

Conflict-Livelihood Interaction In Yemen:

Participatory assessment conducted in Abyan, Taiz, Hajja, and Amran Governorates



October 2013

Acknowledgements

The authors would first like to thank the members of the field research team. Second, we are grateful for the valuable contributions of all our interviewees, from governorate and district levels key informants to livelihood groups members, who participated in this study. We would also like to acknowledge the valuable inputs of Carine Dreau, and Khaled Yasin Al-Dubaia in ensuring the quality of the field work implementation process and editing final reports of the assessment. We would also like to acknowledge the valuable inputs of Naresh Sing in the development of the study design and conceptual framework. This document is an output of a project funded by UNDP. However, the views expressed and information contained within are not necessarily those of or endorsed by UNDP, which accepts no responsibility for such views or information or for any reliance placed on them.

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Disclaimer

The authors of this Assessment Report do not claim that the findings presented represent the official position of UNDP or any other institution involved in this assessment.

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Cover page: Livelihood activity in Shar'ab al-Salam, Taiz. Photo: © Interaction In Development

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Abbreviations

CSO	Civil Society Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
KII	Key Informative Interview
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
SLA	Sustainable Livelihood Approach
SWF	Social Welfare Fund
GoY	Government of Yemen
HH	Households
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Executive Summary

This report presents the results of a participatory qualitative assessment on people's perceptions of the conflict and livelihoods interaction in Abyan, Taiz, Hajja, and Amran Governorates in Yemen. The study was part of a comprehensive research project funded by UNDP, which included an intensive literature review, and a quantitative Household study in the same governorates.

In each governorate, the study was conducted in two districts that were selected to represent various aspects of the governorate (i.e. vulnerability context, conflict, livelihood structure, etc.). The study team met with relevant stakeholders at district and governorate levels with a diverse range of livelihood groups, men and women, youth, and formal and informal leaders including authorities, youth, and civil society actors.

The key objectives of this qualitative assessment included complementing the findings of the quantitative Household Survey, and helping better understand the livelihoods dynamics of the people, before and after conflict, in terms of the following dimensions:

- 1) the vulnerability context including impact of conflicts, natural disasters, seasonality and other shocks and stresses,
- 2) the coping and adaptive strategies of the people,
- 3) the assets of household and community,
- 4) the transforming structures and processes through which people realise their livelihood outcomes including policies, institutions, organisations, culture, religion, power relations etc.
- 5) livelihood activities, entitlements, capabilities and outcomes.

In order to fulfil the research objectives, several qualitative and participatory assessment techniques and tools were used, including key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs) with some participatory and visual tools, case studies, structured observation of situations and life histories. Prior to the start of the assessment few meetings were set up with the UNDP assessment international expert to agree on the key issues and themes to be explored in the assessment in the light of the DFID Sustainable Livelihood Framework.¹

Data collection was carried out by Interaction in Development during the period of 5-20 September 2013 by two teams (one team for data collection in two governorates). Each team comprised one team leader, two females and two males. A principal investigator led the two data collection teams. Another Interaction key expert was also devoted as a peer reviewer to ensure the quality of the final outputs and the linkages between this participatory assessment and the quantitative household assessment.

Key findings of the assessment

- Conflicts were the major factors affecting the vulnerability context in all the 8 communities followed by restrictions on migration and border crossing to Saudi Arabia, then drought, floods, animal disease outbreaks, and seasonal shocks.
- The four types of conflicts revealed during the FGDs were the 2011 conflict; the war against Al-Qaeda and Ansar Al-Sharia'a in southern governorates; Houthis related conflicts in northern governorates (with the government, with Islah Political party in Amran, and with the tribes in Mastaba district (Hajjah) and neighboring areas); and tribal conflict. The war against Al-Qaeda and Ansar Al-Sharia'a in southern governorates, and enduring closure (occupation) of Mastaba district in Hajja, revealed the highest vulnerability situation with a slight difference in the nature of the conflict (Khanfar in Abyan governorate was still affected by the displacement and the massive destruction as a result of the war against Al-Qaida and Ansar Al-Sharia'a militants, while Mastaba in Hajja governorate did not reach

¹ Ashley and Carney: 1999, DFID 1999) analytical framework of Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF)

massive destruction, the closure of the district affected all aspects of people's livelihoods. Although Lawder district in Abyan being in similar context with Khanfar, but its capacity to build on different capitals including the social capitals, made it more capable of coping to survive compared to Khanfar (Abyan) and Mastaba (Hajja).

- The wage laborers constitute the largest livelihood groups in all governorates followed by 'petty traders' - owners of small and micro business. The regular salary in the public sector or other than the public sector came as the third livelihood group followed in fourth place by a combination of various livelihood groups (small farmers, small scale fishers, and limited number of large farmers, large traders, and large fishers) that vary in size from one context to another urban status (urban/rural) and the geophysical context). As a result of the 2011 political conflicts, very few livelihood groups emerged and/or increased in some localities (i.e. armed groups, drug dealers, smugglers, kidnappers, and looting groups). Most livelihood groups were dominated by men.
- The perceived high level of insecurity and lack of safety was a grave issue in Khanfar, Lawder, Al-Qahera, and Mastaba districts. All still considered conflict-prone areas. In Abyan, the "defeated" Al-Qaida and Ansar Al-Sharia'a were still considered a potential threat for communities in general and for their livelihoods in particular. Residence and returnees in Khanfar (Abyan governorate) were agonized by the enormous destruction and had major concerns over landmines buried in some agricultural areas and in the fishers' compound. In Mastaba district (Hajja governorate) people reported to be under siege by Houthis, and this affected all aspects of their livelihoods. Some of the issues raised during FGDs with men and women included harassment; shooting near women and children as they fetched water from the source or worked in the fields (pregnant women had miscarriages in the fields). Landmines in 'what-used-to-be' the main weekly market of A'hem imposed a siege on the district controlling access to grazing, and farmers could not even use or sell their lands. The occupation of schools and health facilities had been depriving children from going to schools, and the community from using health services. Houthis were also said to imprison anyone opposing them. Local authorities came to a halt. People were not allowed to visit the sheikh in his house.
- Communities' financial assets and their access to financial resources were affected by multiple factors included conflict, increased prices, and natural and seasonal shocks (in all areas with variation in the severity of the impact of conflict in Abyan, and Mastaba district in Hajja), restrictions on migration and cross borders trade with Saudi Arabia (mainly in Hajja, and little impact in Shar'ab, Lawder, Amran and Al-Qahera), animal disease outbreak (mainly in Hajja and Abyan). People lost their livelihoods as a result of the conflict, and lack of job opportunities. Few members of the livelihood groups had their equipment and tools destroyed or looted (in Abyan), or had to sell them and meet other crucial household (HH) needs (i.e. agricultural tools and fishing tools in Abyan, tools of petty traders and small business in Taiz and Hajja, etc.).
- Access to financial support from SWF and welfare organizations had become more difficult after the conflict compared to the situation before, when the major challenges were in the limited amount of money and the time and effort consuming processes. Participants spoke about various reasons including an increased number of the poor as a result of the conflict compared to the limited capacities of these institutions. In addition, it was indicated that lack of appropriate targeting schemes had been leading these institutions to depend on local agents or staff who tended to classify people based on their political stand during the conflict. The type of support that could be accessed, although with some difficulty, was mainly in terms of food, assistance in weddings, sickness, or marriage and mostly during the month of Ramadan, but no examples were seen in terms of supporting livelihood groups to recover their livelihood activities. Accessing banks that assist income generation activities - available mainly in Al-Qahera and Abs - was reported to be very difficult; they required guarantees that could not be afforded by the poor, incorporated high interest fees, did not have appropriate repayment schedules, did not provide additional guiding services, as well as did not extend leniency to those who may fail in their business or get risks that hinder the repayment. Accessing credit from relatives and shop keepers

was increased at the beginning of the conflict but became so tough when all HHs, relatives and shop keepers were directly or indirectly affected by the conflict.

- To cope with the results of the conflict, different strategies were applied at the household and community levels. Some of these strategies entailed actions that had negative consequences, while some strategies were considered by communities as positive and enhance households' and communities' resilience. Coping strategies' negative impact on people included: reducing consumption, selling crucial household assets, shifting to traditional healers, living in the damaged shelters with very poor sanitation and living conditions. They had to continue their livelihood activities in a risky environment where they did not have clarity on the maps of landmines. They still got shot by armed men occupying the area and forcing closure on people movement. Other negative coping strategies were: shifting to home based treatment of pregnancy and delivery, diluting milk powder for babies, not seeking vaccinations that were restricted by armed groups, getting water from contaminated sources, joining armed groups, drug dealers and smugglers, accepting forced and early marriage to armed men, using harmful sources for energy and cooking purposes, allowing children to travel illegally to work in Saudi Arabia through dealers involved in child trafficking, pausing livelihood activities of the poorest rural women to avoid cultural restrictions and fines on animal rearing in the land of others, or to avoid impact of chemicals on their beekeeping activities, divorce and domestic violence, mental health problems due to pressure of demands, dropping out of schools to work and support the family or to protect girls from harassment and road risks, forming community armed groups to protect the area putting youth at risk, etc.. Several types of organizations were reported by participants to be operating in the eight districts targeted by the assessment in the four governorates. These organizations included local councils and government executive institutions, formal and informal social NGOs groups, private organizations; political parties, and INGOs. There was a perceived lack of Institutions at the district level in terms of enhancing access to information on conflict and livelihood activities, enhancing preparedness, building capacities and coordination among livelihood groups, and enhancing coordination among government institutions, NGOs, INGOs, private sector, and other stakeholders

Priorities / recommendations

In light of the above key findings, the following early recovery and resilience priority recommendations were proposed by the researchers, based on the perspectives of different respondents involved in this study and the evidence collected.

Key urgent protection priorities

Some priorities were indicated by participants in different communities as grave issues and require urgent attention and action by all stakeholders at all levels. These issues include:

1. Protection of some conflict prone areas of perceived high level of insecurity and lack of safety like Khanfar, Lawder, Al-Qahera, and Mastaba districts. All were still considered conflict-prone areas and the need for protection mechanisms was highly emphasized.
2. Protection of specific vulnerable groups including IDPs and returnees from Abyan, families with lost breadwinners, families with disabilities and mental health problems due to conflict, women and children in Mastaba (Hajja) living under the siege by Houthis, harassment victims, people living close to areas where landmines have been buried in by armed groups, malnutrition cases, people blocked from accessing water and health services, youth and child soldiers, victims of child trafficking, drug addiction, and early marriage, jobless returnees from Saudi Arabia, imprisoned citizens by Houthis, marginalized groups (akhdam), poor and large families with no or very limited income, wage laborers and livelihood groups restricted from doing their activities such as animal grazing, beekeeping, petty traders in urban centers, etc.

3. Protection of key community projects that destroyed or stopped due to the conflict or are still occupied by armed groups was prioritized in some areas such as infrastructure in Abyan, Thula water projects, all schools and health facilities occupied by Houthis in Hajja, or by armed groups in Shar'ab (Taiz).

Recommendations and priorities for early recovery and resilience:

The main priorities and recommendations for early recovery and resilience shared by participants focused on strengthening preparedness adaptive capacities, improving livelihoods, governance and coordination mechanisms and policies.

Strengthening preparedness capacities

- Promoting positive attitudes towards the importance of preparedness schemes at different levels, building on indigenous and Islamic history in this aspect and tackling any negative attitudes that were created due to misinterpretation of some religious concepts.
- Building various early warning and awareness systems that provide people with the relevant information on different expected conflicts and shocks in each area, expected vulnerabilities, sound coping strategies and available support programs for each type of shock and affected group and how to access them. Selection of awareness channels and approaches should take into account the effectiveness of each approach and its ability to target each community, livelihood groups, cultural and gender differences.
- Assessment of the indigenous knowledge and early warning systems in some sectors (i.e. informing villagers when a flood/valley coming from the mountains due to heavy rain in mountainous areas (Shar'ab), tribal systems used in preparedness and calling for unity when the area faces a threat from armed groups(Lawder), etc. The negative impact of a conflict on such indigenous systems should also get assessed and alternative approaches checked and piloted if needed.
- Establishing community based preparedness structures and building their capacities in analysis of shocks and conflicts, participatory planning, mitigation, assessment of all available resources and their locations and how to use them during conflict/shock (i.e. alternative shelters, water resources, financial resources, alternative plans, etc.
- Most preparedness interventions focus on national, governorate, and community levels. This study emphasizes the need to help each livelihood group (i.e. petty traders, wage laborers, farmers, fishermen groups, etc.) and each vulnerable group (i.e. marginalized groups) to have their own preparedness and representative structures that link their needs and plans in the overall community/district preparedness plans. Such structures would also enhance sharing of information among the same group and strengthen their advocacy and lobbying voices. Building on the lessons learnt from the experience of few marginalized groups NGOs in Taiz, these can provide a basis for an increase in efforts to establish and enhance preparedness structures for livelihood groups, although their experience was still limited to community based development and advocacy and did not reach preparedness level.
- Establishing a task force of district, local government, NGOs, INGOs, livelihood groups representative structures, and private sector to link local preparedness into wider development plans
- Participatory assessment of vulnerable groups and households in each community and providing prevention and protection services using appropriate and participatory targeting while avoiding social, political, ideological, distance, and gender biases. Access to secured shelter, roads, access to water,

sanitation and hygiene nutrition, education, health services, work and markets, security and safety were reported very weakly in most communities assessed in this study and should be priorities in the protection interventions. The previous section on urgent priorities and other sections of the report indicated more details on urgent protection issues in each community.

- Enhancing involvement of different networks and stakeholders in advocating and expanding the preparedness mechanisms.
- Enhancing the involvement of available research institutions and/or creating “think-tank” institutions committed to mobilizing preparedness concepts and mechanisms. Conflict in some areas like Taiz, already contributed to the emergence of many informal entities that can be assisted to enhance their capacities, focus and ways of working.
- More advocacy and pressure still required by related stakeholders at national and governorate levels to enhance government spending on preparedness, operational, information systems, and capacity building budgets for executive government offices at community level (i.e. health, education, agriculture extension, etc.). Demonstrable models should be supported and promoted by available INGOs and donors working in conflict prone areas to be used for advocacy and promotion purposes.

Strengthening adaptive capacities:

- Promoting positive attitudes towards sharing positive coping and adaptive strategies and tackling all related common superstitious ideas that may hinder sharing successful approaches with others.
- Improving understanding of trends and their local impacts is a crucial introductory task in planning, designing, and promoting adaptive strategies.
- Building various awareness systems that provide people with the relevant information on different conflicts, shocks, their impact and the best coping strategies done by others in the same context. Selection of awareness approaches on coping strategies should take into account trusted effective approach for each community, livelihood groups, cultural and gender differences.
- Enhancing involvement of different networks and stakeholders in promoting practical adaptive strategies.
- Building confidence and flexibility to learn and experiment
- Enhancing the involvement of available research institutions in assessing and promoting innovative adaptive schemes building on various experiences including experiences in other countries with a similar context.
- Areas for further research: Extending the assessment of the indigenous adaptive knowledge and practices is recommended by this study. Given the scope of the assessment and its focus on conflict-livelihood interaction, various coping strategies people pursue to deal with food insecurity, climate change, natural, and seasonal shocks on their livelihoods were not intensively covered as it was the case of coping strategies to meet the impact of the conflict. Thus more detailed research of non-conflict related coping and adaptive strategies in some livelihood activities (i.e. agriculture) still needed to reach better understanding of the sound practices that can be mobilized among farmers, and wage-laborers in the agriculture sector. Similarly this can be done in other sectors like (fishery, trade, etc.)

Improving livelihoods

- Tackling the perceived high level of insecurity and lack of safety in the conflict prone communities, markets, and roads. Fighting armed groups should take into account the safety of citizens, their shelters and livelihoods capital assets.

- Ensuring appropriate living conditions with secured shelter, access to water and sanitation, access to electricity, education facilities, and health services. Key issues to focus on include; reconstruction of shelters, refinancing projects interrupted during the war, getting armed groups out of the schools and health facilities, and supporting the finance of health care, education, and cost of electricity in areas of very hot climate.
- Awareness-raising on self-employment and small enterprises.
- Promoting access to various skills to diversify job opportunities. This study emphasizes the need to modify the vocational training approaches to fit with majority of livelihood groups and their limitations. Participatory assessments of market needs and opportunities should inform the plans of vocational trainings. Skills needed to build confidence, management and marketing skills, dealing with financial institutions, and enhancing attitudes to self-employment should also get incorporated and promoted. The need for encouraging policies and supportive environment to involve youth and women in the market in different livelihood activities (motivational, acknowledgement, grants, free formal and informal vocational trainings, tools, etc.)
- Improving access to markets and employment and reduce closure on markets by armed groups. In non-conflict areas, petty traders asked for protection from the suddenly imposed restrictions by municipality and local authorities.
- Control of prices of basic food items and essential livelihood requirement including prices of the diesel for agricultural and fishing purposes.
- Change of current credit policies including high interest rates, guarantees required from poorest families and those who have no fixed salaries to ensure repayment, short repayment schedules, fines on delay in repayment, etc.
- Ensure appropriate payment value and schemes for daily wage workers
- Establishing community and livelihood-based organizations and building their capacities in technical and “how” to run their livelihood activities, analysis shocks and conflicts and their impact, prepare participatory mitigation plans, access to resources, accessing related information, networking and linkages with other organizations and stakeholders, advocacy and lobbying skills, etc.
- Establishing networks of local livelihood organizations and building their capacities to raise their voices and participate in the planning, programming and policy making in issues affecting their livelihoods.
- Building livelihood organization adaptive capacities (including access to information on adaptive schemes, saving schemes, insurance, etc.)
- Supporting access to, and sustainable management of, productive assets (i.e. land, irrigation schemes, sea and fishing areas, etc.)
- Enhancing involvement of different networks and stakeholders in advocating and expanding support to livelihood groups including research and think-tank institutions
- Implementing different motivational initiatives for livelihood groups and individuals (acknowledgement of women workers, butchers, carriers, cleaners, youth successful projects, farmers associations, etc.).

Improving governance and coordination

- Enhancing coordination mechanisms, sharing of information, and adherence to ethical issues in relief and development work among all stakeholders at the community level (government, NGOs, INGOs, etc.), ensuring sound participation of local authorities, organizations, and livelihood groups representative structures.
- Enhancing the enabling environment for integrated, pro-poor, gender sensitive, decentralized and participatory interventions on livelihood and conflict.
- Advocacy and policy work at different levels to address underlying trends, systemic, and policy issues (including national expenditures and commitment to livelihood, protection, health financing; tax and

market policies, protection programs and targeting mechanisms, grievance systems, transparency, distribution of wealth and participation, control of armed groups, etc.)

1. Introduction/ Context

Economic recovery, underpinned by sustainable household livelihood, was at the core of the Government of Yemen (GoY) Transitional Program for Stabilization and Development (2012-2014). Poverty and pessimism about the possibility of a dignified livelihood have been among the key drivers of successive cycles of conflict. Concerted immediate and longer term responses are required if the 'transition' is to gain momentum and faith of the populace in the process maintained. Considering the limited resources and the magnitude of need, the challenge for the international community is where and how to target livelihoods responses, and ensure that interventions will have a meaningful sustainable impact.

