

CONTRIBUTION OF AREA-BASED APPROACHES TO ENHANCE RESILIENCE, LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD SECURITY IN YEMEN

A Case Study of ERRY III Joint Programme in Tuban District - Lahj Governorate



INTRODUCTION

Yemen is a country struggling with protracted conflict, making it hard for its people to find stable jobs and ensure food availability. The country's weak economy, environmental problems, and the effects of climate change make these issues even worse. In the midst of these challenges, the ERRY III Joint Programme is working to implement sustainable solutions. This is especially true in Tuban, Lahj, a rural area known for economic problems, where the ERRY III JP aims to address the root issues causing vulnerability, food insecurity and job disruptions with targeted, integrated solutions.

This case study analyzes what the ERRY III JP is doing in Tuban, Lahj, focusing on planning and implementation, including the roles of men and women. The study highlights the programme's area-based approach efforts to build resilience, create sustainable employment opportunities and enhance food security in one of the most severely affected areas in Yemen. By examining its effects and what can be learned from them, this study highlights how the programme is working to build sustainable job opportunities and improve food security in one of Yemen's hardest-hit areas.

ERRY III JOINT PROGRAMME

Strengthen resilience of the population in the most vulnerable governorates in Yemen.

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The ERRY III Joint Programme's partnerships leverage the unique strengths of four UN agencies as well as local partners, seeking to maximize synergies and complementarity of interventions, capitalizing on existing capacities at the local level. By employing an Area Based Programming approach, ERRY offers integrated and multi-sectoral development solutions aimed at promoting the socioeconomic recovery and resilience of crisis-affected communities across seven governorates. ERRY's strategy is centered around supporting resilient livelihoods and facilitating the creation of decent employment opportunities, which are critical for revitalizing the local economy.

Yemen is battling a profound crisis due to ongoing conflicts that have negatively impacted the economy and vital agricultural sector, plunging the nation into severe food insecurity and poverty, worsened by environmental challenges like flood, drought and land degradation.

In order to address these challenges, the European Union and the Government of Sweden have co-funded the ERRYIII Joint Programme, in partnership with four UN agencies: UNDP, FAO, ILO, and WFP, with a total allocation of USD 49,378,000 for the period from March 2022 to February 2025. The joint programme aims to strengthen the resilience of Yemen's most vulnerable areas, promoting sustainable energy practices and gender equality.

Focusing on Tuban, a district in Lahj with great agricultural potential yet facing numerous hurdles, the programme aims to tailor interventions to local needs, striving to secure stable livelihoods, improve food availability, and prepare communities for future challenges. This concerted effort represents a hopeful stride towards sustainable development in Yemen through community-centric solutions.



CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

ERRY III Joint Programme promotes locally driven development by empowering communities to articulate their development vision and priorities as expressed in "Community Resilience Plans", which are prepared in an inclusive and participatory manner involving all social groups using the bottom-up approach. The various community level structures, such as Village Cooperative Committees, mobilize communities for shared development, working in a collaborative community micro project, fostering dialogue, trust building exercises, reinforcing social cohesion, and local governance. ERRY JP strives to nurture accelerated recovery and resilience across Yemen's diverse communities.

The ERRY III Joint Programme identified geographical targets using area-based approaches with situations analyzed jointly by all four UN agencies. Different interventions by the four UN agencies are being implemented in the same geographical areas to address diverse needs and complex problems of households and community priorities in an integrated manner.

Led by UNDP in partnership with the Social Fund for Development (SFD), the programme initiates early consultations and community needs assessments to develop these Community Resilience Plans, ensuring that interventions by all participating UN agencies and implementing partners are closely aligned with the community's resilience goals. The community needs are identified in a participatory way involving all stakeholders and joint programme partners. The ERRY III Joint Programme implemented gender-sensitive Community Resilience Plans (CRPs) as a foundation for all its interventions in Tuban, marking a significant shift from previous phases towards a more unified and community-centered approach.



INTERVENTIONS

ERRY III JP'S INTERVENTIONS IN TUBAN DISTRICT WERE DIVERSE, TACKLING VARIOUS HOUSEHOLD AND COMMUNITY NEEDS FOR RESILIENCE, LIVELIHOOD AND FOOD SECURITY.

- **WFP** leads Food for Asset (FFA) interventions where the targeted beneficiaries get access to cash and food by participating in 6-month cash for work programmes that aim to rehabilitate community priority assets. WFP's FFA component built three classrooms, administrative and teachers' rooms, a canopy, and a fence at Kod oteirah School, directly affecting 135 students and indirectly benefiting 733 community members.
- **UNDP** leads and implements micro enterprise and business-related interventions which aim to create sustainable livelihood opportunities for MSMEs. UNDP's livelihoods component renovated Al Hawtah Market; 400 direct beneficiaries including 224 women were involved in the Life Skills & Business Training Programme in collaboration with ILO; 250 individuals benefited from grants and microbusinesses.
- **UNDP** in partnership with SFD leads local governance and social cohesion related interventions with intention to support community prioritized micro projects, build capacity of local institutions, and social cohesion.
- **UNDP'S** local governance Component executed 4 subdistrict projects and 3 initiatives, impacting 7,441 directly and 12,000 indirectly, focusing on community priorities like water network installations to enhance hygiene and reduce water-fetching burdens.
- These initiatives enhanced women's accessibility to basic services such as water, transportation, health and education.





INTERVENTIONS

- **WFP and UNDP** seek to integrate 120 youth and women into the labor market after training. We provided TOT and certification to 9 trainers involved in UNDP's livelihood component and business consulting, ensuring sustainability. Additionally, in collaboration with FAO and ILO, we enhanced the business capabilities of 25 producer and marketing group promoting sustainable income.
- **FAO** leads Agriculture Value Chain Development interventions that include dairy products processing, tomato, and sorghum value chain, provide livestock feeds, and climate smart agriculture. FAO's smart agriculture targets 360 small-scale farmers with climate adaptation interventions, improves tomato production for 400 farmers, enhances livestock management for 350 farmers, and improves dairy production hygiene for 298 smallholders.
- **UNDP** also leads the renewable energy related intervention to increase basic service and public facilities' access to clean energy. UNDP supported schools and public facilities with solar energy systems to improve the school learning environment.
- **FAO's** Agricultural Value Chain support targets climate shock adaptation for 360 small-scale farmers, ;improves tomato production for 400 farmers; enhances livestock management for 350 farmers; and improves dairy production hygiene for 298 smallholders.
- **ILO** leads to provide skills development through apprenticeship scheme in Tuban for 79 beneficiaries in market-demanded occupations. The beneficiaries have successfully completed the program and received certification and toolkits which will facilitate their employment to provide them with sustainable income.

SYNERGIES AND COMPLEMENTARITIES

THE INTEGRATED EFFORTS ACROSS UN AGENCIES ENSURED THAT INTERVENTIONS WERE COMPLEMENTARY AND MUTUALLY REINFORCING, LEADING TO A HOLISTIC COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND MAXIMIZING THE PROGRAMME'S OVERALL IMPACT.

WFP interventions, such as rehabilitation of community assets and infrastructure through the Food for Asset (FFA), which provides cash to beneficiaries who participate in labour-intensive public works, were combined with UNDP's installation of solar panels in key social institutions such as schools and health centres, to effectively restore essential service delivery. The ILO's market-responsive and demand-driven vocational skills development through an apprenticeship scheme, which targeted certain FFA beneficiaries, improved the employability skills of vulnerable youth and women, enabling them to find decent employment. In addition, the FAO gave agricultural inputs to some of the FFA beneficiaries and assisted them in joining the various producer groups established along the four key value chains. Similarly, UNDP and ILO's collaborative effort to provide entrepreneurship training to small business owners and aspiring young entrepreneurs, combined with grants, revived Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs), opening economic opportunities for other businesses in the nearby area.



SYNERGIES AND COMPLEMENTARITIES

- Initiation of Gender Sensitive Community Resilience Plan at the programme's start created basis for synergies among UN agencies (FAO, ILO, UNDP, WFP), enhancing Tuban's community resilience planning processes.
- Synergetic interventions of FAO and ILO improving agriculture and job opportunities. ILO provides training to FAO targeted beneficiaries to improve entrepreneurship skills.
- ILO and UNDP work jointly to enhance capacity building and livelihood opportunities through the "Start and Improve Your Business" initiative.
- WFP targeted beneficiaries after completed cash for work, supported by FAO, ILO and UNDP livelihood interventions to create sustainable livelihoods opportunities.
- The synergies between ILO and UNDP in business development and conducting trainings improved economic empowerment and entrepreneurship skills of women and youth.
- Leveraging synergies with other initiatives and governance structures to boost resource efficiency and community benefits, underlining a united approach for sustainable development in Yemen.
- UNDP solar energy system provided to dairy products processing groups of FAO, public facilities and community assets supported by WFP and vocational training centers supported by ILO, enhances strong synergies to sustain the intervention and created impacts.
- All efforts align with ERRY III's gender action plan to ensure gender equality and empower women in all activities.



GENDER MAINSTREAMING

ERRY III JOINT PROGRAMME PLAYS A PIVOTAL ROLE IN ADVANCING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT THROUGH TARGETED INTERVENTIONS AND COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED IN TUBAN-LAHJ, FOSTERING TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE AND ENHANCING GENDER EQUALITY ACROSS VARIOUS SECTORS.

- Tuban, Lahj interventions by UNDP, WFP, FAO, and ILO enhance gender equality and women empowerment.
- UNDP's local governance component involves women in decision-making through VCCs and SDCs, with women's representation at 50%.
- LG conducts capacity building for women's involvement in community planning, benefiting 24 female beneficiaries.
- Social cohesion component trains women in conflict resolution and mediation, with 4 female participants out of 25 in insider mediators training.
- Livelihoods component supports women through cash for work, entrepreneurship programmes, and grants, with 224 females participating in cash for work activities and 142 women receiving financial grants.
- ILO provides training and apprenticeship programs for women, with 20 female craftspeople and 40 female apprentices.
- Asset rehabilitation, including schools by WFP, aids women's accessibility to basic services, with 41 assets rehabilitated.
- FAO supports women in dairy production and agriculture, with 298 female dairy producers trained and 106 female farmers provided with inputs.





