

Transitional Assistance in Yemen: Strengthening Resilience and Supporting Vulnerable Households

The challenge

The civil war in Yemen is in its eighth year now and has brought about the world's gravest ongoing humanitarian crisis. Even before the onset of hostilities, Yemen was rated as one of the least developed countries in the world. 80% of the total population (approx. 24 Mio. people) are vulnerable and depend on humanitarian assistance. According to the World Bank the poverty rate amounts around 50%, with women more severely affected than men. Children are even more severely afflicted by the impacts of the civil war due to diseases (e.g. cholera), malnutrition and loss of access to education. A quarter of all children in Yemen cannot attend school. The physical and social infrastructure is obsolescent in many regions and some of it has been destroyed in the war zones. Many farming households have sold or used up their productive basis to survive, meaning they now lack the foundation for income generation and food security.

Only half of the health care centres that existed before the outbreak of war are still able to provide basic medical care. Two-thirds of the people have no access to clean water and sanitation. Of these, the most severely affected are the most vulnerable groups children, young people, women, single heads of households, persons with disabilities and former war combatants, former child soldiers and the Muhamasheen minority, all of whom depend on public services and emergency aid.

Combined with the destruction of the physical and social infrastructure, the far-reaching disruption of the economy and governmental budget cuts, the prolonged violent conflict in Yemen has heavily curtailed the operational capability of sub-national, public administrative authorities and the potential of traditional local self-help systems. The multifaceted crisis fuels tensions among the various religious, ethnic, and social groups.

Our objective

The programme contributes to enhancing the resilience of local institutions and vulnerable population groups in three selected governorates in Yemen.

Our approach

The programme follows the "Whole of Yemen" Approach of German Development Cooperation, and therefore is a neutral partner for the people in all of Yemen. It implements in the governorates of Ibb, Dhamar and Hadhramaut.

Project name	Strengthening resilience and participation at local level in Yemen
Commissioned by	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ)
Project region	Governorates of Ibb, Dhamar and Hadhramaut
Lead executing agency	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Duration	10/2019 – 03/2025



L. to r.: Training of 300 farmers in Hadhramaut in cultivating onion seeds; CFW activity in Hadhramaut to rehabilitate irrigation canals.

Upgrading local capacities to provide basic services through small-scale measures

Challenge

A lack of legitimacy due to personal and institutional ties to conflict actors, clientelism and endemic corruption, as well as drastic budget reductions caused by the government's continued suspension of subsidies since 2013, which accounted for 90% of the local budget, led to dysfunctionality in most parts of the country. Local institutions, including community-based self-help structures, have been struck by the tense atmosphere caused by the civil war and the political upheaval in the country. Therefore, a tremendous lack in basic service delivery is pervasive all over the country.

Objective

The aim of field of action I is to strengthen local capacities for improved provision of basic services and to enhance the response to the ongoing crisis in Yemen. Within this field of action, SRPL rehabilitates social and technical basic infrastructure through participatory developed small-scale measures and provides capacity-building to local actors such as local council members.

Our Approach

Seventeen districts in the three governorates Ibb, Dhamar and Hadramaut will gain support through this field of action. The Capacity Development Strategy adopted by the programme addresses all three levels: the individual, the organisational and the societal level with a focus on individuals and organisations. This is done through specific trainings for the personnel of local authorities (local councils and line ministries' offices at district level) in strengthening their technical, methodological and operational skills in the fields of participatory planning, data collection and information management, financial and administrative management as well as monitoring and evaluation. Institutional and technical support is also provided to local authorities to improve their internal structures in order to create an enabling environment for the staff to use the acquired skills for delivering better services.

Implementing Partners

In this field of action, the main implementing partners are local authorities, including local offices of line ministries, local councils and specifically the community development committees. Our implementing partner in the fields of WASH and health prevention is the Berlin based AKKON University with its local partner organisation Quality of Health Services and Development (YAQHS).

Transitional Development Assistance (TDA)



This GIZ programme is part of the Transitional Development Assistance (TDA) approach of the German Government. The aim of TDA is to support structural development in Yemen by enhancing different dimensions of resilience – especially those of vulnerable groups and local institutions. The SRPL-programme contributes to bridging the gaps between humanitarian assistance, development cooperation and peacebuilding, and as such delivers as a “Humanitarian-Development-Peace-Nexus”-approach.