Yemen, which is one of the poorest countries in the Arab world, is chronically underdeveloped with 44% food insecurity and 58%² stunting among children less than 5 years of age. This is the second highest stunting rate in the world. During 2011, prices of staple food such as wheat, flour, sugar, milk and dairy products rose by between 40% and 60%. At the same time Yemeni households were vulnerable to new food price shocks, with about 96% of Yemeni families being net buyers of food, and around 17.5% of the population living below the 1 PPP\$ poverty line and 34.8% under the national poverty line according to 2006 Household Budget Survey³. The poorest Yemeni households spent a third of their income on bread alone. Unemployment among 15-24 age groups was 52.9% and 44.4% among the 25-59 years group. Poverty ratio increased from 35 % in 2006 to over 50 % in 2010, resulting in increased poverty rate of living on less than \$ 2 a day.

The situation of women was of particular concern, as the gender gap in Yemen was consistently ranked highest in the world. Cultural constraints relating to their participation in discussions, independent ownership of assets and freedom of movement with consequent lack of access to markets compounded the livelihood disempowerment of women. Notwithstanding 25.8% of the formal (and up to 50% of the informal) total labor force (aged 15+) were women (2010)⁴ and 91% of women in rural areas work in agriculture on family lands and were not paid for their labor. However, only 11% of women farmers received payment for their labor⁵. Thus disproportionately affected groups included women, children, small scale farmers and sharecroppers, landless laborers, nomadic herders and artisanal fishermen scattered in 133,000 small rural settlements.

Approximately 75% of the population lives in rural areas. In addition to this gap between rural and urban areas, there were huge local and regional disparities. According to the 2006 poverty assessment, Human Poverty Index at the governorate level varied between 20% and about 60% in urban areas and between 40% and 70% in rural areas. Money metric measure ranged across governorates from 15% to 70% in rural

² WFP/UNICEF CFSS (2102)

³ 3rd GoY/UNDP/World Bank Household budget Survey, 2006

⁴ *International Labour Organization, using World Bank population estimates*

⁵ CEDAW Report 2008

areas and from 5% to 40% in urban areas. These disparities were even more pronounced at the district level. Moreover, the food and fuel crisis as well as the conflict and instable political situation have most probably resulted not only in poverty increase but also in an aggravation of regional/local disparities. The degradation of natural resources, especially water, also contributed to the crisis of the livelihoods systems of many communities across Yemen and to the increase of tension and conflicts between communities. Beyond an understanding of which areas have been directly affected by conflict⁶ there was a lack of disaggregated data that could allow identifying the most vulnerable areas and communities, to understand their livelihoods systems and which specific factors and dynamics of vulnerability were lacking. However, returning IDPs to Sa'ada and Abyan was clearly a priority. Moreover, in Yemen data gaps seemed to persist for indicators tracking the rate of vulnerability, employment, skilled healthcare workers, teachers, as well as more broadly employees engaged in the agricultural, industrial and service sectors for both women and men.

The government, humanitarian and development community in Yemen agreed that revitalization of household livelihoods was a priority area for 2013. To achieve this agenda, updated data analysis on livelihoods was therefore urgently needed. Lack of sustainable livelihoods was a significant root cause of many cluster concerns ranging from malnutrition to lack of education and a range of protection issues. All clusters responses would therefore benefit from a better understanding of household dynamics and from addressing livelihood gaps.

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⁶ In the north Sa'ada, Hajjah and Amran and in the south Abyan, Aden and Lahej.

⁷ Ashley and Carney: 1999, DFID 1999) analytical framework of Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF)

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2. Methodology

2.1. Research objectives, themes and questions

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- 2) the coping and adaptive strategies of the people,
- 3) the assets of household and community,
- 4) the transforming structures and processes through which people realize their livelihood outcomes including policies, institutions, organizations, culture, religion, power relations etc.
- 5) livelihood activities, entitlements, capabilities and outcomes.

Research questions included sets of questions around views on conflict, vulnerabilities, livelihood activities and groups, coping strategies, transforming structures and ideas for early recovery and resilience programming and policy change.

Box 1: Key questions of the qualitative assessment

1. Assess the **vulnerability context** in terms of shocks and stresses, seasonality, trends, human induced, natural disasters, socio-economic, cultural, political, ecological, types of conflict occurred with what impacts? What makes the household livelihoods susceptible to these various shocks and stresses
2. 2.a. What is the **livelihood structure** of the people (Livelihoods - activities (labor and self-employment) assets (5 types), entitlements, capabilities (part of human capital but now linked to freedoms economic, social, political, ecological, cultural) before and after the conflict.

2.b. Are their livelihoods sustainable? (Analyze the livelihood system through the lens of sustainability i.e. Are they ecologically sound, economically effective, socially equitable?)
3. 3.a. **What are the coping** (usually short term and negative) and adaptive (more long term) strategies as a result of conflict compared to before conflict?

3.b. What are the constraints and opportunities for **early recovery**? What early recovery strategies /actions would make sense?

3.c. What are the constraints and opportunities for building resilience leading to longer term sustainable development? Which early recovery strategies are consistent with long term sustainable development and which are not?

4. What are the **transforming structures and processes** through which people's livelihoods are realized: policies, institutions, culture (including religion, ideology, other cultural practices) power relations. How do these help or hinder early recovery, resilience building, and livelihood sustainability?

2.2. Methods and techniques for data collection

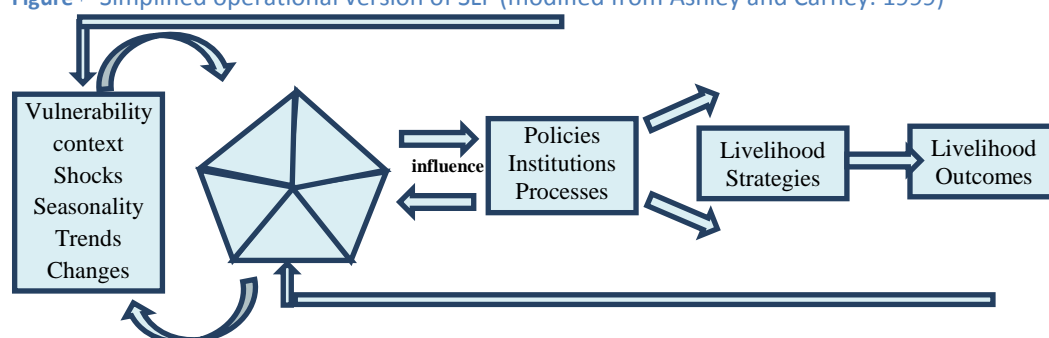
Several qualitative and participatory data collection methods were used. These methods included (but were not limited to) the following tools.

1. Key informant interviews (KIIs): KIIs at the local and governorate levels included government representatives, community leaders, leaders of available activist or civil society groups (youth, women, marginalized groups).
2. Focus group discussions (FGDs): Incorporating some participatory and visual tools based on semi-structured guides, FGDs were conducted with several groups in each district, disaggregated by gender, age (mainly youth and adults) and involvement in livelihood activities.
3. Case studies: Guided by the FGDs and KIIs, case studies were carried out with few community members identified for their particular characteristics – male/female, adult/youth, particular vulnerability, and particular livelihood group.
4. Structured observation: Guided by the KIIs and issues raised during the FGDs, situations (during, e.g., visits to markets, visits to public services institutions, areas destroyed during the conflict, etc.).
5. Validation meetings (Roundtable at governorate to validate the study findings at districts, and to gain broader understanding on institutions.
6. Validations of the findings of the qualitative assessment by cross checking with the results of the Quantitative Household Survey

2.3. Data processing and analysis

The assessment team used the DFID Sustainable Livelihoods Framework⁸ as the analytical framework to structure the data collected and to guide data analysis and reporting.

Figure 1 Simplified operational version of SLF (modified from Ashley and Carney: 1999)



- All interviews, with appropriate consent, were transcribed to Arabic (Researchers also took detailed notes during FGDs, and KIIs, including on non-verbal communication during interviews and other meetings).

⁸ Ashley and Carney: 1999, DFID 1999) analytical framework of Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF)

- Every day following data collection, the research team under the coordination of the principal investigator held a detailed debrief and analysis meeting to identify key themes and sub-themes first to track and then to analyze in depth. Research team members generated summaries of each meeting, including identified themes and supporting verbatim statements.
- All identified themes and sub-themes formed the basis of an internal analysis workshop in Sana'a among the research team.
- A detailed summary of different areas and findings (by theme, district, gender, age group, etc.) was developed during the participatory analysis done in Sana'a and formed the basis for report writing.

2.4. Evaluation of livelihood capitals

The livelihood capitals for the assessment areas and main vulnerable livelihood groups were assessed following the five types of livelihoods assets (Human, Natural, Financial, Physical and Social capitals). The evaluation was conducted based on various scoring exercises done at the FGDs and KIIs at the district and Governorate levels in settings where the team did not find challenges with the time required to do the exercise within the FGD. Very few evaluations were done by the assessment team based on the information collected from various resources. Assets were evaluated using a scale starting from a value of "0" to a maximum of "5" for each type of assets. Scores were used to design the pentagon shape chart for developing a comparative overview of the assets. Although evaluations of districts' capital assets were done with community people, information was validated with key informants and results of the observation done by the team. This triangulation was needed as participants in some localities revealed limited understanding of the context of the whole district. Assessment teams tried their best to reduce biases expected in the estimations provided by key informants (i.e. sharing with key informants the result of observations done by assessment team in the area, asking for supporting data and documents, consulting more key informants, etc.).

Table 1: Summary of the locally defined indicators for the evaluation of access to assets

Natural capital assets	
<u>Natural resources</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultivable land• Sea and “good” and long beach/ sea shore• Rocks and sand for construction <u>Environmental and location conditions</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Potential for clean energy (sun, wind)○ Moderate climate with less impact on health and livelihoods○ Tourism/historical areas○ Strategic location in the region	<u>Appropriate management systems of the natural resource</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Irrigation resources• Ownership and access to public lands and mountains• Ability to reach your own land and do regular agriculture activities
Financial capital assets	
<u>Family/ Households assets</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Women’s gold• Furniture and HH materials including weapons• Animals/livestock• Crops/goods• Equipment/materials (used by farmers, fishermen, petty traders, businessmen, transportation, etc.)• Cash in hand/saving• Land• Buildings	<u>Credit:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trust and relation based credit-no interest• Credit institutions <u>Solidarity/ Remittances</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remittances support from relatives• Solidarity/Philanthropic support <u>Humanitarian and social protection initiatives</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Humanitarian (INGOs, relief agencies)• Support from Social Welfare Fund <u>Membership risk sharing schemes</u>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Insurance scheme Organized/membership risk sharing (tribal, traditional scheme)
Social and political Capital Assets	
Social capital assets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in formal and informal social groups and networks that provide support for protection, cooperation, advocacy and pressure, etc. (i.e. community-based organizations, NGOs, Youth, livelihood groups associations, religious-based organizations, women's organizations, and extended family networks. • Relations of trust /Mutual support and solidarity • Supporting religious, traditional and cultural norms • Connections and networks (patronage, kinship and affiliation, neighborhood, relation with people in power or in main institutions, etc.) • Perceived levels of safety and security 	Political/governance capital assets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to and participation in government decision-making processes • Gender relations and power structures influencing control over decision making within households, communities, and the wider society • Access to judicial systems and security sector institutions.
Physical Capital Assets	
<p>1. Access to adequate housing (secured buildings/shelters with healthy living conditions)</p> <p>2. Access to and use of basic infrastructures in the area (i.e. Access to safe water and sanitation, secured roads, secured water and Sanitation services, formal or informal Irrigation scheme, Stable electricity services, Telecommunication services, schools, university, and other education institutions, health facilities, vocational training centers for formal and informal training, agriculture and fishing support centers, awareness channels on livelihood and conflict, fixed and secured markets, etc.)</p> <p>3. Available tools, equipment and materials needed for livelihood activities</p>	
Human Capital Assets	
<u>Knowledge, education and skills</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational attainment • Skill levels • Knowledge base and local use of science and technology • The extent to which local skills match the needs of existing or emerging local businesses <u>Access to food, education, and health care and Capacity to work</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of disability/mental health problems • Freedom of work, to travel, to sell in markets • Nutrition • Healthy living conditions and practices • Appropriateness of work types to age, gender and physical capacities. • Motivating, safe, age and gender sensitive working conditions. 	<u>Livelihood aspirations and Capacity to adapt</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness and eagerness to gain and improve knowledge and skills • Opportunities for formal and informal vocational training • Life skills (self-confidence, etc.) • Connection and sharing with others in various livelihood activities • Dynamic and flexible workers • Risk taking • Adapt to any situation • Have more connections, network, patronage, membership groups, etc. • Trust based connections (for example; to borrow money, or take goods on credit, etc.) • Use safe savings schemes • Know the right coping approaches that do not affect physical health • Use formal and/or informal insurance schemes • Ability to deal with social trends

2.5. Sample sizes and types of respondents

The participatory assessment conducted in the four governorates of Abyan, Amran, Hajjah and Taiz, where the quantitative Household Survey was undertaken. From each governorate two districts selected to ensure livelihoods diversity as described in the next sub-section on Sample Selection of Districts.

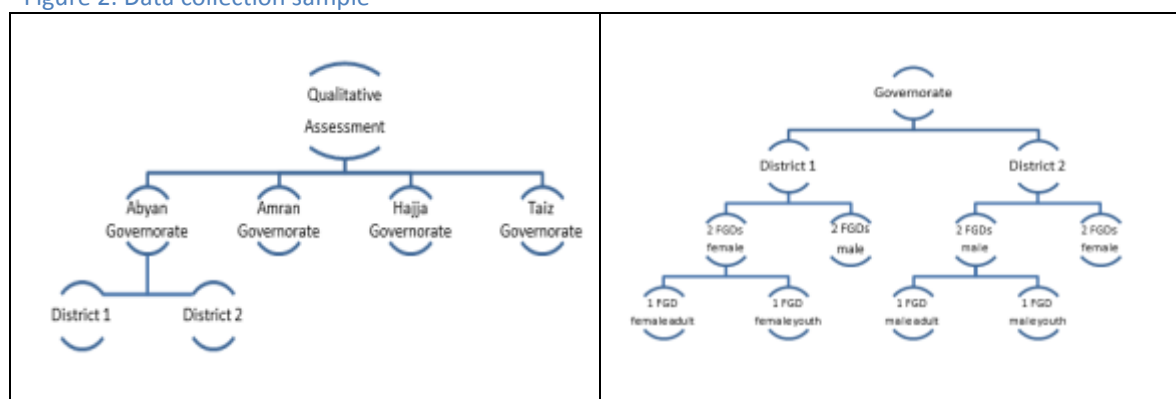
Table 2: Shows various data collection methods applied in each of the assessment areas.

Methods	in each district					in each governorate (2 districts)					In the 4 governorates (8 districts)				
	Female		Male		Total	Female		Male		Total	Female		Male		total
	Adult	Youth	Adult	Youth		Adult	Youth	Adult	Youth		Adult	Youth	Adult	Youth	
FGD with participatory tools	1	1	1	1	4	2	2	2	2	8	8	8	8	8	32
FGD participants	10	10	10	10	40	20	20	20	20	80	80	80	80	80	320
KIIs	1				1	2 in districts + 1 at governorate				3	12				12
Case studies					1					2	8				8
Round table: # of meetings										1	8				4
Round table: # of persons										10	8				40
Site observation					1					2	8				8

In each district, four FGDs conducted: 2 with males and 2 with females. The two male FGDs included a session for male adults and a session for male youth, and this also applied for the female FGDs. The number of FGDs in the four governorates was around 32 sessions targeting approximately 320 persons on the basis of 10 participants in each FGD. Besides the FGDs, the assessment teams conducted three KIIs in each governorate (one in each district and one at governorate level).

Other complementary methods used include two case studies/life histories in each governorate thus the total was 8 on the basis of two case studies per governorate. To validate the findings from the district round table meetings were organized at governorate level with key informants from local officials and NGOs, and knowledgeable persons. The total number of round table meetings was 2 (was difficult to organize in Taiz and Hajja and replaced by more KIIs), and the total number of participants in these meetings was about 15 persons.

Figure 2: Data collection sample



2.6. Selection of the districts/ areas

The 8 districts selected to be targeted in the qualitative assessment have been outlined below. **Overall**, the districts were all selected based on **purposive sampling** using several criteria: (1) the 8 districts were all cited in the Desk Review; (2) they were all targeted in the quantitative Household Survey thus the data

from the qualitative assessment could inform the quantitative Household Survey; and (3) within each governorate the two districts were selected to represent the diversity of the ecology within the same governorate, which was relevant to the main livelihoods types.

Moreover, the 8 selected districts were known for being conflict areas and/or conflict affected areas. The 8 districts selected reflected the ecological zones of the four governorates, and in Amran, Raidah was selected to capture the unique ethnicity of a Jewish community living in Raidah, which was a place surrounded by tribes, and Raidah was at the time hosting IDPs from Arhab as a consequence of the war. In the 8 selected districts efforts were made to ensure capture of the various contexts (factors) of conflicts: Al-Qaida, Houthis; tribal conflicts; land disputes; IDP hosting areas, the 2011 political conflict. The latter was also a cross cutting issue throughout the 8 districts.

Table 3: List of selected districts in the 4 Governorate of the qualitative assessment

Governorate	Districts	Key Features	Classification	
			By Ecology	By Conflict
Abyan	Khanfar	Coastal, conflict, Qaida	Coastal	Al-Qaida
	Lawder	Mountainous, tribal, Qaida	Mountainous	Tribal, Al-Qaida
Amran	Thula	Urban, impact of conflict on the main livelihood activities built around tourism	Urban (tourist attraction)	Affected by lack of tourists due to security problems in Yemen
	Raida	Rural, ethnic/ Jewish minorities and a hosting community for IDPs from the conflict in Arhab between Gov. military camps and local armed tribes	Rural	Ethnicity; IDPs' hosting community
Hajja	Abs	Western and flat part of Hajja, Market, on the international road to Saudi Arabi, diversity of livelihood activities	Lowland with diversified livelihoods	Conflict with Houthis ; land disputes; IDPs' hosting community
	Mastaba	Mountainous, occupied by Al-Houthis, schools, health facilities, and local weekly markets have been closed and occupied by Al-Houthis	Mountainous	Tribal, occupied and fully controlled by Al-Huothis
Taiz	Al Qaherah	Urban (part of Taiz City), among the poorest districts in Taiz, political context	Urban (poor)	Political context (2011 conflict)
	Shar'ab As Salaam	Rural, mountainous, tribal, on-going conflict among tribes increased due to the political unrest	Mountainous	Prolonged tribal conflict increased due to the political unrest

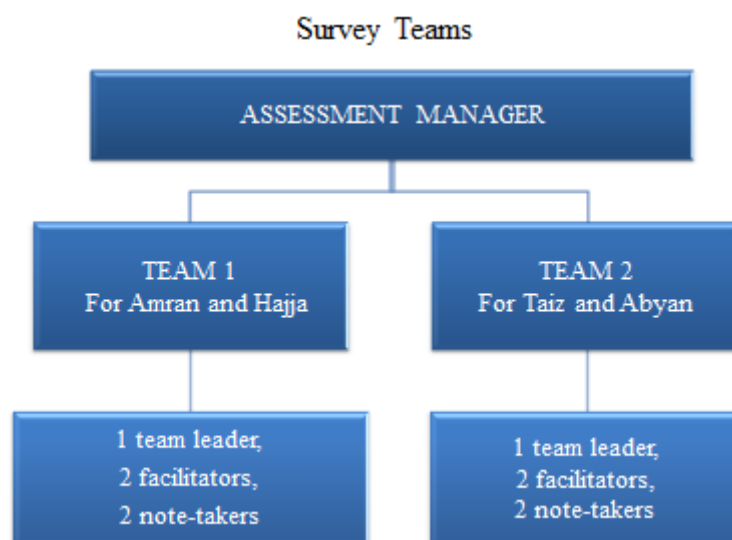
2.7. Research team composition

Given the qualitative and participatory nature of the research and the context of the research areas, the team structure reflected a clear balance of skills, knowledge and experience in qualitative and participatory evaluation. The team was comprised of the following (but not limited to) members:

1. One principal investigator
2. One peer reviewer
3. Ten qualitative researchers (divided into two sub-teams and reflected a gender and cultural balance)

4. Two administrative/assistant staff members
5. Local coordinators (recruited from the areas to facilitate and coordinate meetings with the targeted key informants and participants from various livelihood groups)

Figure 7 Composition of the assessment field team



2.8. Capacity Building of the assessment team

To build the knowledge and skill of the assessment team in regards to conflict and livelihood aspects as well as to refresh the knowledge and skill of the team in the qualitative research and some specific participatory tools needed for the assessment, Interaction conducted 4 days training for the team in Sana'a, included 1 day for testing the tools and preparing for the field work. The following table summarizes the focus of the workshop.

