

Strengthening resilience and promoting rural households in Yemen

The challenge

The civil war in Yemen is in its ninth 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. Two thirds of the total population (approx. 21.6 million people) are vulnerable and depend on humanitarian assistance. According to the World Bank, the poverty rate amounts to around 50%, with women more severely affected than men. Moreover, children are heavily 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 The physical and social infrastructure is obsolete in many regions and some of it has been destroyed in the war zones.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 and 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. More than half of the population have no access to clean water and sanitation. The most severely affected are vulnerable groups such as children, young people, women, single heads of households, persons with disabilities and former war combatants, and the Muhasheen 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 capacity 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 the three selected governorates Ibb, Dhamar and Hadhramaut in Yemen.

Our approach

The programme follows the "Whole of Yemen" approach of German Development Cooperation, and therefore is a neutral partner to the people in all of Yemen.

Programme name	Strengthening Resilience and Participation at Local Level in Yemen (SRPL)
Commissioned by	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ)
Programme region	Governorates of Ibb, Dhamar and Hadhramaut
Lead executing agency	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Programme duration	10/2019 – 03/2026



L. to r.: Installation of an irrigation network in Dhamar; Discussion at a participatory planning event in Sayoun, Hadhramaut.

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

Challenge

Personal and institutional ties to conflict actors, clientelism, and endemic corruption undermined the legitimacy of local governance structures. Besides, local institutions suffer from drastic budget reductions following the government's continued suspension of subsidies since 2013. Consequently, local governance structures are dysfunctional in most parts of the country. In addition, 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 to provide basic services and to enhance the response to the ongoing crisis in Yemen. Within this field of action, SRPL develops small-scale measures in close coordination with local communities to rehabilitate social and technical basic infrastructure. Moreover, the programme provides capacity-building to local actors such as local council members.

Our Approach

Seventeen districts in the three governorates Ibb, Dhamar and Hadhramaut are supported 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 achieved through specific trainings for the personnel of local authorities to strengthen 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. This aims at creating an enabling environment for the staff to use the acquired skills and deliver 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 Federal 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

- Through the participatory planning processes at community level in Far' Al Odayn, Ibb and Ghayl Bawazir, Hadhramaut, concrete small-scale measures in the fields of education, health, and WASH were identified within both districts. To date, 30 small-scale measures directly benefitting over 220,000 people were implemented and funded by the programme. They include the equipment of 14 schools, the rehabilitation or installation of water infrastructure in 5 villages, and provision of medical equipment to 6 hospitals.
- Another main activity are trainings with participants from public administration and local self-help structures. So far, 13 training modules with over 1,400 participants were conducted.
- Besides, 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 to prevent water-borne infectious diseases through measures in the areas of water hygiene, waste management, sanitation, and capacity development for the Yemeni Association for Quality of Health Services and Development (YAQHS). To raise awareness on WASH, 199 community volunteers have been selected of which 135 are female. Women can more easily enter private houses and meet female residents - who are the key target groups of the activities - as they are most commonly responsible for household related activities such as water storage.



L. to r.: Woman speaks at a participatory planning event at community level; Rehabilitated Al-Thawra school in Ibb.





L. to r.: Training of farmers in Hadhramaut on cultivating onion seeds; Animal vaccination campaign in Dhamar.

Improving income and food security for rural households

Challenge

Agricultural production and fisheries employed nearly 70% of the labour force before the civil war. Since then, the agricultural labour force has decreased 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 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. Through Cash-for-Work Plus (CfW+), participants further gain new vocational skills (see infobox). 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+). For instance, over 150 women and young men received vocational training in the production of face masks and weaving of traditional clothing.
- Cash-for-Work (CfW) measures include the construction of water infrastructure irrigation canals, which have been built with local communities to provide broader access to water, minimise irrigation losses, and to generate income and practical experience.
- Besides, agricultural inputs with accompanying advisory services to improve agricultural production are provided. For instance, 1,800 vulnerable rural families received improved potato and onion seeds to address yield-related food shortages. The seeds are more resistant to adverse weather conditions and in consequence enhance cultivation rates. Moreover, 200 families were trained on beekeeping and honey production.
- 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 receive guidance on animal health. So far, more than 730,940 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 young men being trained in the knitting of traditional men's clothing (Al-Mawa'az).





L. to r.: Young men being trained in boat maintenance in As-Shihr; Fishermen in Al Mukalla receive training on GPS fish finders and customised ice boxes.

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 existing landing and marketing infrastructure that is important for the fisheries sector in Hadhramaut 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 to ultimately boost their resilience to the crisis.