Activities

- The participatory planning processes at community level have been resumed in Far' Al Odayn, Ibb and Ghayl Bawazir, Hadhamaut. This led to concrete small-scale measures having been identified within both districts which will be implemented jointly with the local communities and funded by the programme.
- WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) projects in cooperation with AKKON University have been implemented to enhance local capacities for the provision of basic services. Their aim is the prevention of water-borne infectious diseases through measures in the areas of water hygiene, waste management, sanitation and capacity development for AKKON's local partner organisation Yemeni Association for YAQHS. For raising the awareness on WASH, 100 community volunteers have been selected of which 99 are female. Women can enter private houses and meet female residences who are the key target groups of the activities more easily, as they are most commonly responsible for household related activities as for example water storage.



A woman explains her vision of local governance

Improving income and food security for rural households

Challenge

Agricultural production and fisheries, which employed nearly 70% of the labour force before the civil war, have decreased by one-third and the agricultural labour force by half. The agriculture sector is hampered by difficult climatic conditions (90 % of the water is used for agricultural production), natural conditions (only 6 % of the country's land is suitable for cultivation) and structural conditions (very small farm sizes, high irrigation losses, breakdown of services). Extensive food imports (about 80 % of food was imported before the conflict) led to distorted market conditions, so that local products are hardly competitive. The shortage of veterinary services has led to an increase in animal diseases and a decline in animal husbandry, which is a main source of income for many rural farming households. In consequence, many have sold or completely exhausted their productive base to ensure their survival. They now lack the basis for stable income and food security.

Objective

Field of action II improves the productive livelihood resources of vulnerable households and communities facing poverty and hunger and to ensure their income and food security.

Our Approach

The hypothesis of field of action II is that employment promotion and the revival of agricultural production will strengthen the stabilisation and adaptation capacities of vulnerable population groups and therefore contributes to improving food security. By means of Cash-for-Work (CfW) measures, members of rural households receive practical experience, agricultural tools and short-term income opportunities; and in Cash-for-Work Plus (CfW+) measures additionally gain new vocational skills (see infobox below). Activities are chosen based on the long-term needs of the communities. Within this field of action, there are different approaches focusing on agricultural production inputs in the agriculture sector. These approaches include the provision of improved vegetable seeds and agricultural manual tools, trainings, and capacity building on diversification of agriculture product marketing throughout the value chains.

Implementing Partners

The main implementing partners are local authorities, including local offices of technical ministries (especially in the agriculture and irrigation office), and non-governmental organisations.

Activities

- One main activity type in this field of action is Cash-for-Work Plus (CfW+) (see infobox). For instance, water infrastructure irrigation canals were created, which have been built with local communities to provide broader access to water and to generate income and practical experience. Due to this activity, irrigation losses can be minimised.
- Another approach consists in the provision of improved potato seeds to vulnerable rural families to address yield-related food shortages. The seeds are more resistant to adverse weather conditions and in consequence enhance cultivation rates.



- To tackle the loss of livestock caused by disease, GIZ promotes vaccination campaigns for the animals of smallholder households. During the campaigns, local service providers are capacitated and rural households and receive guidance on animal health. So far, more than 20.000 animals have been vaccinated.

Cash-for-Work Plus (CfW+)



Cash-for-Work Plus (CfW+) is a programme to create income possibilities to stabilise people's income during or after crises. The "+" indicates additional vocational training to ensure lasting skill improvement and therefore better future job prospects. The duration of these measures is usually 4 months within our programme.

The picture shows training and guidance on beekeeping and honey production along with the provision of beekeeping kits in Ibb governorate.



CfW+ Training for beekeeping in Ibb

Increasing income security of artisanal fishing households

Challenge

The fisheries sector has traditionally made an important contribution to food security and income generation in the coastal regions of Yemen. Extensive fish resources and a rich maritime biodiversity (approx. 400 fish species) form the basis for this economic sector. The landing and marketing infrastructure that is important for the fisheries sector is available in Hadhramaut in varying sizes but is generally in poor condition. Particularly artisanal fishery is affected by the consequences of the crisis. The volume of landings has reduced drastically, which is exacerbated by additional post-harvest losses, leading to reduced income for households dependent on the small-scale fishery sector.

Objective

Field of action III improves the framework conditions for increasing the income security of households in coastal Hadhramaut dependent on artisanal fishing, thereby ultimately boosting their resilience to the crisis.

Our Approach

The approach of field of action III is to rehabilitate fish landing sites and market infrastructure in order to offer a hygienically improved working environment to artisanal fishermen (see infobox below). Furthermore, fishers receive improved equipment and capacity building on post-harvest handling to improve fish quality and reduce losses, leading to more marketable fish for human consumption. Through Cash-for-Work Plus (CfW+) measures, e.g. on engine maintenance or net-weaving, the capacities of young men and female fishing community members are developed, and income opportunities are created. To further improve framework conditions and strengthen the role of fishermen cooperatives, a dialogue forum for confidence-building between relevant authorities and members of the artisanal fishermen's cooperatives is promoted.

Implementing Partners

The main implementing partners are in the relevant local authorities, encompassing the Ministry of Fish Wealth (MFW) and its subordinated agencies, as well as Hadhrami fishermen cooperatives.



Activities

- To improve safety at sea and reduce post-harvest losses, fishermen receive equipment kits and capacity development trainings. The picture above, for instance, shows ice boxes that are needed to uphold the cold chain from catch to sale. Trainings for fishermen are provided e.g. on how to use GPS systems provided by GIZ, which help stay safe at sea.
- The CfW+ measures conducted by this field of action benefit young and female members of fishing communities. Young men's prospects improve with trainings e.g. on boat maintenance and engine repair. Women, despite being crucial to the value chain, are often not visible in it. Their role is strengthened with income opportunities and trainings on weaving and repairing fisher nets, drying and salting fish.
- Regular dialogue sessions between fisheries cooperatives at each landing site with the fisheries authority and the cooperatives build confidence between the owners and users of landing site infrastructure, regulators and fishers.

Infra ++



In addition to a tangible improvement of local populations' living conditions, Infra++ offers opportunities for access to target groups, supports social cohesion and, in this specific case, offers great potential for the economic empowerment of women. In addition to improved hygienic conditions at the landing sites, Infra++ strengthens the resilience of vulnerable households by generating improved income opportunities.

The picture shows one of the four landing sites for artisanal fishermen which will be rehabilitated. The livelihoods of about 5,000 fishermen and their families will be improved. The linkage with marketing infrastructure along the fisheries value chain provides significant scaling potential for many more Hadhrami people in this field.



Fishers and vendors at Hay Al U'mmal landing site in Al Mukalla

Fostering social cohesion at local level

Challenge

Social tensions and the potential for violence among the local population are intensified by the ongoing and complex crisis. Further exacerbating competition between different groups of this complex society, the collapse of local currency and serious fuel shortages have driven prices up, endangering food security for several million Yemenis; health facilities, water and sanitation systems and other critical infrastructure have been destroyed or have broken down; and widespread traumatising is often worsened by a lack of knowledge of or access to psychosocial support offers. Under such conditions, distrust and prejudice become entrenched and determine everyday life. Particularly in a socially and politically fragmented and fragile context such as Yemen, supporting local populations in working towards a more socially cohesive – and, by extension, more peaceful – society is of particular relevance to safeguarding developmental achievements.

Objective

Field of action IV conducts local needs-based measures for fostering social cohesion. While this field of action stands at the centre of SRPL's social cohesion work, the TDA programme aims to mainstream elements this way of working through all its field of actions' respective approaches. The results hypothesis is that pointing out alternative courses of action will enable vulnerable population groups to acquire more positive coping skills in the ongoing crisis.

Our Approach

Local civil society organisations are identified and trained in order to enhance their capacities, and community initiatives are jointly developed and then implemented by trained NGOs. This includes jointly developed measures for psychosocial support. Field of action IV also coordinates the joint project between three GIZ Yemen programmes and Seton Hall University's (SHU) Center for Peace and Conflict Studies (CPCS). The project aims to enhance the understanding of conflict-economy relationships in selected governorates in Yemen, and through dialogue and planning to increase the capacity for economic development and coexistence.

Implementing Partners

For field of action IV, implementing partners are international academic partners and local civil society organisations, also including small community-based organisations. These partners play a key role in implementing small-scale measures in Yemen to foster social cohesion and strengthening the inclusion of vulnerable people.



Activities

- Members of local civil society organisations receive trainings on methods of conflict management & resolution, violence prevention (particularly in youth), human rights, and psychosocial support; as well as project planning, organisational steering and management, monitoring and evaluation systems. So far, trainings with 30 employees from 20 organisations, thereof 47% women, have taken place.
- An example small-scale activity in Ibb tackles heavy littering close to the informal dwellings of displaced families and of the marginalised minority (Al Muhamasheen) and a lack of sanitation facilities for them the local host population. The situation caused tension between host and informally settled families and will be addressed with collaborative clean-up events and a dialogue on how to collectively manage waste in future. The joint action generates immediate and visible positive effects for both the host and the displaced marginalised community through their collective efforts.



CfW+ activity in Ibb: Women sewing face masks as COVID-19 prevention

Gender



Enhancing Gender Equality is an important part of GIZ's work. In Yemen, women are among the most vulnerable groups as they face higher rates of poverty and domestic violence and are mostly excluded from decision-making processes. Therefore, addressing prevalent gender norms and empowering women by providing trainings and job opportunities is a key cross-cutting element of our work.

The picture shows women in Yarim, Ibb governorate sewing face masks for the population. Over 250.000 masks have been produced to control the spread of COVID-19 in Yemen. During this activity, women were trained and generated income to support their families.

All fields of action at a glance

1. Upgrading local capacities for the provision of basic services

- Developing the competencies of local actors in participatory planning, drafting community development plans and monitoring them.
- Cooperating with local administrative authorities on the selection and supervision of small-scale measures which are implemented by these entities and with the funding of the programme.

2. Improving the productive sources of livelihood of vulnerable rural households

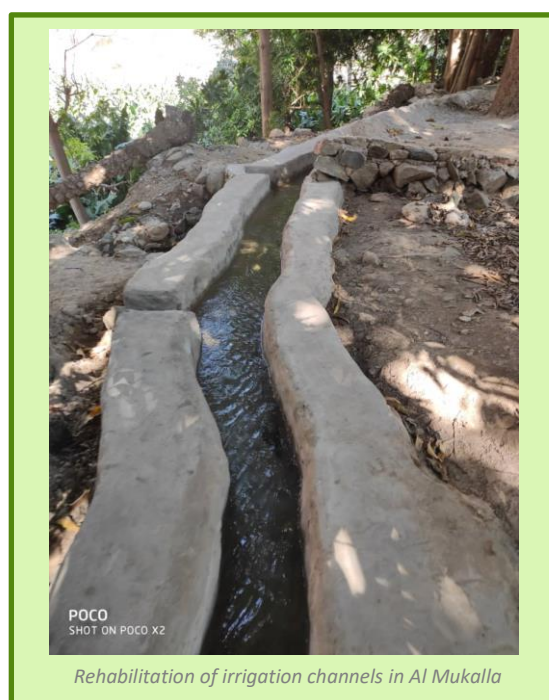
- Jointly developing the selection of beneficiaries of small infrastructural measures (CfW+) like road improvement works or constructing irrigation channels.
- Training on selecting vulnerable farming households for allocating agricultural inputs such as seeds.
- Developing human capacities through imparting know-how to farmer groups.

3. Increasing the income security of households that rely on artisanal fishing

- Fostering the capacities of artisanal fishers for sustainable fishing methods and hygienic fish processing to increase the marketable share of fish for human consumption.
- Promoting the capacities of the cooperatives to strengthen them in their role as service providers and as representatives of artisanal fishers.
- Working together with the responsible authorities and the cooperatives to select landing and market infrastructures to be rehabilitated.

4. Carrying out local needs-based measures to foster social cohesion

- Developing the capacities of NGOs and CBOs in methods of conflict resolution and violence prevention.
- Developing the competencies of local actors in planning, executing and maintaining small-scale measures for promoting social cohesion.
- Better knowledge of conflict-economy relationships and participatory planning for economic development and social coexistence.



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