Table 4: Focus of the capacity building workshop

FOCUS of the team capacity building workshop:		
DAY 1: INTRODUCTION, THEORIES & FRAMEWORK	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Introduction and objectives of the assessment b. Brief introduction of the interaction between conflict and Sustainable Livelihoods Approaches/ Framework c. Working Groups: (detailed review and presentation of the conflict impact on the various components of the Livelihoods Framework (identification of each component, examples, inter-relation with other components, its positive and negative use, affected groups, interventions and type of programs used within this component at different levels including direct early recovery, development of capacities, policies, etc. 	<u>Interaction between conflict and various components of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict and factors affecting the vulnerability context • Impact of impact on Livelihood assets – (practical examples on Natural, Physical, Financial, Human, Social and <u>Political capitals</u>; • Conflict and livelihood activities • Policies, Institutions and Processes; • Livelihood outcomes and aspirations • Early recovery and resilience • Gender specificity (the need for a gender-sensitive analysis).

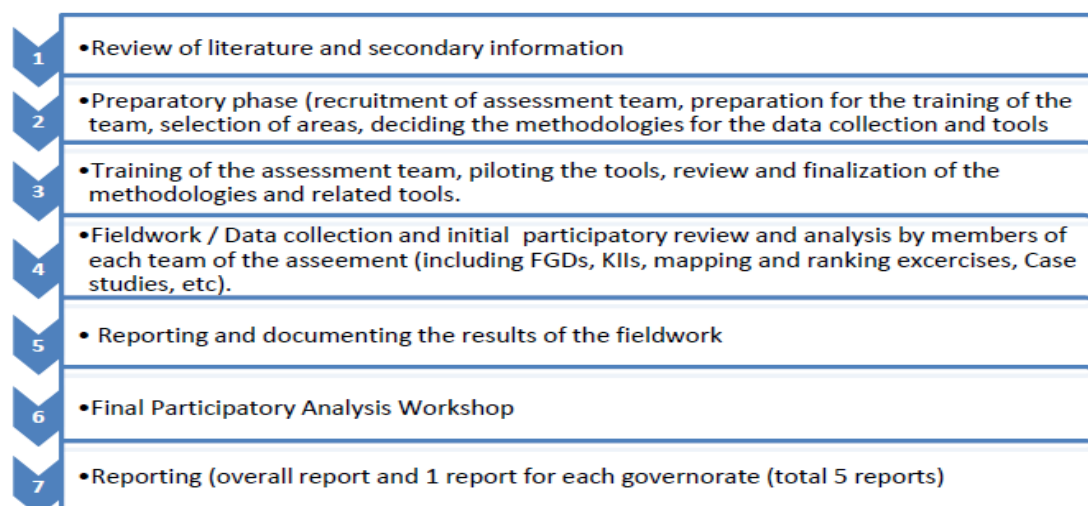
Day 2 TOOLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working Groups (issues to be assessed in each component of the livelihood framework, resources, and recommended data collection approach/s for each question), focusing on how to analyze the impact of the conflict on each component. Building the study tools based on the discussion (best approaches to get the required data agreed in each component) Case study / scenario presentation and group work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working group 1 - What assets have been depleted due to conflict, how might households be affected. What interventions would you recommend and why? Working group 2 - What are the possible opportunities created by the conflict, and what capacities can be drawn on to take advantage of these opportunities? What interventions would you recommend and why? 	<p>Key questions to assess the following components of the framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflict and vulnerability context Conflict and livelihood assets (Natural, Physical, Financial, Human, and Social & <u>political</u>) Productive Livelihood activities, Conflict and transforming structures (Policies, Institutions and Processes) <p>Area Profile: (basic required overall information of the targeted governorates and districts in the assessment)</p> <p><u>Homework:</u> Modifying the questions to the local context of each governorate</p>
Day 3 TOOLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the modified tools Review of the ways of working in the field, approaches of data collection, management of the field work, expected programs and movement, group analysis in the field, documentation, etc. Preparing for field work for Piloting/ Testing the tools at the community level. 	<p>Data collection methods and instruments; pre-developed checklists; PRA tools; targeted groups of each tool, and principles about selection of targeted groups and individuals, sample units in the field.</p> <p>Review of main principles; Triangulation; gender specificity, optimal ignorance and appropriate imprecision; and open-ended / leading questions, local relevance and Acceptability, etc.</p>
Day 4 FIELD TEST & FEEDBACK	<p>Morning: Conducting the pilot in a context nearer to the real situation.</p> <p>Teams split to sub-teams (male and female teams, conducting a FGD each, KIIs with community key informants, market trader. An observation of the local market, etc.)</p> <p><u>Afternoon / Evening</u> Discussion on any challenges faced due to the approaches, guiding questions, checklists, or anything else.</p> <p>Fine-tuning the tools and making any</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reaching agreement on fieldwork schedule, team members (who works with whom), days (how many, when to finish), areas, communities and markets to cover, sharing information and joint analyses every evening, report outline and with agreement about who writes what, when to assemble whole dataset/reports, logistics, transportation and accommodation, insurance, etc. Coordination with field focal persons SHARING THE FINAL PLANS AND TOOLS

	changes to fieldwork schedules in the light of reality.	WITH UNDP AND DOING ANY AGREED MODIFICATION OF TOOLS
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2.9. Main phases of the assessment development and implementation

The qualitative assessment was planned to be conducted within 32 days. However, the some activities, especially the office work took more time than anticipated. The assessment was undertaken under seven phases including but not limited to the following steps:

Table 5: Process of the assessment implementation



The following schedule specifies the number of days for each activity. The days allocated for fieldwork include travel time between and within governorates.

Table 5: Implementation schedule

	Major Activities	Sub-activities	Days
	Inception phase		
1	Preparation	This includes desk review, recruitment, developing data collection instruments and training materials	2
2	Training	Training of fieldworkers	3
3	Pre-testing	This includes fine tuning of instruments and preparation for fieldwork	1
	Fieldwork		
4	Data collection, participatory reviews, and validation at district or governorate levels)	Travel to governorates and coordination	1
		Data collection at governorate and community levels	8
		Travel back to Sana'a	1
5	Documentation	Individual/team outputs for each FGD, KII, etc.	2
	Data Analysis & Reporting		
6	Review and participatory analysis	Meeting with both assessment teams for joint analysis	2
7	Reporting	Preparing 4 reports (1 for each governorate)	8
		Writing overall reports (all governorates)	2
		Responding to comments and updating reports accordingly	2
	Total		32

2.10. Ethical Issues

Given the sensitive nature of the enquiry, and the focus on particularly vulnerable groups, efforts were

made to ensure respondents were fully aware of the risks and benefits involved in participating in the study and confidentiality and anonymity were maintained. Informed oral consent was taken and recorded and all study participants were informed about the objectives of the study and the issues and questions to be covered during the interview/discussion. Respondents had the right to refuse to participate and could withdraw at any time during the interview. A safe space and an appropriate time were identified for interview to ensure confidentiality and minimal disruption to the lives of respondents. In the report writing, quotations and opinions have been made anonymous.

2.11. Challenges and limitations

- Reaching general agreement on a specific asset for a certain district or governorate led to long debates among participants in FGDs as well as among team members when trying to compare districts based on their assets (For example, Taiz was generally considered to have higher levels of human capital than other governorates, but closer analysis of the situation revealed inconsistencies. In Shar'ab district in Taiz for example, access to education for girls was limited, not culturally promoted, and challengeable for those who were attending schools.⁹ Moreover, some areas can be seen as better off when looking at a certain capital, but may rank among the least areas in a sub indicator within the same capital (for example, good education but very high malnutrition within the human capital). Thus following the field work, the assessment team used to go through time consuming processes to review all findings, and check other resources, and validate with other stakeholders.
- The limited scope of the study made it difficult to capture some livelihood groups that were not targeted by the assessment (e.g. internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the northern and southern provinces, refugees, etc.).
- The study was conducted during the distribution period of some international humanitarian programs, which meant many people wanted to participate in interviews assuming the team members were international NGO staff registering new cases. The local coordinators and the head of the research team were crucial in explaining the purpose of the mission to people, but these challenges still affected daily planning.
- Applying the participatory tools was easier in rural areas than urban areas, where people found difficulty understanding the context of the whole neighborhood, unlike rural areas where participants had more knowledge of the area, history, etc. Thus more FGDs and KIIs were done in urban areas to better understand the context.
- The inter-relation and interaction between all components of the livelihood framework, made the final reporting more challengeable in terms of sorting issues and prioritizing the type of details within each section.

3. Vulnerability context

This section describes the vulnerability context affecting livelihood groups based on their perceptions and experiences in regards to conflicts, natural disasters, seasonality and other shocks and stresses.

⁹ Shara'ab Al-Salam is a mountainous rural area. Each school serve many scattered villages and may not be accessible for some villages.

3.1. Major shocks

Conflicts were the major factors affecting the vulnerability context in all the 8 communities followed by restrictions on migration and border crossing to Saudi Arabia, then drought, floods, animal disease outbreaks, and seasonal shocks. Box 1 presents an overview outlining major factors making up the vulnerability context as perceived by participants in FGDs and KIIs. The overview is followed by two subsections (3.2 and 3.3) each describing the main vulnerabilities (subsection 3.2 on ‘main conflict-related vulnerabilities’ while subsection 3.3 on ‘non-conflict related vulnerabilities’). The two subsections are followed by subsection 3.4 on ‘Interaction between conflict – and non-conflict shocks.

Box 2: Overview of major factors making up the vulnerability context

- 1) **Conflict / shocks / seasonality (with no preparedness capacities)**
 - Conflicts
 - 2011 conflict (including riots and continuous conflict between elite/people in power)
 - Extremist groups conflicts in the southern governorates (Al-Qaida and Ansar Al-Sharia’ah)
 - Houthi-related conflicts in the northern governorates (with government, with the Islah party, and with few tribes)
 - Inter-tribal conflicts
 - Restriction on migration and border crossing between Yemen and Saudi Arabia
 - Natural shocks/hazards (flood and drought)
 - Seasonal issues (price of some crops, fishing during the winter in the Red Sea , Malaria)
 - Animal disease outbreaks
- 2) **Social vulnerability and trends** (cultural aspects, conflict over resources, using chemical in agriculture, southern movement, kidnapping of foreigners, marginalization of some groups, women, etc.)
- 3) **Fragile livelihoods and weak capacity to sustain/adapt with change** (unsustainable activities, lack of diversity of their activities, the lack of insurance and saving)
- 4) **Very weak governance and institutions with conflict-induced instability** (to protect access to rights, natural resources, financial resources, ensure security and protection, provide public services such as health, education, etc.)

3.2. Conflict-related vulnerabilities

3.2.1 Types of conflicts

The four types of conflicts revealed during the FGDs were: the 2011 conflict; the war against Al-Qaeda and Ansar Al-Sharia’a in southern governorates; Houthis related conflicts in northern governorates (with the government, with Islah Political party in Amran, and with the tribes in Mastaba and neighboring areas); and tribal conflict. These are discussed below:

The 2011 conflict was the major factor affecting various livelihood groups in the eight communities targeted by the assessment. The conflict resulted in high price increase of basic commodities, tensions (among family members, at community level and between political parties), insecurity, frequent and prolonged power blackouts due to lack of fuel and also due to sabotage, roadblocks by armed groups, and looting by armed groups. These in turn have consequently reflected themselves negatively on livelihoods as major production operations had to reduce working hours and wages due to lack of fuel, and power blackouts while some had to close and regular workers were made redundant or forced to have unpaid leave. Access to health and education services was constrained by lack of security and absence of staff. Whereas these issues affected all the eight communities negatively, Al-Qahera district in Taiz governorate was in particular far more affected than any other areas, because the confrontation between the pro- and

anti-regime took place in the heart of Al-Qahera itself.

Tribal conflict, although indicated in most areas, its impact was revealed to be limited and temporarily. Tribal conflicts were mostly reported in the districts of Lawder (Abyan), Shar'ab (Taiz), and Rayda and Thula in Amran. They were not mentioned in Khanfar (Abyan) and Abs (Hajja), and this was explained by the fact that tribal structures were present in the mountains whereas Khanfar and Abs were coastal areas. Tribal conflicts were confined to mountains specific areas. Similarly, the **conflict between Houthis and Islah Political Party** in Amran were due to different ideologies, but escalated into political tension among community members.

The war against Al-Qaeda and Ansar Al-Sharia'a in southern governorates, and enduring closure (occupation) of Mastaba district in Hajja, revealed the highest vulnerability situation with a slight difference in the nature of the conflict (Khanfar was still affected by the displacement and the massive destruction as a result of the war against Al-Qaida and Ansar Al-Sharia'a militants, while Mastaba did not reach massive destruction, the closure of the district affected all aspects of people's livelihoods. Although Lawder district was in a similar context as Khanfar, its capacity to build on different capitals including the social capitals, made it more capable of coping to survive compared to Khanfar and Mastaba.

Table 6: Main factors making up the vulnerability context by governorate (starting with the one of the highest impact as ranked by participants)

Abyan (Lawder and Khanfar districts)	Taiz (Al-Qahera & Shar'ab District)	Hajja (Abs & Mastaba districts)	Amran (Raida & Thula districts)
1. Extremist groups conflicts (Al-Qaida and Ansar Al-Sharia'a) 2011-2012 (with riots and continuous conflict between elite/people in power) 2. Instability following withdrawal of security and military forces from Abyan 3. Drought 4. Inter-tribal conflicts 5. Restriction on migration and border crossing between Yemen and Saudi Arabia	1. 2011 conflict (including riots and continuous conflict between elite/people in power) 2. Restriction on migration and border crossing between Yemen and Saudi Arabia 3. Inter-tribal conflicts 4. Drought and flood in August 2013	1. 2011 conflict 2. Restriction on migration and border crossing between Yemen and Saudi Arabia 3. Drought and floods in 2012 and August 2013 4. Houthis-related conflicts intended to occupy districts in the western/Tihama part of Hajja on close to the Red Sea. 5. Seasonal issues (price of crops, fishing during the winter in the Red Sea, Malaria) 6. Animal disease outbreaks (Dengue Fever) 7. Inter-tribal conflicts	1. 2011 conflict 2. Houthis-related conflicts since 2012 (with the Islah Party) 3. Inter-tribal conflicts 4. Drought and flood in August 2013 5. Restriction on migration and border crossing between Yemen and Saudi Arabia

Evaluation of the impact of conflict

Participants in FGDs were stimulated to identify criteria (indicators) that could be used by them to rank the impacts of conflicts. Participants then used their criteria (indicators) to assess the impacts of conflicts in their communities. Table * presents the results of the participatory assessment in each locality according to the conflict most relevant to the context, and a 4-point rating scale was used to assess the impact (**V**ery High impact, **R**elatively High, **M**edium and **L**ow) denoted by the initial letter(s).

Table 7: Impact of the conflict and HH susceptibility to the conflict

Criteria (indicators)		Abyan (War against Al-Qaeda)		Taiz (2011 conflict)		Hajja (Houthis)		Amran (Houthis & Islah)	
		Lawder	Khanfar	A-Qahera	Shar'ab	Abs	Mastaba	Raida	Thula
1	Severity of the impact	RH	VH	L	L	M	M	L	L
2	Impact on different members of	M	VH	L	L	L	M	L	L

	the family								
3	Impact on various community and livelihood groups	M	VH	M	L	M	RH	M	M
4	Impact on economic situation and financial assets	RH	VH	M	M	RH	RH	L	L
5	Impact on access to infrastructures/institutions	RH	VH	L	M	L	VH	L	L
6	Affected social life and norms	M	RH	M	M	M	RH	M	M
7	Impact on attitudes, motivations, ideologies, ideas	M	RH	RH	M	M	RH	M	M
8	Length of time of the conflict	VH	VH	VH	M	M	M	M	L
9	Susceptibility to the same shock/conflict in future	RH	RH	RH	M	M	RH	M	M

Very High (VH)

Relatively High (RH)

Medium (M)

Low (L)

3.2.2 Main vulnerabilities related to conflicts

Perceived high level of insecurity and lack of safety

The perceived high level of insecurity and lack of safety was a grave issue in Khanfar, Lawder, Al-Qahera, and Mastaba districts, areas that were still considered conflict-prone areas. In Abyan, the “defeated” Al-Qaida and Ansar Al-Sharia’a were still considered a potential threat for communities in general and for their livelihoods in particular. Residence and returnees in Khanfar (Abyan governorate) were agonized by the enormous destruction and had major concerns over landmines buried in some agricultural areas and in the fishers’ compound.

“We still have a problem, animal herding was the responsibility of women, but when the military camps were setup here with soldiers everywhere, women could not go out herding, and not to mention landmines in the grazing areas as the main problem that remains” (Male participant in FGD, Khanfar district, Abyan Governorate).

The following case study illustrates examples of the perceived level of insecurity and lack of safety in addition to inability to access various public services.

Box 3: Case study (Being “under siege/closure”)

Being “under siege/closure” in Mastaba district, Hajja governorate:

In Mastaba district (Hajja governorate) people reported to be under siege by Houthis, and this affected all aspects of their livelihoods. Some of the issues raised during FGDs with men and women included harassment; shooting near women and children as they fetched water from the source or worked in the field (pregnant women had miscarriages in the field). Landmines in ‘what-used-to-be’ the main weekly market of A’hem. Imposing a siege on the district controlling access to grazing, and farmers could not even use or sell their lands. Houthis were also said to imprison anyone opposing them. Local authorities had come to a halt. People were not allowed to visit the sheikh in his house.

Picture: 1: A weekly market interrupted by armed groups in Mastaba, Hajja Governorate.. Photo.Abdullatif Al-Marhabi@ Interaction in Development)



‘ A’hem souk (market) is closed. It was one of the biggest markets in Yemen. Now it is full of landmines. A’hem souk is closed it was the second after Al-Talh’h souk. They used to come to A’hem from Taiz and from all over the country, and even from Saudi. It used to have everything from a small thing as the needle to a tank.’ (Adult female, FGD, Mastaba District, Hajja)

In Mastaba they occupied schools and health facilities depriving children of going to schools, and the community from using health services. People could not afford seeking health care as the nearest health facility outside the

district was in Abs district, and renting a car cost more than YER 20,000 (USD 100).

‘even vaccination teams were forced to go back to Hajja, they restrict them from the area and say “this is an American and Israelis medicine”, Al-Houthis have been occupying all schools and health units, they constructed walls and division inside them and distributed rooms to their associates for living and to hide when shooting on people”, ‘ Although the Hajja governor is from here - Mastaba district-, he could not release us from the closure of Houthis. After very long complain from people, he persuaded Houthis to leave one school, the school located in the village of the sheikh’. “one school?, what is this?” just to save his face and dignity in the area as he could not do anything for people”. ‘at the beginning girls dropped out from school because we feel afraid that they get harassed by armed men, now even boys cannot study with the schools being occupied by those who have “no hearts”’. Adult female participant in the FGD, Mastaba district, Hajja governorate)

‘Where can we go, they are everywhere, the mountains are full of Houthis, even the governor could not deal with them, they are not merciful, shooting on every person passing without being checked by them, they even shoot animals of people, we (women) do not leave our houses, we are so afraid, few families displaced to Mazrak camp in Haradh and abandoned their homes.’ (Adult female participant in the FGD, Mastaba district, Hajja)

Economic vulnerabilities/Constraints in access to local formal and informal institutions

Communities’ financial assets and their access to financial resources were affected by multiple factors that included conflict, increased prices, and natural and seasonal shocks (in all areas with variation in the severity of the impact of conflict in Abyan, and Mastaba district in Hajja), restrictions on migration and cross borders trade with Saudi Arabia (mainly in Hajja, and little impact in Shar’ab, Lawder, Amran and Al-Qahera), and animal disease outbreak (mainly in Hajja and Abyan). To cope with the results of the conflict different harmful strategies had been commonly used by HHs in all areas depleting their crucial household assets (i.e. selling women’s gold, furniture, livestock, and crops).

People have lost their livelihoods as a result of the conflict and resulting lack of job opportunities. In Abyan a few members of the livelihood groups had their equipment and tools destroyed or looted (in Abyan), or had to sell them and meet other crucial HH needs (i.e. agricultural tools and fishing tools in Abyan, tools of petty traders and small business in Taiz and Hajja, etc.).

Access to financial support from local NGOs, National Social Welfare Fund (SWF), private sector and welfare organizations had been more difficult compared to the situation before the conflict, when the major challenges were the limited amounts given and the time and effort involved in the process. Various issues including an increased number of the poor, as a result of the conflict, compared to the limited capacities of these institutions gave rise to concern. In addition, it was indicated that lack of appropriate targeting schemes led these institutions to depend on local agents or staff who classified people based on their political stand during the conflict. The type of support that could be accessed, although difficult, was mainly in terms of food, assistance in weddings, sickness, or marriage and mostly during the month of Ramadan, but no examples were seen in terms of supporting livelihood groups to recover their livelihood activities. Accessing banks that assisted in income generation activities-available mainly in Al-Qahera and Abs- was reported to be very difficult; requiring guarantees that the poor could not afford, high interest rates, inappropriate repayment schedules, lack of support services, as well as lack of discretion in cases of business failure or other problems with repayment. Accessing credit from relatives and shop keepers was possible at the beginning of the conflict but became very difficult when all HHs, relatives and shop keepers got directly or indirectly affected by the conflict.

Box 4: Case study (access to water)

Access to water

Access to water and sanitation was a major chronic problem in all rural and urban communities targeted by this assessment. The challenges were evident in Al-Qahera, and rural communities in the other seven

districts overwhelmed by the increase of prices during and after the conflict especially in areas of very hot climate (Abs, Khanfar, Mastaba), and areas in which cultivation of qat was common (Shar'ab). As a result of the conflict, the water supply systems in Khanfar, and Lawder were destroyed. Closures by Houthis in Mastaba have been restricting women and children from fetching water from other villages.

Conflict among tribes in neighboring areas in Thula affected the supply of water from the neighboring areas leading people to use contaminated water from the water harvesting schemes. Escalating conflicts over water supply was considered a potential crisis for the area. With the exception of Al-Qahera, lack of irrigation systems affected the ability of farmers to cope with the high costs of other inputs; (high cost of diesel, lack of access to tools like water pumps, irrigation networks, etc. The recent flood also damaged some of the natural channels/valleys for irrigation (Shar'ab).

"The water project stopped supplying water due to a dispute with the villages where the project is located, and we had no choice, but to fetch water from contaminated water cistern, and buy water from vendors (water tankers) at high cost that affects our income." (Adult femal, Thula, Amran)

Picture 2: Water tanker, Taiz



3.3. Non conflict-related vulnerabilities

The major shocks that were not directly related to conflict have been described in this sub-section.

Restriction on migration and border crossing to Saudi Arabia was said to be the most important factor affecting the livelihood context in Abs and Mastaba in Hajja governorate being located in the border area with Saudi Arabia. This situation affected opportunities for employment in Saudi Arabia, the trade and business activities in Abs, and movement of goods and trade across the borders. This situation also increased the number of jobless returnees in Abs and Mastaba, exacerbated tensions within HHs, worsened conflicts over ownership of land, as well as increased incidents of pregnancy and delivery in a situation of very hot climate and lack of electricity. There was also a very limited access to health services in general and reproductive health services more specifically. The impact of these restrictions were also reported in other areas (Shar'ab, Lawder, Raida and Thula) but with limited impact compared to Abs and Mastaba districts in Hajja governorate.

Flood, drought, animal disease outbreak, and decline in the price of some crops, were reported in rural agricultural areas that were producing crops- mainly tomato, mango, and banana- , and in urban areas that were involved in marketing and selling agricultural products. These areas included Lawder and Khanfar districts in Abyan governorate, Shar'ab district in Taiz governorate, Mastaba district and rural parts of Abs district in Hajja governorate, and Thula and Raida in Amran governorate). However, their impact was limited to influencing financial and natural assets and coping strategies to meet HHs' needs for small farmers, wage laborers and petty traders in the agriculture sector. Women in rural areas were among the main affected groups due to their involvement in animal rearing, beekeeping, and agriculture.

In the western part of Abs district (Hajja governorate) fishing activities came to a halt during winter due to the strong winds, increasing the vulnerability of members of this livelihood group whose main income was fishing (boat owners and fishing wage laborers). Boat owners were affected, whereas daily wage

laborers working in fishery were hard-hit, because they had no savings to pay for neither food nor assets to convert into cash.

In Al-Qahera and Shar'ab (Taiz governorate) people told of the impact of flood due to heavy rains on people's lives and livelihoods. In Al-Qahera 25 buildings were said to be damaged by flood in the suburbs of this urban district, although the city in recent years received major flood protection works through a World Bank funded project. In Shar'ab, a rural district, the flood was reported to cause major vulnerability to lives and livelihoods due to the destruction of agricultural terraces and the wadi, which was used as the main access road to the district. Unless commuters were warned ahead of the event, the sudden flow of flood in the wadi would come as a shock, and several occasions commuters have lost their lives on their way to towns/markets or on their way back to their villages. The road was always damaged after the heavy flow of the wadi, and could not be used for several days, not even by four wheel drive vehicles, which affected people's livelihoods. For decades, there existed a local communal warning system in which villages upstream would fire gunshots in the air to warn commuters downstream of the flood or the flow of the wadi, but the growing use of guns as a result of the continued conflict following the 2011 political upheavals made it difficult to figure out whether the gunshot were a warning of a flood coming or something else, and the warning system collapsed. Another seasonal related vulnerability was the spread of malaria, which was reported in Mastaba and Abs (Hajja governorate) and Shar'ab (Taiz governorate). Those most vulnerable to malaria were pregnant women, infants, and new visitors with low immunity.

On top of these shocks, stresses and conflicts, participants also mentioned other factors that contributed to worsen the vulnerability context. They have been listed here and will be further described in other sections of the report.

- **Weak adaptive strategies** and lack of any preparedness or resilience in the system, and lack of support or existing capacities.
- **Social vulnerability and trends** (cultural aspects, conflict over resources, using chemicals in agriculture, southern movement, kidnapping of foreigners, marginalization of some groups, women, etc.)
- **Fragile livelihoods and weak capacity to sustain/adapt with change** (unsustainable activities, lack of diversity of their activities, the lack of insurance and savings). Local institutions who were responsible for governing access to natural and financial resources, and for ensuring security and protection, and for providing basic services were weak to assume their roles.
- **Future uncertainty** (among farmers and other livelihood groups, male and female including youth, newly graduated, marginalized groups, and communities that were still prone to conflict due to the presence of Al-Qaida, Ansar Al-Share'a, Houthis, and other armed groups)

Box 5: Examples of other non-conflict related non vulnerabilities:

Examples of other non-conflict related non vulnerabilities:

- Women have generally had limited opportunities to work due to rooted traditional norms on gender roles coupled with their low level of education, which was an outcome of these rooted traditional norms. In rural areas, most women mainly engaged in family farming and/or livestock without being paid, and a small number of women worked as wage labor, paid in-kind not cash. In urban areas, a growing number of women worked as domestic workers often without any written contract and were deprived of the entitlements stipulated in the law, because the Yemeni Labor Law does not recognize domestic workers as part of the labor force. Some women worked as cleaners in public institutions and in private schools and health facilities. All of those mentioned were mostly illiterate. Very few women were involved in providing assistance during weddings or ceremonies including henna drawers, and hairdressers.
- Marginalized ethnic groups such as the Akhdam, face discrimination and social exclusion in all communities targeted in this assessment, exacerbating their precarious living conditions. Their low

status, in addition to their poverty, limits their ability to access land or adequate housing, for example, and they were generally tasked with what has been seen as the most degrading forms of work, such as collecting rubbish. People from the Akhdam community were rarely targeted by government programs, welfare associations, which adds to their sense of exclusion.

- The lack of information on the involvement of disabled population in livelihood activities, was a common challenge in all districts. This could be a result of the stigma attached to disability, which made this vulnerable population invisible in all livelihoods groups.

3.4. Interaction between conflict – and non-conflict shocks

In this sub-section we highlight what was already mentioned in the preceding sub-sections in regards to the interaction between multiplicity and interrelation between shocks related to conflicts and those related to non-conflicts. Conflicts and non-conflict that have created coping strategies to meet these shocks and stresses were also negatively affected by the indirect impacts of the various conflicts (i.e. increased prices of the diesel restricting use of pumping water for irrigation, increased cost of transport to move fishing boats and materials to another fishing zone, limiting functions of the related institutions supporting agriculture, veterinary, credit, etc.). Nowhere did anyone indicate availability of any formal disaster preparedness or warning systems. In Shar'ab district in Taiz, farmers indicated that people previously knew about floods coming from the mountains through indigenous approaches (people in the villages at the top of the mountains shot into the air to warn the lower villages). However, they indicated that such a system was also affected by the expansion of arms in the area, making it difficult to figure out the reason of the shooting (i.e. warning?, wedding?, youth playing with arms to practice shooting in the mountains?, etc.). The impact of conflict over access to electricity services, affects different aspects of people's lives and their ability to cope with all the above mentioned non conflict-related shocks.

4. Livelihood Structure

This section focusses on the main components of the livelihood structure;

- Livelihood activities/groups
- Livelihood capitals/assets

4.1. Livelihood Groups and Capitals

4.1.1. Major livelihood groups/activities

In the absence of data, at the district and governorate levels, on population size of each livelihood group and the main source of income in each area, we asked participants during FGDs to rank livelihood groups

by their size using the '10 seeds approach' (see table 9 below), and the results were verified by key informants during KIIs.

Overall, 'wage laborers' constituted the largest livelihood group in the four governorates followed by 'petty traders' - owners of small and micro businesses. The regular salary in the public sector came as the third livelihood group followed in fourth place by a combination of various livelihood groups (small farmers, small scale fishers, and limited number of large farmers, large traders, and large fishers) that varied in size from one context to another, urban status (urban/rural) and the geophysical context. As a result of the 2011 political conflicts, only some groups such as those that were armed, drug dealers, smugglers, kidnappers, looting groups, and gangs were expanding. Most livelihood groups were dominated by men.

Women generally had limited opportunities to work due to rooted traditional norms on gender roles coupled with their low level of education, which was an outcome of such traditional norms. In rural areas, most women were mainly engaged in family farming and/or livestock without being paid, and a small number of women worked as wage labor, paid in-kind not cash. In urban areas, a growing number of educated women worked as teachers in public and private schools, and as nurses and midwives in public and private health facilities. Urban women with no schooling or with low education attainment often worked as domestic workers in houses without any written contract and were deprived of the entitlements stipulated in the law, because the Yemeni Labor Law did not recognize domestic workers as part of the labor force. Some women worked as cleaners in public institutions and in private schools and health facilities. All of those mentioned were mostly illiterate. Very few women were involved in providing assistance during weddings or ceremonies including henna drawers, and hairdressers.

Wage labor in non-agriculture, petty trading, regular salary employment and small business were the most dominant livelihood activities in the assessed urban areas (Al-Qahera, and Abs). Many petty traders were said to be mainly involved in selling and marketing agriculture and animal products.

Wage laborers in agriculture/livestock, and small farmers, were exclusively based in rural areas. Fishing (boat owners and wage labor in fishing) communities was a major livelihood group in Khanfar (Abyan) and Abs (Hajja) as they were the only coastal areas targeted by the assessment. Fishing represents one of the major livelihoods in Yemen due to the large size of the coastline. Women were mainly working in agricultural and livestock with a relatively small number in petty trading (henna (tint) drawers, hairdressers, dressmaking, selling home-cooked products, or door to door sellers). Table 9 summarizes the major livelihood groups ranked according to vulnerability.

Table 8: Major vulnerable and non-vulnerable livelihood groups in the assessment areas

Livelihood Groups		Abyan		Taiz		Hajja		Amran	
		Lawder	Khanfar	Al-Qahera	Shar'ab	Abs	Mastaba	Raida	Thula
Vulnerable Livelihood Groups									
Wage laborer	Overall score								
	In agriculture								
	In fishery	X		X	X		X	X	X
	In non-agriculture								
Petty traders/small businesses									
Small farmers									
Small scale fishers		X		X	X		X	X	X

Low wage employees with big families/needs								
Least Vulnerable Livelihood Groups								
Large businessmen/traders						X		
Large farmers			X			X		
High/Multiple wage employees with less family members/needs						X		
Large scale fishers	X		X	X		X	X	X
Armed groups, smugglers, kidnappers, looting groups, gangs								

Legend (scores were based on participatory ranking /10 seeds approaches)

	80% - 100%	The most dominant/prevaling livelihood group
	60% - 80%	Relatively High (common)
	30% - 60%	Medium
	5% - 30%	Low
	Less than 5%	Very low/ rare
X		Does not exist

Source: Compiled by the assessment team from data reported by participants in FGDs using 10 seeds approach.

Table (10) below shows the main income sources for people in the 8 districts as revealed by participants in FGDs. 'Wage labor in agriculture' appeared as the main income source for people in all districts with the exception of the urban center of Al-Qahera in Taiz governorate in which wage labor in non-agriculture' seemed to be the most common source of income. Agriculture/Livestock holders second as the main source of income for households in all the districts with the exception of Al-Qahera and Khanfar.

Table 9: Proportion of main sources of income for households each locality (ranking/ ten seeds approach)

Main sources of household income	Abyan		Taiz		Hajja		Amran	
	Lawder	Khanfer	Al-Qahera	Shara'ab	Abs	Mastaba	Raida	Thula
Agriculture/Livestock	15%	10% * ^a		15%	10%	20% * ^b	15%	20%
Labour in agriculture/ livestock	30%	20% * ^a		25%	20%	40% * ^b	25%	25%
Fishery		10% * ^a			5%			
Trade (Petty trading and Business)	5%	5%	15%	5%	10%		5%	5%
Regular Salary workers, in Public and private service (Education, Health, University, Banks, etc.)	10%	10%	15%	10%	5%		10%	10%
Regular Salary workers-Military	10%	5%	5%	15%			15%	15%
Labour in non-agricultural, non-fishery (construction, services in the market, houses, etc.)	10%	10%	45%	5%	25%	15%	10%	10%
Remittances (Social Welfare Fund, and philanthropy)	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%		5%	5%
Remittances (from migrants and workers in other governorates)	5%		10%	10%	10%	20%	5%	5%
Assistance from International relief organizations	10%	25%					5%	

Beginning (for ethnic marginalized households)			5%	5%	5%			
Other illegal activities (Armed groups, smugglers, kidnappers, looting groups, gangs, etc.)				5%	5%	5%	5%	5%

Source: Compiled by the assessment team from data reported by participants in FGDs using 10 seeds approach.

Note ^a: Reported figures for agriculture in Mastaba reflect the situation before conflict. Actual figures were much less than those reported.

Note ^b: Reported figures for agriculture in Khanfar reflect the situation before conflict and displacement. Actual figures were much higher than those reported.

4.1.2. Vulnerabilities of livelihood groups

This section focuses on the most vulnerable groups (wage laborers, small farmers, petty traders and small businesses, small fishermen, and regular salary employees who had a large number of dependent family members).

4.1.2.1. Wage Labor

As mentioned in the previous sub-section, ‘wage laborers’ constitute the largest livelihood group in all governorates. Wage Labor in non-agriculture was the most dominant activity in urban areas (Al-Qahera, Abs, and the urban parts of Lawder and Khanfar). Wage labor in agriculture was reported mainly in rural areas (Lawder and Khanfar (Abyan governorate); Mastaba and the rural parts of Abs (Hajja governorate), as well as Thula and Raida (Amran governorate). Wage labor in construction was revealed in all areas, albeit occasionally and on a small scale. Wage labor in fishery appeared in Khanfar (Abyan governorate) and Abs (Hajja governorate), because the two districts are coastal areas.

In general, wage laborers were the most vulnerable livelihood group, mainly because they were engaged on a daily or weekly basis (short-term), their income was unpredictable, very sensitive to conflicts and dispute over land and properties, and their security was often compromised by attempts at securing their daily income. Wage laborers have thus been hard-hit by conflicts. The main shocks at the level of each context varied, including losing jobs and getting into debts (in all the 8 communities); losing the shelter (Khanfar); displacement (Khanfar and Mastaba); selling their limited available household assets (Khanfar); joining armed and ideological groups (Khanfar, Lawder, and Abs); working in risky environment; mental health problems caused by the huge needs and limited opportunities:

Picture 3: Wage labor in construction. Taiz



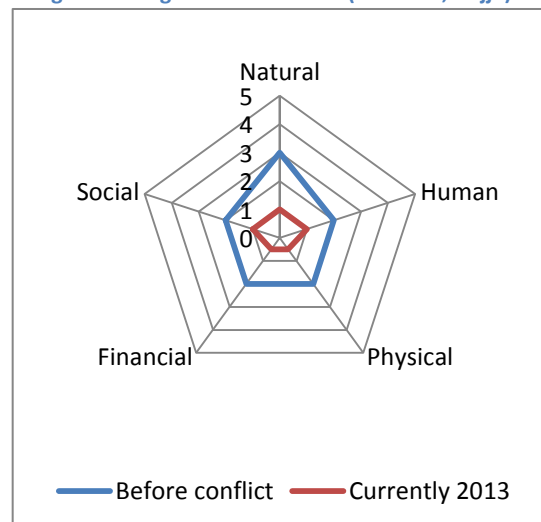
Almost all meetings with men, youth, women as well as officials indicated that the majority of households depend on daily work to cover their expenses, in urban and rural areas. This category involved skilled workers as mechanics, carpenters, plumbers, blacksmith, construction workers, wedding singers (men and women), agricultural workers, porters, house helps or cleaners, guards, female hairdressers and people collecting recyclable materials. Youth in Taiz and Abs reported that working as a daily labor locally was the first option for them before considering migration.

The most important aspect of such daily work was that some of these activities were still considered shameful, and workers were stigmatized. Some of these activities were attributed to specific families of the community, such as singers and drummers (Lawder and Amran), butcher and barbers, cleaners, porters (everywhere), agricultural workers in Abyan, and female hairdressers (Lawder, Amran). In Lawder and Khanfar, the FGDs with men and women and with youth (male and female) revealed that Al-Qaeda and Ansar al-Sharia made use of the economic and social situation to stimulate wage employment, providing income opportunities and raising awareness of some groups of being marginalized by the community. In Abs and Mastaba (Hajja), it was indicated that youth and children from this categories were more targeted by Houthis, smugglers, drug dealers, and prostitution workers.

Although most districts indicate availability of wage laborers in various sectors, most wage laborers lost their opportunities to work in Mastaba district following the closure on the area by Al-Houthis armed groups. The impact of the closure by Houthis on the wage laborers is illustrated in figure 4. Wage laborers in Mastaba used to work in agriculture, and the weekly traditional markets, where people come from different parts of the region. However, due to the closure/

occupation of the area by Al-Houthis which started in mid 2012, movement in the agricultural fields or herding animals was restricted. Shooting over people including children and women was to be expected at any time. Weekly markets were blocked and became risky for any activity due to the landmines that were put there by Al-Houthis. The construction work in new public services and schools that used to absorb a large number of workers, stopped since such areas have also been occupied by Houthis.

Figure 4: Wage Laborers assets (Mastaba, Hajja)



Box 6: Case study 2 (wage laborers in tourism)

Local youth male and female tourism guides in Thula district, Amran Governorate

In the town of Thula (Amran governorate) male and female youth worked as interpreters and tourist guides and were involved in art & craft for tourists visiting Thula. The 2011 conflict and the on-going security incidents of hijacking foreigners have brought tourism in the area to a halt, and those who were working in tourism have no other options or choices to pursue different livelihoods.

‘ Through my work with tourists when they visit our area, I managed to learn more than 6 foreign languages and speak 4 of them fluently. I used to support my family through the income I get from guiding tourists. Kidnapping used to be done by few people who are not from our area and in most cases they belong to Mareb governorate. But for several years tourists continued coming to Thula, although their numbers decreased. However, in the last 3 years with the escalated political conflict, they stopped coming.’ “How can we expect them to come while lack of security and tension spreads everywhere?”, ‘ I finished now my secondary school and setting at home, doing nothing and praying that God will help restore the security situation to its time before the conflict ’. (Female youth participant in the FGDs, Thula district, Amran)

Abs and Mastaba districts (Hajja governorate) were dramatically influenced by the return in 2013 of Yemeni migrants in large numbers from Saudi after being forced to leave Saudi, because they did not have work permits. Their return increased demand on the already reduced job opportunities for local residents and so supply greatly exceeded demand for wage workers. In Shar’ab (Taiz governorate), around 700 migrant workers were said to have returned from Saudi due to the lack of work permits. While some participants perceived this positively as some of those who returned had land that was neglected, and could then cultivate it, others underlined the negative impacts related to unemployment and resurgent conflicts over lands and properties.

Women in Taiz, Abs, Abyan, indicated that due to the impact of the conflict, some of them started to work as domestic cleaners or produce food items for sale by their children to be able to contribute to household income. In addition to this, women started to work in hairdressing or *henna* drawing activities.

Daily Labor was also dramatically affected during the conflict, in Khanfar (Abyan governorate), Abs and Mastaba (Hajja governorate) and Raida (Amran governorate), due to the displacement of population and the closure of markets. In Abs, the market stopped for several weeks as a result of the conflict between Abs people and the neighboring district due to revenge.

While the war against Al-Qaeda undermined livelihoods, people cited job opportunities being generated during evacuation and displacement for truck drivers transporting people, items and furniture. Porters were also involved in moving furniture. After the conflict, the presence of international humanitarian organizations working in emergency and the emergence of community solidarity initiatives offered job opportunities. Other benefits gained as a result of conflicts were related to training, and this was cited by participants in FGDs who revealed that some people in Abs, Abyan and Taiz worked in life skills, peace building and project creation. Recently, some programs were providing grants and/or credit for economically active youth and households in Abyan. A few CSOs, created after the conflict, were running awareness and training programs for youth in Abs, Abyan and Thula. Youth female participants in Abs also indicated that some of their acquaintances who graduated from secondary education found opportunities working with existing NGOs involved with IDPs in Haradh district in Hajja.

Figures 5 and 6, illustrate the change in the wage laborers assets in Al-Qahira (Taiz) and Abs (Hajja), which revealed the largest wage laborer populations. Factors affecting wage laborers’ situation in these districts were described in the previous paragraphs on the major factors affecting wage labor.

Figure 5: Wage Laborers assets (Al-Qahera, Taiz)

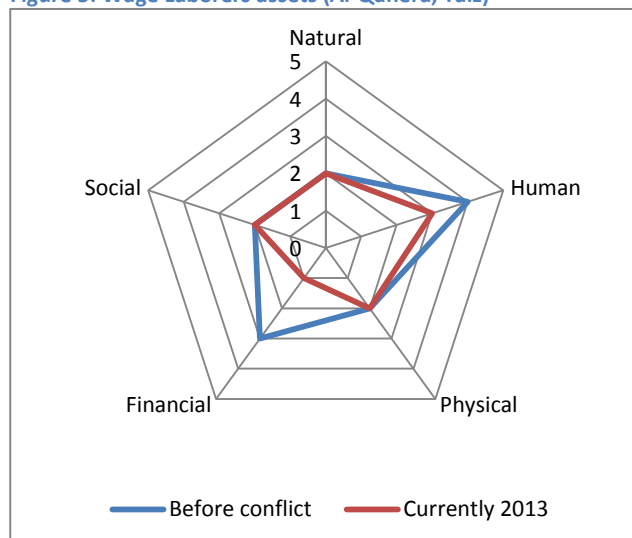
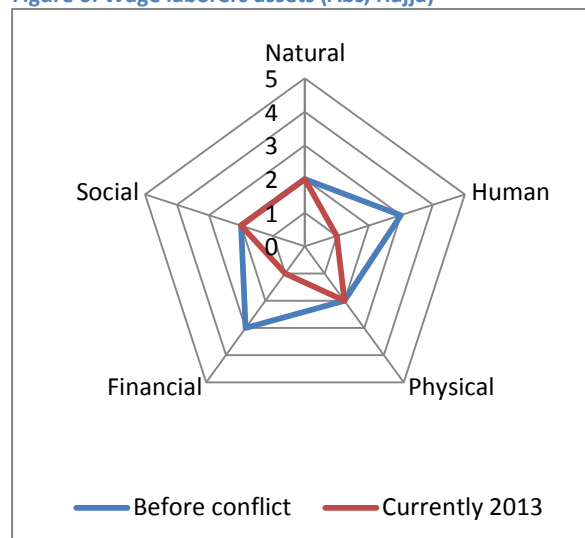


Figure 6: Wage laborers assets (Abs, Hajja)



The majority of those consulted including women and youth believed that most workers on daily wage were keen on starting their own income generation projects, and for those who were better educated to find employment on a regular salary. However, a limited social capital (connections) coupled with a low educational level and lack of qualifications restricted opportunities to get employment.

Abs and Al-Qahera, the only districts that indicated availability of a few banks, people with ideas, clear plans and sufficient skills to start their own income generation projects, complained about the difficulty to obtain credit with affordable interest rates. Incubators livelihood programs were highly prioritized by the youth in this category, i.e. to be able to have access to credits with low interest rates and less collateral requirements. Some were not willing to start their own project and were rather hoping to find employment or join some livelihood group, pointing out that they lack confidence to start individual or group projects, even if they had enough financial resources. Meeting with a key informant indicated that life skills were still required for the youth to build their confidence, but another key informant in Abs pointed out that such life skills training was supposed to be provided at an early stage during school, before secondary education, to build sound attitudes and skills and to reduce any psychological blocks.

Wage laborers cited the need to resolve the underlining factors of their poverty that include: illiteracy; poor living conditions; malnutrition; low wage in relation to price inflation; limited and seasonal work opportunities; the extreme heat and incidents of malaria in coastal and low land areas; cold weather in mountainous areas; very limited access to health services; lack of any system to get compensation or insurance when they fall sick or face accidents while working; increased prices of food; transportation; and other goods without increase in their wage; limited access of their children to education and employment; large number of dependent family members; limited access to social welfare assistance and philanthropy, etc.

4.1.2.2. Petty Traders/ small businessmen

Petty traders, owners of small and micro-enterprises or income-generation activities, represented the second main livelihood group in all governorates. It encompassed diverse activities (i.e. small shops, cafeterias, small restaurants, barbershops, telecommunication centers, transportation services, water tankers, selling goods on wheelbarrows, bicycles or in-front of major shops in the town, etc.)

As for the case of daily workers, most of these activities were more common and involve more people in urban centers (Abs town, Al-Qahera, and the centres of Khanfar and Lawder).

As indicted by the observations and most discussion sessions with adults, women and youth, men mainly occupy this area of work. This was explained by the cultural context, also reinforcing the limited experience of women in business. A very small number of women running business were met during the assessment, such as a grocery shop in Shar'ab, telecommunications centers, internet cafés, and hairdressing salons (Al-Qahera and Lawder). More commonly, working women were mainly involved in home-based income generation activities such as producing food (bread) to be sold in grocery shops (Amran), incense (in all Governorates) or handicraft, such as tailoring (Taiz). In all targeted areas, women also worked as door to door sellers, mainly for clothes and perfume.

Box 7: Exploitation and lack of clarity among petty traders on tax policies

Lack of clarity on tax policies

'when the tax people come, they see that you are not selling and losing your vegetables but they keep insisting that you pay large a amount and are threatening. Either you get nervous, fight them and get caught by the police, which is another very hurting story, or you bargain with them. They do not care what amount reaches the government as tax. They just want you to say "I will pay you a little less than requested but without a formal receipt." It goes to their pockets and you become their friends. "we are threatened, but they can't reach or speak with the big thieves (people in power and large businesses) on tax." "Is it right that poor "mafrash" (vegetable open shop) like us shall pay tax even during this vacuum??" (a hard time for petty trade/small business). Nowadays, they reduce the tone of their voice, they know what will happen to them, every person in the market will contribute (beat them). (adult male participant in the FGD, Al-Qahera, Taiz).

As illustrated in figure 7, 8, 9 and 10 below, the context of the petty traders and small businesses varied from one area to another. These petty traders were among the most unpredictable activities, as they have been either really strongly affected by the war or benefitting from it. The adverse situation caused some businesses to stop, such as cafeteria, restaurants, and grocery shops. In Lawder and Khanfar, as well as the Ahim the market in Mastaba was described as the biggest weekly market of the country, all businesses closed down either due to the war on al-Qaida in Abyan or conflict with Houthis in Hajja. Figures 7 and 8 below, illustrate the impact of the context on the petty traders and small businesses in Abs and Mastaba districts in Hajja governorate.

The activities of selling gas and water benefitted the most from the conflict. Water tankers were reported in Lawder and Khanfar (Abyan), and Mastaba (Hajja) due to the deficiency in accessing water during the conflict or the interruption of the construction process of new water projects as a result of the armed conflict or tensions with neighborhood districts where the sources of water existed, as the case of the Thula district in Amran.

In Al-Qahera (Taiz), Internet centers located close to the sit-in area also indicated that they benefited from an increased number of customers during the conflict. Selling second hand material was indicated as an emerging livelihood activity in Abyan due to the displacement of people. Drivers of pick-ups also witnessed an expansion of their activities, getting involved in the moving of people's belongings during the displacements.

Figure 7: Petty Traders (Abs, Hajja)

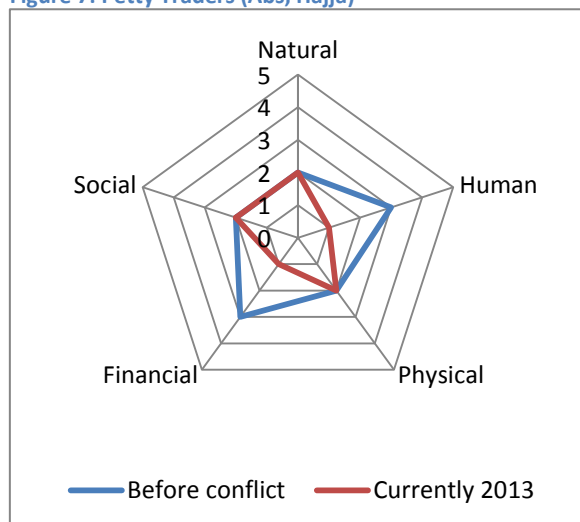


Figure 8: Petty Traders (Mastaba, Hajja)

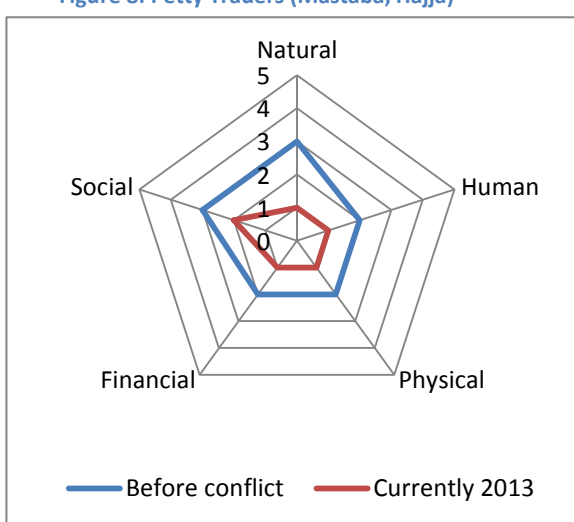


Figure 9: Petty Traders (Al-Qahera, Taiz)

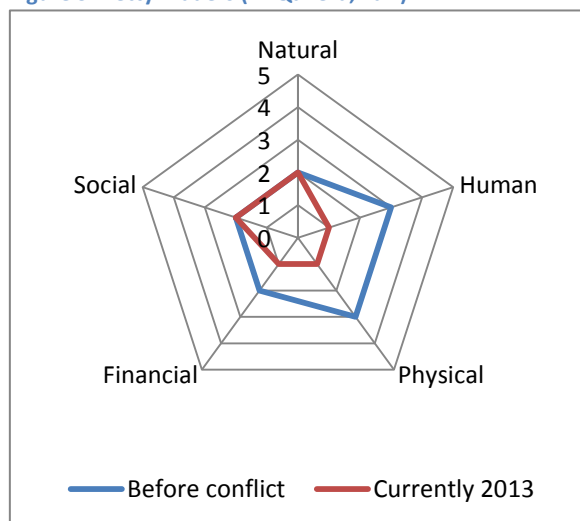
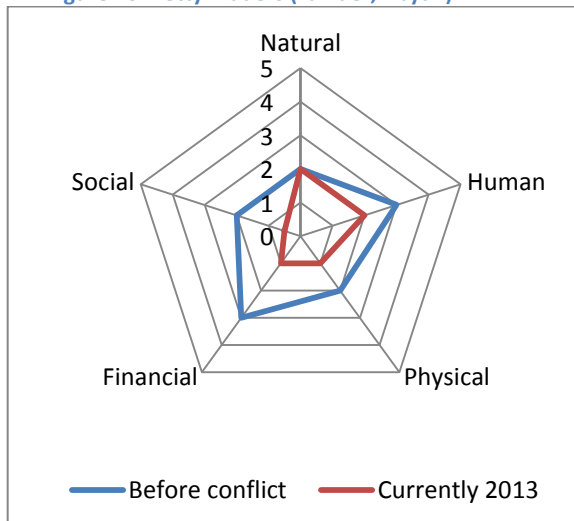


Figure 10: Petty Traders (Lawder, Abyan)



The following case study illustrates another dimension of the conflict impact on petty traders.

Box 8: vulnerabilities of northern petty traders and owners of small businesses who were working in southern governorates

Unrevealed displacement and vulnerabilities (the case of northern petty traders and owners of small businesses who were working in southern governorates)

The assessment field-work in most areas revealed that small projects were often run by people from Taiz who lived in these areas with few population from Raima and Ibb governorates and Wasab district in Dhamar. Therefore, in areas like Khanfar and Lawder in Abyan, although in Lawder local people stayed during the conflict, wage laborers had to leave the prone affected areas. In most cases they had to sell their properties with a loss as was the case of all displaced people from Abyan.

One of the team members-who came from a southern governorate-, related that he was surprised to hear from a participant that although people respect internal migrants from different areas running small businesses, in Khanfar and Lawder (Abyan), owners of such businesses were targeted, as they were mainly coming from northern areas, as a result of the increased influence of the Southern separation movement. This led to the damages of such small projects, while the owners were not entitled to rehabilitation support from the Government and relief organizations, that was only targeting people from

the area as was the case of all displaced people. Displaced petty traders and owners of small businesses were said to have limited resources and often not have the necessary capital to restart their activity after the conflict, as the financial resources were directed to the priority of coping with the conflict's impacts and cover displacement costs, travel, maintenance of damaged assets, etc.

As was the case of wage laborers, accessing financial support and credit with limited processes and less negative impact on the petty traders, was the main concern of this group. Similarly they also raised the importance of protection from losing their resources due to conflict, corruption, or restrictions on markets, shift of markets to locations that were not appropriate. Other issues that have been absorbing their limited resources were also highly emphasized including: poor living conditions, high rent, family health situation, cut of electricity in a hot climate, the absence of any system to get compensation or insurance when they face risks, increased prices of food, transportation, manipulation and exploitation by the tax department, and limited access of their children to education and employment.

4.1.2.3. Small Farmers/ livestock holders

The type of crops grown varied among areas according to the different agriculture zones. Abyan and Hajja were mostly involved in the agricultural sector due to the geographical nature of the areas, which was flat, with the availability of underground water and the presence of important wadis. Both Governorates grew similar crops, such as bananas, mangos, millet, corn, papayas and different types of vegetables. Their production used to reach most of the country's markets and the markets in Saudi Arabia before the displacement in Abyan and the restrictions on cross borders trade with Saudi Arabia. In Amran and Taiz, due to the mountainous typology, the agriculture concerned mainly *qat* and grass, coffee and cereals as wheat or sorghum.

Picture 4: Livelihood activities/Herding in Amran



The various conflicts dramatically affected the agricultural sector. The 2011 conflict provoked an increase in the price of diesel and petrol. During the conflict with the Houthis in the north and Al-Qaeda in the South, grazing lands in some locations were occupied or affected by landmines. In Abyan, some people were forced to abandon or sell their land to cover the cost of displacement. In Lawder district in Abyan, although people originally from Lawder did not emigrate during the war with Al-Qaeda, wage laborers coming from northern areas left, leaving the farmers to their farms. However, even in this case, women stopped working in the fields because of the presence of gangs and armed groups. Men started therefore to take over tasks usually accomplished by women, but this situation required additional household security measures and related demands which led many to abandon their farms.

As illustrated in figure 11, following the war and after the defeat of Al-Qaeda, some small farmers returned to agricultural work, but in general people were still dealing with other priorities to recover from conflict impacts, such as housing issues. Moreover, in Khanfar and Lawder, people mentioned the spread of landmines in the area and the lack of information on this issue which deterred them from going back to farming or grazing activities.

In Mastaba, access to farms diminished as a result of the armed conflict with Houthis. The absence of physical security, due to the presence of the armed groups, affected the ability of women to plant and harvest their crops. Men have lost their livelihoods elsewhere and had to return home to protect their families. While people cited several constraints to livelihoods (for instance, lack of access to schools and health facilities), the overriding constraints voiced related to access to field and market. This is illustrated in figure 12.

