



Disaster Risk Reduction Success

Englishka village, Sar-e Pul

The village of Englishka sits alongside a flood path in the northern Afghan province of Sar-e Pul.

In previous years, the residents of Englishka have seen heavy rains bring disastrous floodwaters surging through the river, threatening to wipe out their homes and the crops they depend on for their food and livelihoods.

Earlier this year, working in close coordination with the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Agency (ANDMA) and the Sar-e Pul Directorate of Water Management, IOM identified Englishka as an especially vulnerable community in need of disaster risk reduction assistance.

IOM met with community leaders and government officials to begin work on a 480-meter long gabion wall that would protect the village's 5,000 families and two million square meters of farmland from seasonal floods.

Gabion walls are retaining walls filled with stacked stone, placed strategically along riverbanks to divert and fortify against floodwaters. Through the organization's Humanitarian Assistance Programme (HAP), IOM has constructed gabion walls in villages throughout Afghanistan, where they have played a vital role in protecting communities from floods.

Under the guidance of HAP engineers from Kabul, local laborers from Englishka were hired to construct the wall along the riverbank. Construction began in March 2014 and was completed in one month.

When the first heavy rains of the season hit Sar-e Pul in April, the residents of Englishka were prepared. The wall stood strong against the powerful floodwaters, successfully protecting homes, the village bazaar and mosque, and farmlands from flood damage.

Response to the success of the wall from community members and local authorities was overwhelmingly positive. IOM received a letter of appreciation from the ANDMA office in Sar-e Pul, and the head of Englishka Community Development Council (CDC) reported receiving numerous phone calls from community members expressing their gratitude and satisfaction with the project. The head of the CDC told IOM that this was the first time in memory that the village had ever been protected from damage during the flood season.

IOM remains committed to supporting vulnerable communities in Afghanistan with disaster risk reduction interventions, through the generous funding of the U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA).