

"As a humanitarian community whose focus has been dedicated to meeting the "needs of today", we have perhaps given insufficient consideration of the potential risks faced by the communities we serve," Alice Armanni Sequi, Head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) in Ukraine, on the occasion of the Mind the Gap! Conference in Kyiv on 23 October 2019.

The decaying industry of Eastern Ukraine creates the ground for ecological and human disaster, which could be triggered by the ongoing conflict at any time. Daily shelling along the contact line occurs in the proximity of chemical enterprises, critical water, utility and other hazardous infrastructure. Moreover, incidents occurring on one side of the contact line can have impact on populations and systems on both sides of the contact line. Unless appropriate steps are taken, hazards such as the flooding of mines and shelling that regularly occurs close to chemical facilities and key water infrastructure have the potential to trigger a large-scale ecological disaster, putting the population and economy of the region at risk.

A group of international and local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), brought together under the European Union (EU) funded 3P Consortium and working jointly with local authorities in conflict-affected regions, is working to **Prevent, Prepare and Protect** (3P) communities.

As a first step, the 3P Consortium organized the "Mind the Gap" Conference on October 23, 2019 to raise awareness and discuss the current situation as pertains to conflict and industrial risks in Eastern Ukraine. The conference brought together a wide variety of stakeholders engaged in civil protection and/or the management of industrial sites in Ukraine, including local authorities who daily face industrial risks exacerbated by the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Through three panel discussions, speakers raised awareness on existing industrial risks and the specific vulnerabilities of the conflict-affected population.

The detailed and thoughtful discussions at the conference will support support the 3P Consortium's engagement with local and national authorities, communities, enterprises and partners to develop mitigation plans to those risks. These plans will allow the relevant stakeholders to understand clearly the potential consequences of disasters, actions needed to lower the risk of a disaster happening or steps to be taken to decrease its impacts.



Deepening existing relations with emergency services responding to conflict-related incidents in front-line rainos, ACTED also provided technical support in preparation of **live simulation** organized by Popasna raion administration on November 7, 2019. The simulation took four months to organize and, in the end, brought together more than 200 direct participants and 21 pieces of equipment. This large scale event was only possible thanks to the close cooperation of everyone involve, including the Luhansk oblast administration, SESU in Luhansk oblast, Popasna raion administration and Emergency Response Team of 3P Partner the Ukrainian Red Cross Society (URCS). To everyone's satisfaction, the live simulation was considered a success by representatives of the central apparatus of State Emergency Services of Ukraine(SESU) in Kyiv.

PREPARING COMMUNITIES

Under the 3P Consortium, and with support of Danish Red Cross and Austrian Red Cross experts, volunteers and staff of the Ukrainian Red Cross Society (URCS) have completed a full cycle of trainings to prepare and train communities to industrial and environmental risks along the Line of Contact.

In October, the most active community representatives of Kodema village (Bakhmut raion) received **first aid training**. Altogether **10** participants gained vital knowledge from Red Cross first aid instructors. As a next step, the participants / active members of the community gained skills in psychological first aid. As the last step in the preparedness curriculum, **2** representatives of Kodema village took part in a three-day community-based **disaster risk management workshop** in Svyatogorsk on how to prepare emergency response plans at the community level. During the workshop organized by the Red Cross with direct support of 3P partner IMPACT Initiatives, it was not only possible to identify what biological and chemical hazards prevail around Kodema, but also to prepare a draft community emergency preparedness plan for the residents of the area.

25 villages become prepared for emergencies

430 villagers with more awareness of responding to emergency situations



On December 3, URCS' team gathered with motivated village members to finalize the plan and discuss preparedness of the population to respond to various emergencies. Now, thanks to the developed documents, residents will be able to quickly receive information about emergency situations when they occur, including instructions on how to act/react and - in case of a large emergency - even organize an evacuation on their own.

With support from the EU, tools and skills were thus provided to **430 villagers** in 2019 - they can now reduce the impact of different harmful situations on their communities. This is especially relevant in the context of the ongoing armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine.

30,000 people will be covered by community contingency plans



UNDERSTANDING RISK

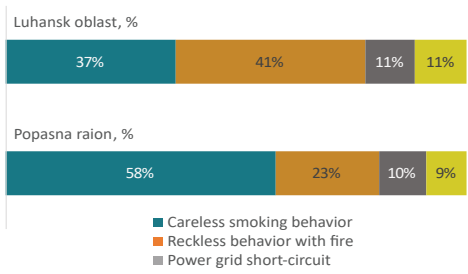
As 2020 starts, time has come to review some of the progress made by the 3P Consortium in 2019, including on the analytical side. During the last few months of 2019, IMPACT Initiatives' Geographic Information Systems (GIS) team in Ukraine was busy on several fronts, preparing a report on area-based risk assessment for Popasna raion (to be published in 2020), advocating for an area-based risk approach understanding disaster risk, and conducting technical workshops for partners and communities.

In Focus: **The Area-Based Risk Assessment (ABRA)** conducted by IMPACT in Popasna raion is currently being finalized. The resulting report looks at industrial, environmental, and conflict-related hazards in the area. ABRA will be a resource for local-level risk management activities and advocacy. Main findings were already presented at "Mind the Gap!" conference, and the Forum of Donbas Reintegration and Environmental Partnership Forum.

DID YOU KNOW?

that the most frequent reason of fire in Popasna raion is smoking? (Data provided by State Emergency Services, 2014-2019 yy.)

Most frequent reasons of fire



18 objects of metallurgic industry



111 mines



24 objects of machinery industry



30 objects of chemical and coking industry

RISK DATA REPOSITORY

One of the large and important steps in the risk assessment undertaken by IMPACT is **collecting geospatial data** concerning hazards, assets, vulnerabilities and risks present in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. As of now, database contains information on the following hazards: 111 mines, 30 objects of chemical and coking industry, 18 objects of metallurgic industry and 24 objects of machinery industry. Information on power and electricity infrastructure, conflict incidence, and fire frequency will also form part of this database.



PARTICIPATORY RISK MAPPING

IMPACT is also providing **hands-on training** for users of risk information: 3 workshops were conducted for Red Cross volunteers who will be working with communities to develop emergency preparedness plans on community and family level. The workshops teach basic skills in participatory hazard mapping and spatial analysis and have received a very positive feedback.

ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS ON RISKS

The 3P Consortium's activities to Prevent, Prepare and Protect (3P) communities and infrastructure from industrial and ecological risks as well as measures taken by local authorities are enabled - or limited - by the processes laid down in the existing legal framework. To support the establishment of effective disaster risk reduction normative acts in Ukraine, Right to protection (R2P) is conducting a complex **legal analysis** to identify gaps and overlaps in the existing laws as well as to recommend global best practices.

Since September 2019 R2P organized **7 meetings** with local authorities and first responders in Donetsk and Luhansk oblast to learn firsthand about their issues, ideas and suggestions. Given that those people are dealing daily with such issues, it is crucial to involve them in the process. Informed by those consultations, R2P specialists analyzed over 25 laws, sub-laws and regulation which regulate the environmental and civil protection sectors. The legal analysis will result in a white book with recommendations which will be advocated for with Ministries, Verkhovna Rada, the Office of the President and others.

R2P experts are also conducting extensive **advocacy work** on the above issues. For example, R2P's legal analyst participated in the high-level forum Forum "Ednannia" ("Unity" Forum) which was held in Mariupol city on October 30, 2019 where she contributed to the new vision for the reintegration and development of Donbas and the whole of Ukraine, and to find new ways to unify Ukraine. R2P used this excellent opportunity to present some of the ecological issues affecting Donbas and encouraged dialogue around possible solutions to these issues.



As per this discussion, potential ways forward for improving the current environmental situation in Ukraine discussed at the Forum could include the inclusion of questions pertaining to ecological security into a new National Security Strategy

R2P experts also engaged various stakeholders on topics of importance to Donbas and the risk of an ecological and/or industrial disaster in conflict-affected regions at a number of events held in the last few months of 2019, including public discussions, roundtables, radio broadcasts, and other fora.

This engagement forms part of the 3P Consortium's overarching approach to information dissemination and advocacy, whereby partners aim to raise awareness of the disaster risk in conflict areas among local, national and international actors.



"Ecological migrants - this is a conditionally named people who can become residents of Donetsk and Luhansk regions in case of ecological catastrophe in Donbas. The region was quite problematic even before the conflict from the point of view of the environmental situation. And in the long perspective, it can get a completely unsuitable region for living, as it will become an area of environmental disaster", said Ms. Anastasia Bondarenko, legal analyst in Right to Protection.