Figure 11: Small Farmers assets (Khanfar, Abyan)

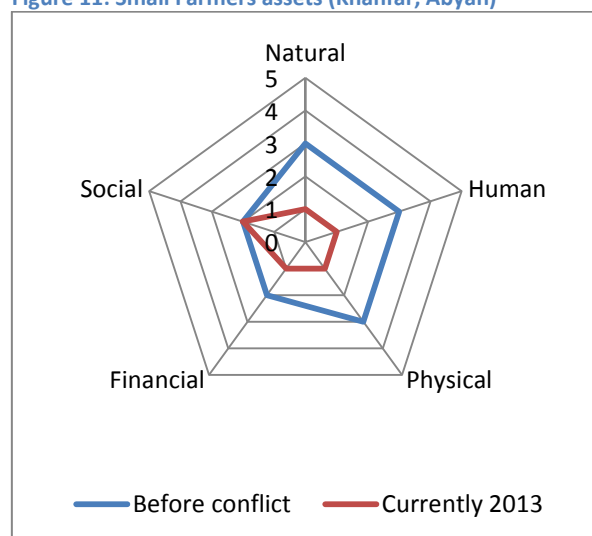
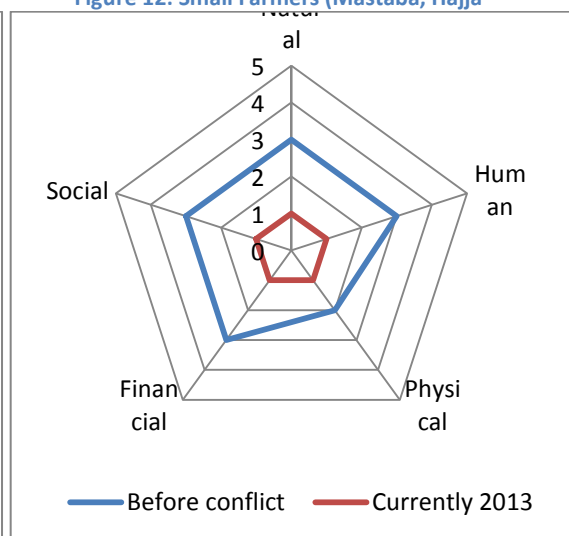


Figure 12: Small Farmers (Mastaba, Hajja)



In Mastaba and Abs people reported being adversely affected by the closure of the border with Saudi Arabia, which restricted trade opportunities. Participants reported the subsequent drop of the price of their goats and sheep.

In Abs (Hajja) and Raida and Thula (Amran), during the conflict, inflation and the unstable situation in Yemen in general reduced people's ability to afford agricultural inputs, especially diesel. Although the Houthis' influence was still present in this area, agricultural activities went back to how it used to be before the conflict. However, complaints concerned the lack of a government subsidies program for fuel and equipment such as tractors as well as the cost of irrigation. This concern was also present in other areas although to a lesser extent.

In urban centers, such as Al-Qahera in Taiz or the urban center of Abs, people depended on selling agricultural products. The complaints mainly concerned the volatility of prices across the seasons, tied to the lack of capacity to stock agricultural products, causing a descent of prices during harvesting season. Participants pointed out the lack of Government support to the private sector to buy big fridges, and the lack of support for the exportation of these goods to the neighbor countries.

In Shar'ab area in Taiz, women complained that qat production had been favored over other crops, and increasingly so during the conflict, as a way to cope more easily with the crisis. This was affecting women's health, worsening malnutrition issues and also leading to the spread of chemicals used for qat trees that affected other activities such as beekeeping.

In addition, due to the conflict over land in the area and the existence of powerful groups, some new norms emerged regarding the way people deal with conflicts. For example, if an animal enters a private land and was found damaging a qat tree, the owner of the animal was subjected to pay an important fine. This was deterring people to get involved in herding activities and led some of them to stop their major activity (animal grazing).

Agricultural activities and animal production in all these Governorates seemed to be the main activities where women were involved, especially in rural areas. They were active in animal breeding and grazing, harvesting, seeding, and maintain fields, while men were mainly involved in management of the activities and irrigation. Women were also involved in beekeeping and producing food products to sell in the neighborhood, such as cheese or samosas.

In Abyan, especially in Lawder and Khanfar, it was noticed that wage agricultural work was socially regarded as a livelihood activity for lower classes, and was occupied by either members of marginalized groups or people from other Governorates.

In addition to this, the unique shift in the gender rules noticed during this assessment, which was due to the conflicts and the presence of Al-Qaeda people in Khanfar and Houthis in Mastaba, women were constrained to stay inside their homes to avoid being harassed or shot. Men started taking over their activities. On the positive side, a few cases have been reported in Abs, where some returnees started cultivating their land. Their return also triggered some tensions over land, as boundaries have been forgotten or lost.

4.1.2.4. Regular Salary employees with large number of dependents

All meetings with men, women and youth revealed that, although employees were better off than individuals depending on daily wages, there were relatively few of them compared to wage laborers, and petty traders. Across all four Governorates, most employees were working in the public sector, mainly in education, health, and the military. Employment in the private sector was mainly in urban areas such as Al-Qahera in Taiz, Abs, Lawder and Khanfar. There was also some employment with Civil Society Organizations. Perception of people on employment will be described in the section on institutions, process and policies.

In Taiz, Abyan and Amran, employees were mainly working in education and health, while, employment in the military was mostly present in Abyan and Shar'ab (Taiz). In Shar'ab, it appeared that military employment was preferred. In contrast, employment in the military was never mentioned among the activities in Tihama region (Hajja)

The private sector in Al-Qahera district in Taiz had the second in highest number of employees in the area following the government, especially the Taiz-based Hail Saeed group of companies. In most localities, the number of employed women was low, except in Taiz urban center (Al-Qahera), and some smaller urban areas like Lawder, Khanfar or Abs. This resulted from the low education level among women as well as availability of opportunities with the private sector. Most cases of employed women were in the health and education sectors.

In Lawder, Shar'ab (Taiz) and Amran, there were alleged cases of duplicated employment with the government or the army, and sometimes the same persons could also receive additional financial support from the Public Welfare Fund, while many poor people were not able to access such employment or support due to their limited connections or lack of social capital.

During the conflicts in Abyan, employees in all sectors faced severe delays in the receipt of their salaries. On the other hand, more opportunities were created following the conflict. In Abyan, many youth were recruited in the military and the People Defense Committees.

Employment in general, and in the military in particular, were seen as an area that was influenced by the role of Sheikhs (community leaders) and political affiliations well as connections with people in power. There was a perception that there was a positive improvement in the employment in the public sector due to better systems introduced within the Ministry of Civil Service.

Marginalized groups (Muhamashin-ethnic marginalized groups-, barbers, etc.) were excluded from employment in all sectors. Lack of education was indicated as the main reason, but in Taiz, especially Muhamashin (Akhdam) indicated that they had been excluded from employment although they may have received education and obtained university degrees. Most NGOs newly created in Taiz were tackling such issues, representing and advocating for these communities.

4.1.2.5. Fishermen and labor workers in fishery

Fishing was a common activity in the two coastal areas targeted by the survey, Khanfar (Abyan) and Abs (Hajja). In these areas, the participants raised several concerns and issues related to this activity. In both areas, the activity suffered from the increased cost of fuel. In Khanfar, as illustrated in figure 13, the conflict strongly impacted fishermen. Many were displaced during that time, and therefore lost their equipment. Even those who returned have not all restarted their activities, as they have to face other priorities such as reconstructing their house. Moreover, people were worried about the landmines in some locations. The main priorities expressed by participants were the support of fishermen with boats and fishing equipment, reduction of the price of fuel, assessment of the landmines situation to enable fishermen to reach the coast safely in some affected areas. Evaluation of the fishermen assets in Khanfar district (Abyan) is illustrated in figure 13.

Figure 13: Fishermen assets (Khanfar, Abyan)

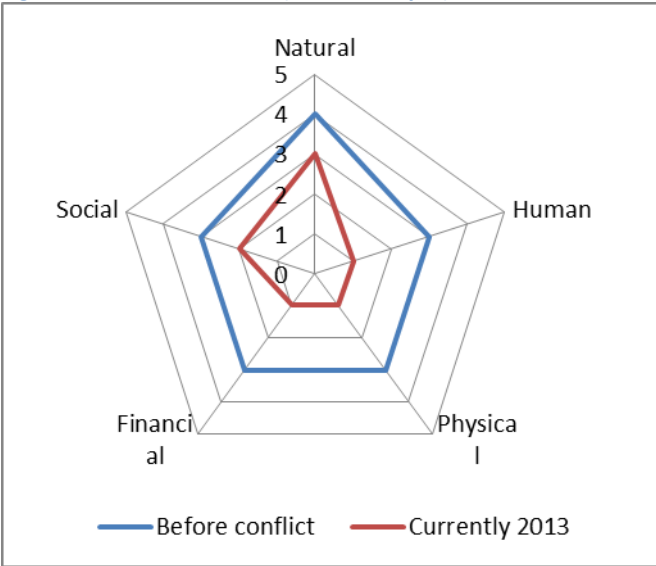
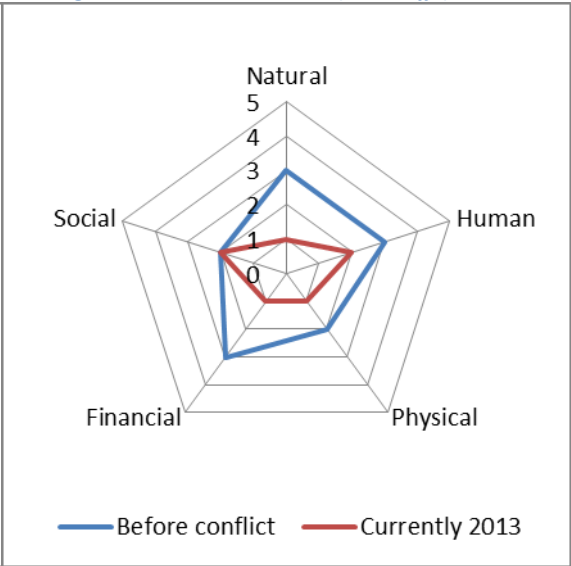


Figure 14: Fishermen assets (Abs, Hajja)



The context of the fishermen in Hajja governorate was slightly different, which is illustrated in figure 14. In Abs, fishermen tended to quit their activity and look for opportunities in Abs market or migrate to Saudi Arabia. In the area, because of the unavailability of fish during the windy season (October-February), fishermen would usually migrate to another area such as Abyan or Hadramawt, yet this movement was no longer affordable for some of them. Even for those who could afford the cost of fuel and other costs related to the activity, fishing was still not a worthy endeavor due to the limited

availability of fishing areas, as a result of the lack of control over big fishing boats practicing massive fishing, destroying the fishing areas.

Moreover, it was at the time risky to venture further out to sea towards Eritrea or Saudi Arabia, as fishing boats were liable to be caught by Saudi forces, Eritrean forces, pirate gangs or International forces – mainly American and French in the Red Sea-, as fishermen were often suspected of being smugglers, or Somali pirate gangs.

The recent border problems with Saudi Arabia restricted the sale fish in the Saudi market. This induced a descent of the prices, and the lack of refrigerators restricted the storage of the surplus of fishing.

Although, meeting with one key informant indicated that there was a government policy controlling fishing of few types of fish (e.g. lobsters) during specific seasons, these were not raised in the meetings at the community level.

Box 9: Expected conflict among fishermen over artificial reef fishing areas in the Red Sea.

Expected conflict among fishermen over artificial fishing areas in the Red Sea

A participant in the FGD in Al-Qahera (Taiz governorate) mentioned the negative effects on those working in fishing due to the decline in fish stocks in Mokha, which is a district on the Red Sea, where fishing was the major livelihood activity, and in the absence of any alternative livelihood options, or ways to diversify their activities fishermen had to intensify or enhance their existing livelihood strategy (fishing) by buying scrap metals (car bodies) and throwing them in the sea as fish traps. Others were reported to throw trees to trap fish. This was a coping strategy due to lack of stock reserve, but also to avoid going away from the coastline where there was a high risk of being arrested by the Eritrean coastguards. Such coping strategy also created tensions due to disputes among fisherman concerning ownership.

4.2. Capital Assets at district level

Using the same approach in assessing the capitals of the livelihood groups, few exercises were also undertaken to have a snapshot on the major capitals of each locality, although it was found more challenging compared to assessing capitals of very specific livelihood groups (i.e. female wage laborers in agriculture).

Reaching general agreement on a specific asset for a certain district or governorate led to long debates among participants in FGDs as well as among team members when trying to compare districts based on their assets (for example, regarding human capital, while Taiz in general was considered to be better off than other governorates, a closer analysis of the situation showed some inconsistencies). In Shar'ab district for example, access to education for girls was limited, not culturally promoted, and difficult for the few who were attending schools.¹⁰ Moreover, some areas can be seen as better off when looking at a certain capital, but may rank among the least areas in a sub indicator within the same capital (for example, good education but very high malnutrition within the human capital). Thus following the field work, the assessment team used to go through time consuming processes to review all findings, and check other resources, and validate with other stakeholders.

4.2.1. Human capital assets

¹⁰ Shara'ab Al-Salam and Mastaba districts are mountainous rural areas. Each school served many scattered villages and might not be accessible for some villages.

In terms of human capital, in Al-Qahera (Taiz) – as illustrated in figure 15-, revealed as presenting better education, knowledge, skills, and adaptive capacities, abilities to advocate for their rights and lead others, and availability of various training opportunities for the youth, compared to other targeted localities. However, poor households, wage laborers, and marginalized groups were still indicating very low access to education, informal training, health services, and appropriate food consumption. The harmful coping strategies in order to deal with the conflict increased their vulnerability.

On the other hand, Khanfar district (Abyan) was characterized by relatively low human capital after the conflict, compared to its situation before 2011, although there were still competitive capacities and skills in agriculture, fishing, military, etc. The displacement of population and damage to properties / assets, caused by the conflict, as well as the induced psychological, housing and family issues, have been indirectly affecting human capital in general. The involvement of humanitarian INGOs following the conflict contributed to tackling food insecurity, shelter, limited skills among the youth, health, and WASH. However these initiatives had just started.

Workers in Abs and Mastaba had skills in agriculture and animal breeding. Moreover, returnees from Saudi Arabia have various skills. However, Mastaba, had the lowest education level among all assessment areas. This is illustrated in figure 16. Although enrolment in basic education got improved in the last 10 years due to the new schools constructed in the area, all schools were reported to be occupied by Houthis armed groups and used for other purposes. Yet, all the efforts of the governor of Hajja, who came from Mastaba, to persuade Houthis to release the schools, so children could continue their education, failed. Men from Mastaba as was the case of men from Khanfar, indicated feelings of shame for being in situations where they could not protect their families from armed groups. Male participants in the FGDs in Mastaba, indicated that they felt ashamed when they went to another district to work.

*“when we go to other areas seeking work, people stare at us, laugh and say how come you are here leaving Houthis armed men occupying your area and harassing your women”.
(FGD. Adult male, Mastaba district).*

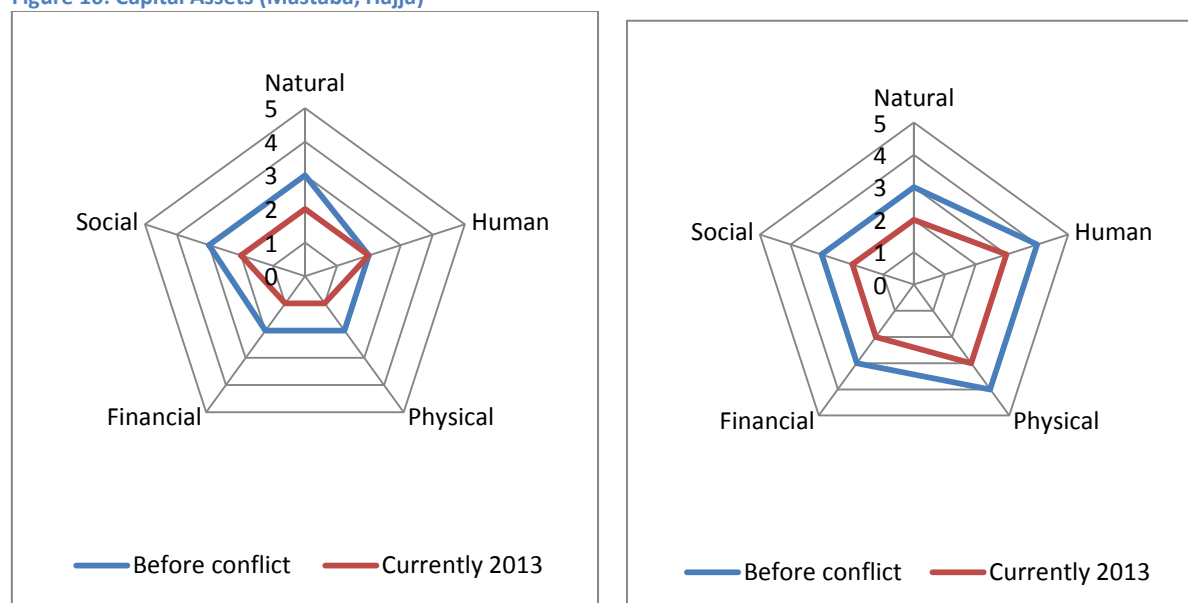
Participants for Raida and Thula in Amran, although admitting the low education levels in their areas, indicated that they had a positive image of the whole country having high quality skills within construction work.

“As a result of the war, education came to a halt, teachers joined the sit-in and demonstrations, and went on strike” (Adult male, Thula, Amran governorate)

In all locations, different factors undermining human capital were present, such as marginalization, girls' dropout of schools, poor health and nutrition conditions in the area, occupation of schools by armed groups, limited vocational and life skills, casualties and disabilities caused by the conflict, early marriages, remoteness of education facilities, inability to afford clothes or transportation fees for school, lack of electricity in very hot areas, cultural norms, poverty level leading youth to join armed groups in illegal activities.

Figure 17: Capital assets (Al-Qahera, Taiz)

Figure 16: Capital Assets (Mastaba, Hajja)



Box 10: Combined locally defined indicators for assessing human capital assets

Human Capital Assets	
<p><u>Knowledge, education and skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational attainment • Skill levels • Knowledge base and local use of science and technology • The extent to which local skills match the needs of existing or emerging local businesses <p><u>Access to food, education, and health care and Capacity to work</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of disability/mental health problems • Freedom of work, to travel, to sell in markets • Nutrition • Healthy living conditions and practices • Appropriateness of work types to age, gender and physical capacities. • Motivating, safe, age and gender sensitive working conditions. 	<p><u>Livelihood aspirations and Capacity to adapt</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness and eagerness to gain and improve knowledge and skills • Opportunities for formal and informal vocational training • Life skills (self-confidence, etc.) • Connection and sharing with others in various livelihood activities • Dynamic and flexible workers • Risk taking • Adapt to any situation • Have more connections, network, patronage, membership groups, etc. • Trust based connections (for example, to borrow money, or take goods on credit, etc.) • Use safe savings schemes • Know the right coping approaches that do not affect physical health • Use formal and/or informal insurance schemes • Ability to deal with social trends

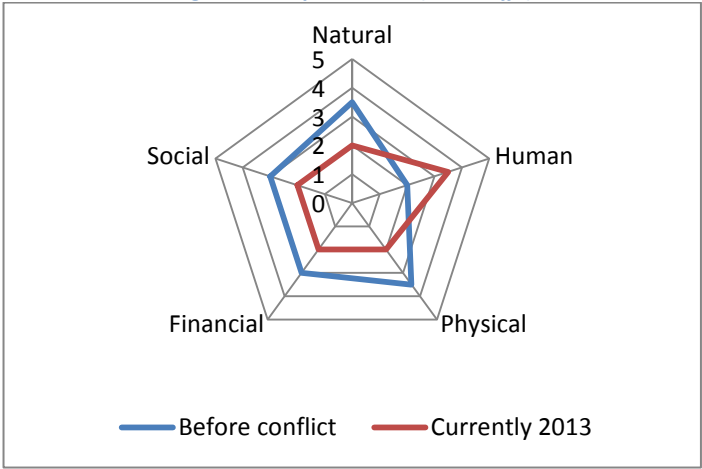
4.2.2. Natural capital assets

Natural capital scored relatively high in Khanfar (Abyan) and Abs (Hajja) (illustrated in figure 17). Although both areas have a very hot climate during summer, and a spread of malaria, they have large cultivable lands, access to the sea for fishing, under-ground water for irrigation, in addition to many other factors including the sun and wind for potential large scale clean energy systems as well as the location of Abs as a center for the whole region and being on the international road to the gulf countries. Taiz also benefited from a favorable environment, while Amran came last, being a mountainous area with limited agriculture land, rocks for construction, and one tourism site (Thula).