Our Approach

Field of action III seeks 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 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 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. Equipment includes e.g. ice boxes that are needed to uphold the cold chain from catch to sale. Trainings for fishermen are conducted e.g. on how to use GPS systems provided by GIZ to stay safe at sea. Overall, 1,000 fishermen benefitted from trainings and equipment to date.
- The CfW+ measures conducted by this field of action benefit young and female members of fishing communities. Young men's prospects are enhanced 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 and drying and salting fish. So far 85 women and 60 young men were trained.
- Regular dialogue sessions between fisheries cooperatives at each landing site with the fisheries authority and the cooperatives aim to build confidence between the owners and users of landing site infrastructure, regulators, and fishers.

Infra ++



The picture shows one of the four landing sites for artisanal fishermen, which are currently rehabilitated to improve the livelihoods of about 5,000 fishermen and their families by applying the construction modality Infra++. To reinforce a tangible improvement of local populations' living conditions, it offers opportunities to support, in this specific case, social cohesion and provides access to beneficiaries which enhances capacity development to sustainably operate and maintain the infrastructure. The linkage with marketing infrastructure for the fisheries sector as well as separate marketplaces for selling other kinds of food, which are next up for rehabilitation, provides significant scaling potential along the fishery and other food value chains. The improved hygienic conditions at the landing sites and the marketplaces result in a stabilized source of income and contribute to the resilience of vulnerable households relying on artisanal fisheries along the Hadhrami coastline.



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 societal groups, 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 over 70% of the population can be expected to have experienced violence and losses causing severe traumatisation, made worse by a lack of knowledge on or access to psychosocial support offers. Particularly socially disadvantaged groups, such as people with disabilities or the Al Muhamasheen minority, are increasingly vulnerable to the brunt of the war. Women and girls are highly affected by domestic violence and are very often excluded from income opportunities and decision-making processes. These issues are compounded by weakened capacities of civil society networks, local unions, women's councils, and youth forums. 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 field of action IV is specifically dedicated to enhancing social cohesion, SRPL aims to mainstream this approach across all fields of action. The results hypothesis is that pointing out alternative courses of action will enable vulnerable population groups to exert more positive coping skills in the ongoing crisis and enhance the resilience of communities.

Our Approach

Local civil society organisations are identified and trained in order to enhance their capacities. Jointly with sufficiently capacitated (incl. trained) organisations, community initiatives are developed and implemented.

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.

L. to r.: Training of civil society organization members in Dhamar; Gathering of local community members for the installation of an inclusive water network in Al Qafir, Ibb



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 As-Shihr taking part in a training on fish processing and preservation. This activity prepares them to generate income and support their families.



Activities

- Members of local civil society organisations partook trainings on methods of conflict management and resolution, violence prevention (particularly youth), human rights, and psychosocial support as well as project planning, organisational steering and management, and monitoring and evaluation systems. So far, trainings with 79 employees from 45 organisations, thereof 53% women, have taken place.
- A total of 225 vulnerable persons from multiple social groups across 11 local communities in Ibb have partaken in small-scale measures that improved living conditions for a total of over 23,000 persons.
- An example of small-scale activities are well rehabilitations in Far'a Al Odayn, Ibb governorate. In several communities, the wells were in poor conditions, affecting both local communities as well as IDPs settled in these areas. To rehabilitate the wells, members of all social groups including the marginalised Al Muhamasheen and IDPs worked together. The collective effort aimed at creating solidarity, opportunities for participation, and greater acceptance of minorities.

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, and monitoring of community development plans.
- 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 selecting beneficiaries of small infrastructural measures (CfW+) like road improvement works or constructing irrigation channels and implementing those measures.
- Providing advisory services to vulnerable farming households and allocating inputs such as seeds.
- Developing human capacities by 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 fishery 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 human capacities of personnel at 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 that promote social cohesion.
- Ensuring better knowledge of conflict-economy relationships and participatory planning for economic development and social coexistence.
- Developing the capacities of peacebuilding NGOs and other service providers through peer-to-peer exchange and networking, also via digital platforms



L. to r.: YAQHS awareness session in Ibb on the Global Handwashing Day; Young men in As-Shihr are trained in engine maintenance

Published by

Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Registered offices Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

Strengthening Resilience and Participation at Local Level
in Yemen (SRPL)

Dag Hammarskjöld Weg 1-5
65760 Eschborn
Germany

eike.vater@giz.de
<https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/91325.html>



As of
Design

August 2023
Nathanael Ott, Eschborn

Photo credits

List of photographers in alphabetical order
© GIZ / Nabihah Mahdor
© GIZ / WEKAN for Media Services and Designs
© GIZ / YAQHS

Text

Daniel Sachau, Eschborn
Nathanael Ott, Eschborn
Kevin Lehne, Eschborn
Miriam Gramelsberger, Eschborn

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

On behalf of

Federal Ministry for Economic
Cooperation and Development (BMZ)