SUCCESS STORIES

SHAKIBA'S JOURNEY: EMPOWERMENT THROUGH UNDP'S LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMME IN TUBAN

Shakiba was engaged in the programme's three-phase approach, beginning with cash-for-work activities that provided immediate financial relief and community benefits. Shakiba then joined a 10-day business management training course, gaining skills vital for entrepreneurship. In the final phase, she received a grant of US\$ 700, which she used to purchase essential equipment to enhance her henna grinding business.

The newly received equipment allowed for a more efficient production process, contributing to a stronger business and improved economic well-being for her family. Her story is a testament to how integrated support combining immediate financial assistance, skill development, and capital investment can lead to sustainable livelihoods and transform the economic landscape for individuals, families and the wider community in Tuban.



SUCCESS STORIES

FAROOQ'S STORY : HARNESSING SOLAR ENERGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Under the joint effort of International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Social Fund for Development (SFD), part of the broader ERRY III Joint Programme, Farooq Ahmed received on job apprenticeship training in solar energy in Tuban District, Lahj Governorate. This training transformed Farooq's career, enabling him to specialize in a field that is not only his profession but also his passion.

Through his apprenticeship, Farooq developed skills to troubleshoot and repair solar panels—a valuable service in his community, where sustainable energy solutions are in high demand. His mentor, Ahmed Ali, commends Farooq's quick learning and developmental pace, noting the mutual benefits of their collaboration.

Farooq's newly acquired expertise led to practical applications, such as directly connecting a fan to a solar energy source in a local school and addressing solar system issues in village homes. His work ensures that schools have the necessary power to operate efficiently and that families benefit from cost-effective and reliable solar energy.

The impact of Farooq's training extends beyond professional growth; it reflects in the well-being of his family as well. With his skills in a growing sector, Farooq can provide for his family, evidenced by his ability to purchase groceries after a hard day's work. The success seen in Farooq's story is a direct result of the synergized efforts of ILO and SFD within the ERRY III Joint Programme to offer practical, in-demand skills training that leads to immediate and tangible benefits.



SUCCESS STORIES

ENHANCING LIVELIHOODS THROUGH INFRASTRUCTURE: THE KOD ODAYRAH SCHOOL

The Kod Odayrah School rehabilitation in Tuban, part of the WFP ERRY Joint Programme's Food Assistance for Assets component, not only transformed educational facilities but also significantly improved livelihoods and food security for the local community. This multifaceted intervention provided immediate cash incentives and imparted new skills to participants involved in the construction, thereby enhancing their income-generating capabilities.

Participants who contributed to the construction benefited from the dual advantage of receiving immediate financial support and acquiring valuable skills that have potential long-term income sustainability. Notably, the initiative also paved the way for some participants to engage in the ILO apprenticeship programme, further enhancing their vocational expertise and employability in sectors such as construction, solar energy maintenance, and more.

This area-based approach ensured that while the school's physical infrastructure was being enhanced, the community's economic resilience was being simultaneously built. Over 31,000 beneficiaries, including women, youth, and vulnerable groups, benefited from cash transfers, which helped them meet essential needs such as food and medication. The project exemplifies how integrating livelihood improvement with asset creation can foster comprehensive community development, improve food security, and support sustainable economic growth. The school will also be benefited from solar energy interventions by UNDP in the near future.

Conclusion

ERRY III JOINT PROGRAMME PLAYS A PIVOTAL ROLE IN ADVANCING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT THROUGH TARGETED INTERVENTIONS AND COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED IN TUBAN-LAHJ, FOSTERING TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE AND ENHANCING GENDER EQUALITY ACROSS VARIOUS SECTORS.

ERRY's Joint Programme Area Based Approach employs multi-sectoral interventions in a synergistic manner, effectively addressing short-term emergency needs while restoring essential service delivery, building resilient livelihoods, and creating economic opportunities. This comprehensive strategy empowers individuals and communities to thrive, charting a course toward a more resilient and prosperous future. The integrated interventions of ERY, coupled with its Area-Based Programming approach, offer a comprehensive package of support, accelerating socio-economic recovery and bolstering community resilience in Yemen. This strategic alignment maximizes impact by addressing multiple dimensions of vulnerability simultaneously, empowering communities to overcome complex challenges and pave the way for sustainable development.

ERRY III Joint Programme has demonstrated a path to sustainable livelihoods, resilience and food security in Yemen, leveraging the strength of stakeholders' collaboration and area-based approaches. This case study is not only showcases of the successful outcomes of the programme but also offers a vision of optimism for Yemen's most vulnerable sectors. The work in Tuban Lahj exemplifies the effectiveness of localized strategies in fostering sustainability and food security under difficult circumstances. The programme's alignment with community priorities, its integration with other efforts, and its focus on gender inclusivity have been pivotal in enhancing community resilience and sustainable growth. These insights from the Tuban Lahj experience provide valuable lessons for similar development initiatives in other regions using area-based approaches.