The conflict impacted the natural capital in different ways. The displacement of population and the

current fear of landmines affected the use of land and seashore in Abyan. Floods affect agricultural lands in Hajja, Taiz, Amran and Abyan, provoking landslides. The occupation of the whole Mastaba district in Hajja by Houthis prevented people from selling their land to generate income so as to cope with pressing needs. It also prevented agricultural activities such as animal grazing.

Figure 17: Capital assets (Abs, Hajja)



In some places, few groups occupied mountains for commercial purposes. This phenomenon was reported in Taiz, Amran and Hajja. The high cost of fuel prevented farmers from using tractors and maintaining their lands, leading to desertification. The use of chemicals for qat trees were impacting the local environment especially beekeeping activity, as the bees were being poisoned thus affecting female farmers and households’ food consumption in Shar’ab. In Shar’ab, water resources were being undermined by the extensive use of water for Qat cultivation. The presence of large scale intensive fishing by commercial companies in the Red Sea was threatening small fishing activities and disturbing the ecosystem. Moreover, fishermen were sometimes suspected of being, or mixed with, pirates and smugglers. Some of them were caught by military forces and sent to jail for several years in other countries.

Box 11: Combined locally defined indicators for assessing natural capital assets

Natural capital assets	
<p><u>Natural resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivable land • Sea and “good” and long beach/sea shore • Rocks and sand for construction <p><u>Environmental and location conditions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Potential for clean energy (sun, wind) ○ Moderate climate with less impact on health and livelihoods ○ Tourism/ historical areas ○ Strategic location in the region 	<p><u>Appropriate management systems of the natural resource</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irrigation resources • Ownership and access to public lands and mountains • Ability to reach your own land and do regular agriculture activities

4.2.3. Financial capital assets

In terms of financial capital assets, all respondents – rural, urban, men and women-, indicated various financial approaches and resources that families depend on during crisis. These capitals varied from one site to another based on dominant livelihood activities, poverty level of areas and specific groups in the community, gender and social issues. Overall, there were about five resources included using family and household assets as the first and most common option, followed by the support from relatives and solidarity initiatives in the community, credit, few experiences of getting support from humanitarian

agencies and the government Social Welfare Fund (SWF) program, and very rare experiences of insurance and membership risk sharing schemes.

Box 12: Combined locally defined indicators for assessing financial capital assets

Financial capital assets	
<u>Family/ Households assets</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's gold • Furniture and HH materials including weapons • Animals/livestock • Crops/goods • Equipment/materials (used by farmers, fishermen, petty traders, businessmen, transportation, etc.) • Cash in hand/saving • Land • Buildings 	<u>Credit:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust and relation based credit-no interest • Credit institutions
	<u>Solidarity/ Remittances</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remittances support from relatives • Solidarity/Philanthropic support
	<u>Humanitarian and social protection initiatives</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanitarian (INGOs, relief agencies) • Support from Social Welfare Fund
	<u>Membership risk sharing schemes</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Insurance scheme • Organized/membership risk sharing (tribal, traditional scheme)

In terms of household assets, selling women's gold, although limited, was revealed by all groups in all areas as frontline assets during crises. Dependence on livestock, crops, and part of the agricultural land were more common in rural agricultural localities in Lawder and Khanfar (Abyan), Shar'ab (Taiz), Mastaba and part of Abs (Hajja), as well as Raida, and Thula (Amran). Selling household material was revealed more in urban localities especially Al-Qahera, Abs, and Khanfar districts, with few cases indicated in rural areas. Few cases of selling equipment that were used by the household livelihood activity were also revealed in most localities especially among non-agricultural activities (petty traders and small businesses, fishermen, divers, etc.).

The least indicated household asset in all areas was cash in hand (savings). Justifications from FGDs and in depth interviews with key informants emphasized that due to the poverty level, huge demands compared to the low salary and wage levels, people could not save money. Few female respondents in Abs and Taiz, indicated that there were very few cases of women involved in traditional group saving schemes (*Hakba*), in which monthly allocations got rotated among members. However, they indicated that members decided in advance how to spend the allocated money (normally for household needs, marriage, purchase of equipment, repayment of debt, etc.). Few female participants indicated that "saving" was not a common practice and in most cases savings used by men covered up the usage of *qat*. Selling buildings, even during displacement, was reported to be very rare and not accepted within the social norms. In one meeting in Al-Qahera, it was indicated that renting part of the house can be an option for few households. Available houses in the same community were reported to be small and very crowded.

More respondents mentioned informal small and irregular support and remittances from the extended family and neighbors and social solidarity from the community. This was mentioned to be through religious and welfare organization during specific events, such as weddings, funerals of relatives or major health crises. Participants-mainly in Taiz, indicated access to such support from the private sector's welfare associations (i.e. Hayel Saed Company). Remittances from relatives in Saudi Arabia was relatively high in Abs and Mastaba (Hajja), some in Shar'ab (Taiz), and Lawder (Abyan), few in Amran, and very limited in Al-Qahera (Taiz) and Khanfar (Abyan). In Al-Qahera most remittances came from relatives working in other regions.

In terms of formal support mechanisms, respondents – mainly adult men – spoke about HH ability to access loans from moneylenders or shops and, very rarely, from banks. Loans were usually taken to pay for food, medicines/health services, and rent. Most common formal mechanisms were moneylenders and shops. Moneylenders in all districts were usually friends, relatives or neighbors. Shops in most cases provided food and non-food items and other supplies, but not cash. Abs and Al-Qahera had a limited number of banks that provided small/micro credit. With the exception of Al-Qahera and Abs districts, participants in all other districts indicated lack of banks in the areas to access credit. Mainly in Abs district, it was revealed that a gender orientated NGO, Abs Development Organization-, was also involved in providing micro-credit for women livelihoods activities in the area. There was no sort of formal or informal welfare or solidarity NGO in Mastaba (Hajja). Accessing financial support from International Humanitarian Organizations was mainly indicated by participants in Abyan. Few participants-mainly adult men and women, in all districts except Mastaba (Hajja), indicated that few families access financial support from the SWF program which consisted of minor amounts. Insurance through private companies was only indicated by one male participant in Al-Qahera district (Taiz), who was working as a mechanical assistant at one of the Hayel Saed companies. Only in Amran, participants indicated the availability of a tribal based membership risk sharing scheme (*Al-Gharamah*).

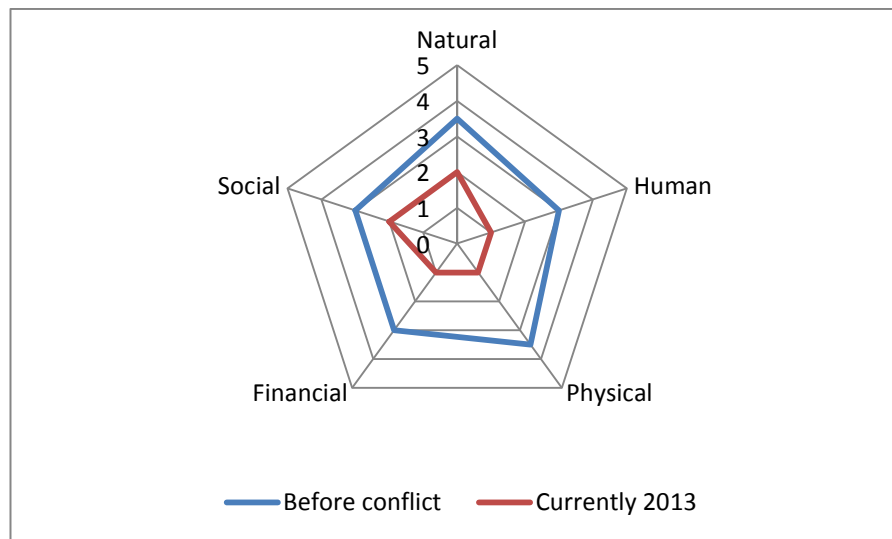
“Here, they are all Gharama (participating in risk sharing), when someone has an accident and even killed several people, they pay for him the blood money and all costs related to negotiation and compensation with the other tribe, and with the court, everything, we are not part of this, ‘They call us aliens... you live in the US for 5 years and you get the nationality, and we have been living in Raidah for 30 years, and they still call us aliens. Employment in the public sector is not allowed, a warranty is not allowed’”. (male participant in a FGD session in Raidah, Amran Governorate).

Communities financial assets and their access to financial resources were affected by multiple factors that included conflict, increased prices, and natural and seasonal shocks (in all areas with variation in the severity of the impact of conflict in Abyan, and Mastaba district in Hajja), restrictions on migration and cross borders trade with Saudi Arabia (mainly in Hajja, and little impact in Shar’ab, Lawder, Amran and Al-Qahera), animal disease outbreak (mainly in Hajja and Abyan). To cope with the results of the conflict different harmful strategies had been common by HHs in all areas affecting their crucial household assets (i.e. selling women’s gold, furniture, livestock, and crops). In severe cases members of livelihood groups had their equipment and tools destroyed or looted (in Abyan), or had to sell them and meet other crucial HH needs (i.e. agricultural tools and fishing tools in Abyan, tools of petty traders and small business in Taiz and Hajja, etc.).

“We sold thirty sheep for ten thousand Yemeni Rials to pay for evacuation to Aden” (male participant in FGD, Khanfar district, Abyan Governorate).

“We lost all our sheep, they were all killed on landmines” (male participant in FGD, Khanfar district, Abyan Governorate).

Figure 18: Capital assets (Khanfar, Abyan)



Reduced work and income opportunities were indicated in most areas. Various forms of negative impact and vulnerability factors were shared differently in different areas, including: displacement and loss of bread winners (Abyan, and Mastaba), blocking access to markets, agriculture land and herding open areas (Mastaba), mining markets and agricultural fields (Khanfar and Mastaba), losing jobs in Saudi Arabia and reducing demand on local livelihood groups (Abs), resuming or losing some activities due to the increased prices of diesel, increased transportation and goods costs, failure of electricity supply in all areas, and reduced demand on construction workers as public construction projects got stopped and the instability impedes investment in this sector, increased blocking of main roads and kidnapping leading to collapse of tourism related activities in some areas (Thula in Amran), the closure of most hotels and restaurants as well as descending prices of animals and crops due to the restriction of immigration and cross borders trade with Saudi Arabia (Abs and Mastaba district) and due to the lowered local demand related to lack of purchasing power (Lawder and Khanfar). In few areas some livelihood groups had been forced to pay regular fees to the armed group (Abs and Mastaba). Due to the conflict and division among communities and decision makers, poor farmers could not get fair solutions that protect them from conflict over water (Amran), from intensive use of chemicals and the harmful restriction on herding that had been affecting rural women's bee keeping and herding activities or getting compensation or assistant to deal with the damage of their land and to the main roads to their HH caused by the flood. (Shar'ab). Similarly, this was the case of the contradictory market restrictions put upon petty traders and the release of employees in urban localities (Al-Qahera).

According to some participants – mainly adult males as well as male and female youths in Taiz-, access to the other financial support alternatives (such as local NGOs, SWF, private sector welfare foundations, and the community solidarity work), had been more challengeable compared to the situation before the conflict, when the major challenges were in the limited amounts given and the time and effort consuming processes. They spoke about various reasons including the increased number of the poor as a result of the conflict compared to the limited capacities of these institutions. In addition, it was indicated that lack of appropriate targeting schemes had been causing these institutions to depend on local agents or staff who tend to classify people based on their political stand during the conflict. This type of support that can be accessed, although with some difficulty, mainly in terms of food, assistance in weddings, sickness, or marriage and mostly during the month of Ramadan, but no examples were seen in terms of supporting livelihood groups to recover their livelihood activities. Accessing banks that assisted income generation activities-available mainly in Al-Qahera and Abs- was reported to be very difficult; it requires guarantees which the poor could not afford, incorporated high interest fees, the banks did not have appropriate repayment schedules, did not provide additional guiding services, as well as did not respect those who

may have failed in their business or encountered obstructions that hindered the repayment. Accessing credit from relatives and shop keepers increased at the beginning of the conflict but became so tough when all HHs, relatives and shop keepers got directly or indirectly affected by the conflict.

On the plus side, Lawder and Khanfar received extra funds from the government and international community in their responses to the conflict prone disaster. During and after the conflict, some job opportunities were generated. During evacuation and displacement, truck drivers and porters were active in moving items and furniture. After the conflict, opportunities were available with international organizations, NGOs, and community solidarity programs which entered conflict affected area. Male and female youth participants in Abs and Abyan indicated that some of their acquaintances, including young females, found opportunities with existing INGOs working with IDPs in Haradh district in Hajja, Khanfar and Lawder in Abyan. Some participants in Abs, Abyan, Amran and Taiz benefited from training in life skills, Youth, gender, health awareness and First Aid, peace building, and conflict mitigation. Recently, some programs were providing grants and/or credit for economically active youth and households in Abyan.

On the other hand few participants indicated that the conflict also contributed to youth opportunities in accessing vacancies with the Army and community defense committees (in Abyan), with Al-Qaida and Ansar Al-Sharia'a (Abyan), with Al-Houthis armed groups (Hajja), looting groups (Shar'ab), and with smugglers (Abs, Hajja). To cope with the conflict impact, many women -mainly in urban areas- indicated that they have started domestic service jobs, selling food items, selling perfume and clothes, etc.

4.2.4. Physical capital assets

Access to shelter was reported to be relatively good in the assessment rural communities, compared to the densely populated areas such as Al-Qahera district, center of Abs, Lawder and Khanfar districts. Small and crowded houses, and high rent were indicated among the main challenges faced by livelihood groups in Al-Qahera district. Access to shelter was negatively affected due to the conflict in terms of massive destruction of houses and displacement in the case of Khanfar in Abyan due to conflict with al-Qaida, increased rent as the case in most urban areas-mainly Al-Qahera district-, and few cases of displacement from Mastaba district in Hajja, due to Houthis closure on the area. IDPs from Khanfar had been exposed to several vulnerable circumstances, including the loss of their houses, evacuation process and living in Aden and other areas. With the current gradual return of IDPs, many entitlements raised by the government had not been fulfilled, that led to more dilemmas for the returnees as they had lost all their savings.

Picture 5: Women fetching water from remote resources (Taiz)



The flood during the field work of this assessment in August 2013 also affected more than 25 houses in Al-Qahera district, and few houses in Shar'ab and Abs districts. However, lack of access to adequate shelter was the most chronic contributor to the vulnerability of the marginalized groups (al-Akhdam) in the eight districts, as had been the case in all areas in Yemen.

Access to water and sanitation was a major chronic issue in all rural and urban communities targeted by this assessment –mainly in Al-Qahera, and rural communities in the other seven districts had been overwhelmed by the increase of prices during and after the conflict, especially in the areas of a very hot

climate (Abs, Khanfar, Mastaba), and areas where cultivation of qat was common (Shar'ab). As a result of the conflict, the water supply system in Khanfar, and Lawder was destroyed. The closure of Mastaba by Houthis restricted women's and children's ability to fetch water from other villages. Conflict among tribes affected the supply of water from the neighbor villages leading people to use contaminated water from the water harvesting schemes. Escalating conflicts over water supply was considered a potential crisis of the area. With the exception of Al-Qahera, lack of irrigation systems was also raised by farmers and affected their ability to cope with the high costs of inputs when shifting to other means (high cost of diesel, lack of access to tools like water pumps, irrigation network, etc. The recent flood also damaged some of the natural channels/valleys for irrigation (Shar'ab).

Power black-out, was a major concern in the eight districts affecting most livelihood activities and adding to the vulnerability of the people living in the very hot climates of Abyan and Hajja. However, following the conflict, a new electricity station was implemented in Lawder district through a government fund. Overall access to health facilities, schools and roads were found to be relatively better in Al-Qahera district compared to other districts, although they were affected during the conflict and limitations still exist in affordability issues by the poor, small livelihood groups and marginalized groups as was the case in all communities. The Khanfar, and Mastaba districts were considered the most vulnerable in terms of accessing schools, health facilities and roads. In Khanfar, infrastructures were destroyed during the conflict with al-Qaida. While in Mastaba, Al-Houthis armed groups still occupying these infrastructures restricted access to all schools and health units as well as blocking roads and people's access to their agriculture lands, market, and water resources as described by participants in FGDs.

Participants in Khanfar, Abs and Al-Qahera indicated availability of vocational training centers. However, the one in Khanfar, although it was previously more advanced, was destroyed during the conflict. But all these vocational centers were revealed to be for formal and typical training that was not linked to the market's needs and was not designed to suit the limitations of the livelihood groups, and vulnerable individuals (illiterate, required compensation for the daily wage, gender sensitivity, etc.)

Primarily in Khanfar, most equipment of the livelihood group was either sold to meet needs, stolen, or destroyed during the conflict (i.e. fishing boats, water pumps, shops equipment, etc.)

It is worth mentioning here that many infrastructure projects that were under construction prior to the conflict in the eight districts, got stopped in 2011 (schools and University branch in Shar'ab, water project in Thula, and several projects in Mastaba, Abs, Lawder, and Khanfar).

Box 13: Combined locally defined indicators for assessing physical capital assets

Physical Capital Assets	
1.	Access to adequate housing (secured buildings/ shelters with healthy living conditions)
2.	Access to and use of basic infrastructures in the area (i.e. Access to safe water and sanitation, secured roads, secured water and Sanitation services, formal or informal Irrigation schemes, Stable electricity services, Telecommunication services, schools, university, and other education institutions, health facilities, vocational training centers for formal and informal training, agriculture and fishing support centers, awareness channels on livelihood and conflict, fixed and secured markets, etc)
3.	Available tools, equipment and materials needed for livelihood activities

4.2.5. Social and political capital assets

During the field assessment, different social and political assets were revealed and varied among communities and within different groups. The types of social assets included availability of common solidarity and mutual support, relations at the household and community level, availability of supportive

formal and informal NGOs and community structures, and attitudes towards the future, safety, security, and ability to participate in decision making processes to change.

Solidarity and mutual support

In terms of solidarity and mutual support, all communities highlighted the cooperation among neighbors and relatives as a major social asset. Community solidarity initiatives were mentioned as irregular and occur mainly during specific events, such as weddings, funerals of relatives or major health crises and were based on social status in the community and exclude in most cases the marginalized groups. With the exception of Mastaba (Hajja), it was revealed that there were few religious and welfare organization supporting poor people in similar cases. These solidarity initiatives provided food, assistance in weddings, sickness, or marriage and mostly during the month of Ramadan, but they did not support risks in livelihood activities. However, registering with these associations was more challengeable due to increased number of the poor as a result of the conflict, lack of appropriate targeting schemes, and the social, religious and political affiliation among these organizations. Participants in Hajja and Abyan indicated, that after the conflict new sorts of these solidarity actions emerged for those who supported the armed and ideological groups like Al-Houthis in Hajja and Al-Qaida and Ansar Alsharia'a in Abyan. Solidarity initiatives through the private sector were mentioned mainly in Al-Qahera (Taiz) and Lawder (Abyan). Lawder and Amran, and part of Shar'ab district, reported stronger tribal linkages and mutual tribal protection compared to Al-Qahera, Abs, Mastaba, and Khanfar.

