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RESTORATION OF RIPARIAN ZONES IN ARMENIA

COVID-19 Socio-Economic Impact Neutralization Response Project

FINALREPORT



Yerevan 2021

FINAL WORK PERFORMANCE REPORT

Organizationname	BLEJAN environmental, social, business support non-governmental organization
Reporting period	05.04-30.11.2021
Responsibleperson	Lianna Asoyan Head/Project manager
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BLEJAN environmental, social, business support non-governmental organization (hereinafter referred to as BLEJAN NGO), from April 5 to November 30, 2021, as a local partner organization, participated in the COVID-19 Socio-Economic Impact Neutralization Response Project (hereinafter referred to as Project) implemented by the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) jointly with the RA Ministry of Environment and the RA Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure. The local supporting partners of the Project are BLEJAN NGO, ATP Charitable Foundation (hereinafter referred to as ATP) and ISSD Innovative Solutions for Sustainable Development of Communities NGO (hereinafter referred to as ISSD).

The Project was implemented in **18 communities** of Gegharkunik region (marz): **Vardenis, Akhpradzor, Mets Masrik, Lusakunk, Khachaghbyur, Karchaghbyur, Martuni, Artsvanist, Vardenik, Geghovit, Madina, Lichk, Tsakkar, V. Getashen, N. Getashen, Gegharkunik, Sarukhan, Tsovagyugh** (hereinafter referred to as Target Communities), addressing to support the neutralization of the COVID-19 social consequences aimed at the 15th event of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, at the same time solving environmental problems. Planting of willow cuttings and cleaning of riverbeds and riparian zones are implemented in the riparian areas of **10 rivers-Masrik, Vardenis, Artsvanist, Karchaghbyur, Martuni, Argitchi, Tsakkar, Lichk, Gavaraget, Dzknaget**, flowing through the territories of the Target Communities.

The Project was implemented in 2 phases.

During the 1st phase (from April 15 to August 31).

- **520,000 willow cuttings** were planted by ATP in the communities (Makenis-Akhpradzor, Vardenis, Mets Masrik, Geghovit, Madina, Gegharkunik, Sarukhan) adjacent to the riparian areas of Karchaghbyur, Argitchi, Masrik, Gavaraget rivers. **272 residents** (the applications of 259 residents were submitted to ATP) of the above-mentioned and Martuni and Tsovagyugh communities took part in the activities of cutting and planting of seedlings.
- The riparian areas of Masrik, Karchaghbyur, Artsvanist, Vardenis, Lichk, Tsakkar, Martuni, Argitchi rivers were cleaned by ISSD with the participation of **253 residents** (the applications of 252 residents were submitted to ISSD) of the Target Communities. The cleaning activities were completed at this phase.

During the 2nd phase (from September 1 to November 30).

- **80,000 willow cuttings** were planted by ATP on the banks of the Argitchi river in the administrative area of Verin Getashen community, with the participation of **33 residents** of the same community.
- Monitoring of planted and cleaned areas and population awareness-raising activities for the protection of those areas were implemented.

In the Project, BLEJAN NGO supported the implementation of the following objectives:

- To recruit people (about **800 people** were to be recruited, but **558 people** were recruited) affected by COVID-19 in the Target Communities, offering them temporary work of tree planting and riverbank cleaning, to record their data through a pre-designed online questionnaire.
- To organize environmental awareness-raising trainings for the residents of the Target Communities (**100 people** were expected to participate, but **175 people** participated).
- To make arrangements with the local self-governments (hereinafter referred to as local self-government bodies) of the Project's Target Communities for the subsequent protection of planted and cleaned areas, to implement monitoring and awareness-raising.

In total, **558 people** (305 people by ATP, 253 people by ISSD, 544 people's data were submitted), were provided by partner organizations with temporary work of planting cuttings and cleaning riverbanks, **600,000 willow cuttings** were planted and **234609 kg of garbage** was collected, of which **279 kg is recyclable**.

The main and crucial condition for employment was being a permanent resident of Gegharkunik region and affected by COVID-19.

One of the missions of BLEJAN NGO is to ensure the connection of the local self-government bodies of the Target Communities with the public sector in the Project, which was accompanied by the awareness-raising of the residents, constantly focusing on the role of the community in environmental protection and their participation in decision-making process, by emphasizing the right of living in healthy environment, as well as their responsibilities as citizens.

The Following Activities were Implemented During the Project.

Community Meetings

Together with partner ATP and ISSD organizations, initial visits were made to the Target Communities, working meetings were held with the local self-government bodies to discover and locate areas to be planted with trees, to identify people affected by the pandemic, as well as to ensure public participation in the Project's pre-awareness-raising campaigns.



Development and Dissemination of Announcements

During both phases, through the efforts of BLEJAN NGO, temporary job announcements were

disseminated to mobilize and involve the residents in the Target communities.

Resident Mobilization, Data Collection and Analysis

Target community residents affected by the pandemic and desiring to work temporally, were registered through online questionnaires and provided information about their social situation.

Preliminary Assessment of Cleaning Areas

Preliminary assessment of the riparian areas of **Masrik, Vardenis, Artsvanist, Karchaghbyur, Martuni, Argitchi, Tsakkar, Lichk, Gavaraget, Dzknagetrivers** was carried out by the representatives of the Project team, ISSD and local self-government bodies.



Preliminary Assessment of Cleaning Areas

Environmental Education and Awareness Raising

A number of "green" training courses have been implemented within the framework of the Project to ensure the continuity of nature protection, restoration of riparian areas, and the spread of "green" entrepreneurship.

The trainings were held for Gavar, Sevan, Martuni and Vardenis regions, which were attended by **175** resident (**59** from Gavar, out of which 75% were women, 25% were men, **26** from Sevan, out of which 77% were women, 13% were men, **46** from Martuni, out of which 83% were women, 17% were men, **44** from Vardenis, out of which 43% were women, 47% were men).

The participants who participated in all 3 training courses received a certificate of participation, which was also prepared by BLEJAN NGO, agreed with the local partners and approved by GIZ.



Trainings, certificate-awarding

Observation Mission

In the second phase of the Project, during July till October, the observation mission was launched: monitoring of planted and cleaned areas and awareness-raising campaigns were held by pre-selected eco-patrols and local representatives, forming monitoring teams.

A total of **84** visits were made for the purpose of monitoring, **35** of which were with the participation of local self-government representatives. **37** of the visits were observations of planted areas, and **47** visits were observations of cleaned riparian areas.

During the monitoring of the riparian areas, the team members held **42** meetings with the residents, with the aim of emphasizing the importance of keeping the riparian zones, rivers and environment clean, urging the residents to be consistent and not letting others pollute.



Awareness raising in the communities near Gavaraget, Argitchi and Masrik rivers

Photos by BLEJAN NGO

For more details about the Project, please, contact BLEJAN NGO

www.blejanngo.org



ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE, OPPORTUNITIES

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Management of natural resources and safeguarding of ecosystem services
for sustainable rural development in the South Caucasus (ECOsolve)

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