and disabled and acknowledge them as partners. It is quite important to ensure the continuity of this process, its decentralization and mainstreaming into the regions of Armenia. The activities proposed will be implemented upon availability of financial resources.

- ✓ Experience sharing with other organizations concerned and public awareness campaigns to be run by MoES Crisis Management Center and the Emergency Response Service 911.
- ✓ Adaptation of accommodations of the other floors of the MES building to the needs of PWDs, which will result in the increase of the number of PWD jobs.
- ✓ Refurbishment and adaptation of 2 regional CMCs, ensuring jobs for 10 more PWDs in two regions of Armenia.
- ✓ Improvement and adaptation of sanitary accommodations located on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors of the CMSA building, creating relevant conditions for education of the PWDs in the Academy.
- ✓ The experience was recognized as a good practice for offer state institutions and interest. Partners to keep pace with the MoES and promote the culture of "Turning Vulnerability into Partnership".

### Expected Results

- Enhancement of public awareness

- Reduction of the number of unemployed among PWDs through creation of new jobs (at least 30 people getting a job)
- Promotion of the involvement of PWDs in disaster risk management
- Raising interest of the governmental and non-governmental organizations towards considering the PWDs as partners
- Promotion of higher education
- Construction management taking into account the needs and requirements of PWDs.



Movses Poghosyan

Armenian DRR National Platform Director