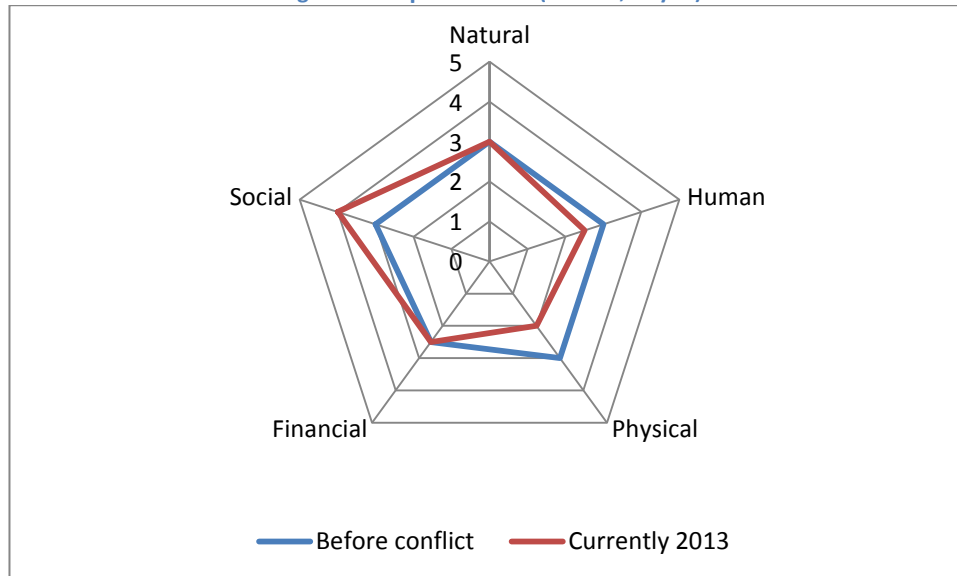
Membership in formal and informal groups, networks, and NGOs

With the exception of Taiz, absence of formal and informal NGOs that represented, advocated, and provided services for specific livelihood groups, was a common phenomenon in all communities (i.e. youth associations, small farmers NGOs, petty traders NGOs, marginalized groups NGOs, conflict mitigation NGOs, advocacy and human rights NGOs, etc.). The other sorts of NGOs available in Lader, Khanfar, Abs, and Amran, were almost exclusively welfare or community based development oriented and most of them created as a result of the conflict. With the exception of Mastaba, new sorts of social groups and NGOs emerged following the conflict in all districts, including social groups connected through the social web-areas (i.e. facebook, etc.), youth initiatives, and gender orientated NGOs. In Shar'ab, an NGO was created to assist in facilitating peace processes during the conflicts between tribes in the same areas. Men from Al-Qahera and Shar'ab in Taiz, Lawder in Abyan and Amran indicated that they have linkages to some individuals at the national levels in various ministries.

Perceived high level of insecurity and lack of safety

The perceived high level of insecurity and lack of safety in Khanfar, Lawder, and Mastaba districts was a grave issue. All were still considered conflict prone areas. The "defeated" armed groups of Al-Qaida and Ansar Al-Sharia'a in Abyan were still a major threat for the affected communities in general and their livelihood activities in specific. The enormous destruction and landmines in some agricultural areas and fishers compounds were major concerns for the people and returnees. Although defeating al-Qaida and Ansar Al-Sharia'a in collaboration with the government in Lawder, increased people's attitude towards their capabilities to protect their communities, the instability and political tension in the country as well as the uncertain future of the community's defense committees, gave the communities and livelihood groups no reason to celebrate the victory and move forward. Similarly, with all the efforts of the current governor to eradicate armed groups in Taiz, people in the city still felt fear of sudden incidences of violence and clashes. Closure on Mastaba in Hajja, affected all aspects of people's livelihoods (i.e. forced marriage, harassment, shooting at women and children while fetching water or while doing any agriculture related activity, occupying schools and health facilities, miscarriages and lack of resources to afford health services in the neighbor districts or afford food for the family, land landmines in the weekly markets, blocking people's access to, or selling and control of lands, prisons for anti-Houthis, increased child trafficking, etc.).

Figure 19: Capital Assets (Lawder, Abyan)



Community and household relations

- Increased mental health problems and tension at the households level, due to the high demands and lack of opportunities to meet them; leading to divorce; violence was emphasized in Khanfar (Abyan), Abs and Mastaba (Hajja), and Al-Qahera (Taiz).
- Increased tension at the community level due to the spread of different political and ideological ideas in all districts.
- Reduced power of the traditional leaders, due to the power of some emerging groups like Houthis in Mastaba (Hajja), community defense committees and armed groups in Abyn, armed groups participating in the looting and political confrontations in cues in Taiz.
- Increased division among communities (all) and stigma against a few livelihood groups (i.e. petty traders in Abyan who came from northern governorates, farmers in Raida (Amran), who originally came from neighbor areas despite having lived in Raida more than 20 years.
- Stigma attached to men from Mastaba, when they worked in other districts (i.e. shame associated with the occupation by Al-Houthis and that women from Mastaba had been harassed by Houthis in the absence of men)
- Stigma and negative images attached to men from Abyan (i.e. accusations of links to Al-Qaida), when they went to other governorates, as affiliated to Mastaba who could not defeat Al-Houthis
- Spread of arms (all areas) and tendency to achieve greater rights by using arms (all areas)
- Increased feeling that change would come gradually by throwing escalated demonstrations and causing change at the national and institutional levels (Taiz)
- Increased youth tendency to join the armed and looting groups, and military for income and protection.
- Increased negative attitudes towards the government.
- Escalating negative attitudes and hate in Tihama (Abs) against people who came from the mountainous areas and occupied their land or dominated employment in public and private services. Also due to a perceived superior behavior and the experienced use of power and arms against the peaceful people in Tihama region (Abs and Mastaba).
- In Lawder and Khanfar, meetings with women, youth and men indicated that al-Qaeda and Ansar al-

Sharia made use of the social division and marginalization of some groups to stimulate youth from the lower social classes, providing income opportunities and awakening the attitudes of being marginalized by the community. In Abs and Mastaba (Hajja), it was indicated that youth and children from different marginalized groups were more targeted, than other groups in the community, by Houthis, smugglers and drug dealers, and prostitution workers.

- The drop out of children from schools due to lack of security, lack of income to cover costs, and the need of children and youth involvement in daily labor to assist in getting income for the family.
- Increased number of youth gender and political activists pushing for more participation of women and youth in decision making, awareness, dialogue among different parties, etc. (anti-unity, pro-unity, anti-previous regime, pro-previous regime, gender activists, etc.). In Taiz, women activists indicated that their image in the community as well as their opportunities to marry and get work, had been negatively affected after participating in the change squares and demonstrations.
- The persistent instability following the conflicts impacted the community. It created a fertile ground for all armed groups to spread and become involved in different illegal activities such as drug dealing, weapon selling, roadblocks, hijackings or kidnappings.
- In addition to this, among the unique shift in the gender rules noticed during this assessment, it was noted that due to the conflicts and the presence of al-Qaeda people in Khanfar and Houthis in Mastaba, women were constrained to stay inside houses to avoid being harassed or shot. Men started to take over their activities. On the positive side, a few cases had been reported in Abs, when some returnees started to cultivate their land. Their return also triggered some tensions over land, as boundaries had been forgotten or lost. In Mastaba, men indicated that women became more powerful and taking the lead in many aspects as the men became less able to face the armed groups, or work to provide needs of the family, and as they became more dependent on women's assets and their income from animal rearing. This was perceived by men and women as a negative change within the family relations and roles, although women liked that men became more involved in some activities which used to be mainly done by women and children such as rearing animals, and fetching water. Men as well as adult women indicated that the involvement of men in those activities was considered negative and humiliating by men.

"...tension among teachers, tension among students, conflicts between people of the same town, conflict within the family between parents and children and among brothers because of partisan and different religious sectors." (male youth participant in FGD, Thula district, Amran)

"a dominant leader restricted an international organization working in supporting children (Save the children). He wanted a percentage of what they distribute and he wanted to be the focal person for them in the area, he wanted to make use of the support for the families of his people." (Adult male participant in the FGD, Raida district, Amran)

"even vaccination teams were forced to go back to Hajja, they restrict them from the area and say "this is an American and Israelis medicine", Al-Houthis have been occupying all schools and health units, they constructed walls and division inside them and distributed rooms to their associates for living and to hide when shooting on people, the governor after very long trials managed to let them leave one of the boys schools. Since they came education for girls stopped completely." (Adult female participant in the FGD, Mastaba district, Hajja)

Women, youth and marginalized groups

Women, especially in poor HH headed by women, were facing multi challenges to cope with the conflict (i.e. stigma on women workers, limited access to work, being in a risky environment, divorce, domestic violence, harassment, restricted movements, religious restrictions on clothes and activities, forced

marriages, and increased domestic tasks; water fetching, producing food to sell, making handcrafts, following administrative processes to get support, covering some agricultural tasks). Early marriages were also reported in most areas but either perceived in a negative way or seen as an opportunity for poor families. Al-Qaida and the Houthis have also been forcing some families to marry off their daughters, and have been involved in women harassment during the conflicts. Also, the pressure and stress caused by the lack of resources led some couples to divorce and some families to split.

‘Where can we go, they are everywhere, the mountains are full of Houthis, even the governor could not deal with them, they are not merciful, shooting on every person passing without being checked by them, they even shoot animals of people, we (women) do not leave our houses, we are so afraid, few families displaced to Mazrak camp in Haradh and abandoned their homes.’ (Adult female participant in the FGD, Mastaba district, Hajja)

Youth and newly graduated faced unemployment and lack of job opportunities, in addition to lack of appropriate formal and informal vocational training, life skills, a supporting environment, that led to an increase in their disappointment, use of drugs, a negative attitude towards the future and government, a fear of failure if starting any business, and an increased tendency to join any opportunity including illegal activities.

Box 14: Combined locally defined indicators for assessing social and political capital assets

Social and political Capital Assets	
Social capital assets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived levels of safety and security • Participation in formal and informal social groups and networks that provide support for protection, cooperation, advocacy and pressure, etc. (i.e. community-based organizations, NGOs, Youth, livelihood group associations, religious-based organizations, women’s organizations, and extended family networks. • Relations of trust / mutual support and solidarity • Supporting religious, traditional and cultural norms • Connections and networks (patronage, kinship and affiliation, neighborhood, relation with people in power or in main institutions, etc.) • Perceived levels of safety and security 	Political/governance capital assets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to and participation in government decision-making processes • Gender relations and power structures influencing control over decision making within households, communities, and the wider society • Access to judicial systems and security sector institutions.

5. Coping Strategies

The insights provided by respondents into the most common coping strategies they used in response to

the range of vulnerabilities and challenges they faced, which included actions at the household level to ensure basic needs of the family, actions done at the community level to protect the community, and other actions related to the livelihood activities. Some of these entailed actions that had negative consequences on different household members. Another category of these coping strategies were found safer and enhanced households' and communities' resilience. The third group of coping strategies were questioned and created debate during FGDs among participants who found such strategies reasonable and another group of participants who found similar strategies very harmful, illegal, and lead to negative long term consequences:

5.1. Coping strategies that entail negative consequences

Various strategies have been used by families and communities to make the most of their limited resources. Many of the on-going mechanisms had a very negative impact on people. These included: reducing consumption, selling crucial household assets, shifting to traditional healers, living in the damaged shelters with very poor sanitation and living conditions, the continuation of livelihood activities in a risky environment where they did not have clarity on the maps of landmines or still got shot at by armed men occupying the area and forcing closure on people's movement, shifting to home based treatment of pregnancy and delivery, diluting milk powder for babies, not seeking vaccination that were restricted by armed groups, getting water from contaminated resources, joining armed groups, drug dealers and smugglers, accepting forced and early marriage to armed men, using harmful sources for energy and cooking purposes, allowing children to travel illegally to work in Saudi Arabia through dealers involved in child trafficking, pausing livelihood activities of the poorest rural women to avoid cultural restrictions and fines on animal rearing in the land of others, or to avoid impact of chemicals on their beekeeping activities, divorce and domestic violence to limit mental health problems due to pressure of demands, dropping out of schools to work and support the family or to protect girls from harassment and road risks, forming community armed groups to protect the area putting youth at risk, etc..

Mastaba district in Hajja, Khanfar, and a few families in Lawder, were the most affected areas by such coping mechanisms and urgent support in such issues was highly prioritized. However, the marginalized groups as well as rural children, youth and women from poor families with high number of family members, and those that were headed by women and have weak social protection linkages, were the most affected by such coping strategies in these areas, followed by the poor in Al-Qahera and Abs districts, and rural wage and agricultural women workers in Shar'ab district. Limited access to safe water was also revealed in Thula district in Amran.

The following were the main strategies that were said to be applied, nevertheless, because there were not many alternative options available to deal with vulnerabilities and challenges.

Individual and household level:

- Reduced number of meals, changed the type and quality of meals, and ate very little or very unpleasant foods, resulting in the weakening of physical health.
- Took food and important stuff on credit from shops at higher prices than direct cash payment
- Sold important agricultural or fishing equipment (Sold productive livestock, working animals or breeding animals, sold fishing boats, etc.).
- Sold major savings (such as gold at low prices)
- Mortgaged or sold land (except in Mastaba district in Hajja, where doing this was difficult due to challenges by Houthis)
- Sold furniture (included room furniture, Gas cylinders, blankets)
- Used firewood and charcoal and animal waste as an alternative for gas.
- Used candles and small risky generators for electricity

- Borrowed money from finance institutions under the false pretense that this would finance a project but was actually used for covering food and family needs (although this was linked to extra interests rates and fees for any delay in repayment)
- Divorce (Spouse separation to cope with the pressure and the disputes)
- Family division during displacement or when the inability to feed the family
- Push young girls to marry to protect them from harassment or forced marriage by armed groups.
- Went to harmful traditional healers instead of health facilities, especially to cure mentally affected individuals (fire treatment) affected during the conflict as well as for pregnancy and delivery cases.
- Used contaminated water that was fetched from remote and unhealthy sources due to the inability to pay for water tankers.
- Children dropped out from schools to reduce costs or to work and support the family
- Due to inability to cope with the impact of the conflict, youth and children were increasingly joining drug dealers and smugglers of drugs, Qat, Hasheesh, arms, and children (trafficking) (mentioned in all governorates but more in Hajja and Taiz)
- prostitution

Livelihood activities:

- Crop substitution (Qat instead of Coffee and grains)
- Sought work with armed ideological groups (Houthis, Qaida and Ansar Al-Sharia'ah, informal supporters of the previous regime who were interested in keeping the conflict escalating, Southern movement/Hirak, etc.)
- Conducted theft, joined a gang, or formed a new one, make use of the conflict and security instability, especially in the cities.
- Sold petroleum products on the black market

Community:

- Looted and hijacked cars and public facilities during the conflict
- Created challenges or attacked the relief support coming to the area or forced them to use specific guides or guards
- Exaggerated the impact of conflict and the number of family members to get more support by welfare initiatives or relief organizations.
- Blocked the water of the valley to sell water (owner of water tankers)
- participated in demonstrations or sit-ins for financial compensation
- Asked for money to facilitate administrative transactions for poor citizens to get registered in the support provided by government, organizations and private institutions
- Used own leadership position to get part of the assistance provided to the community or part from the looted properties

5.2. Positive Coping strategies

Individual and Household protection

- Displacement to save the lives and dignity of family members. (mainly Khanfar, Mastaba, and a few families in Raida, and workers and petty traders in Lawder originating from other regions)
- Sold excess animals
- Consumed less expensive food but not resulting in the weakening of physical health
- Made use of the solidarity transfers of food or money. This included registering the family with all available initiatives and organizations.
- Moved few members of the family to live with relatives
- Sold non-essential possessions / made use of the savings that that would not negatively affect the family (for example, weapons)

- Reduced some unnecessary costs (such as the use of motorcycles for transportation instead of cars)
- Borrowed money from others based on trust relations - culturally not linked to extra interests rates
- Travelled to other districts to get medical services as the health facility got occupied by Houthi armed men and the health staff stopped working there. (Mastaba)
- Went to other districts to get the salaries and the transfers from the social welfare fund that got stopped in the area during the conflict with al-Qaida
- Changed the style of clothing for protection from the fundamental religious groups that had increased during the conflict (Lawder, and Khanfar)

Livelihood activities

- Did casual local work
- Change of livelihood activity to one that was more profitable due to the context and needs (i.e. sold water/tankers where the water project got stopped)
- Sought work in another district within the region especially markets in the proximity of the district (Mainly Abs, Mastaba, and Taiz)
- Paused the livelihood activity for a while to avoid risks and to get more clarity of the situation (small trade in Abs, animal rearing and agriculture activities of women in Mastaba and Lawder, and Shar'ab, and fishing in Khanfar and Abs, Tourism activities in Thula)
- Worked in own land while waiting for the immigration problem with Saudi Arabia to get settled.
- Women produced and sold homemade food as well as sold livestock (local bread/Lahooh, chicken, eggs, etc.)
- Men replaced women in their usual tasks such as agriculture and animal rearing to avoid any harmful actions by armed groups towards women.
- Volunteered with local and international organizations that worked in the area (minimum wage was also gained)
- Started a new weekly market to replace the market that was stopped and occupied by Houthis. "Our new market has positively increased the prices of lands around the new market". (mainly Mastaba)

Community and social:

- Ran solidarity and cooperation initiatives to provide financial and in-kind subsidies for affected families
- Used mosques and a few houses or under trees as alternatives to the schools that were occupied by armed groups (Mastaba/ Hajja).
- Formation of local committees and NGOs to advocate and claim rights with related stakeholders.
- Formation of civil society organizations to help in creating peace in the community and ran initiatives to solve some conflicts/problems among tribes and communities. (mainly in Shar'ab)
- Formation of civil society organizations to provide civic education as well as to advocate the rights of some groups and call for institutional change in the government sector (mainly in Taiz)
- Demanded and created pressure to force the demands made on the government and local authorities to be met (such as compensation for affected households, victims, casualties, youth rights, etc.) (mainly in Taiz)

5.3. Other coping strategies

The following coping strategies were perceived as positive by some participants while other participants perceived them as negative.

Household:

- Men quitted their jobs in other areas and went back to their home area where there was a conflict (to protect the family and properties as well as to do some activities that used to be done by women as women's movement became risky (harassment)
- Bought water from more expensive sources than sending kids and girls to fetch water in a risky site where they could also be exposed to harassment.
- Cut wood from trees to use for energy and cooking purposes to cope with gas deficiency (desertification)
- Restricted the movement of children and blocked them at home to protect them from risks outside of the house
- Joined political parties and religious groups to get protection due to the lack of protection by the government

Livelihood activities:

- Taught or provided health services at home or with international organizations or private institutions to enhance and diversify the income and cope with the increase of prices that could not be covered given the low wage in public facilities. Public facilities as a result could not afford to maintain quality services due to an absence of professional staff.
- Replaced displaced people in their activities and got wage for that from the displaced people themselves.
- "Joining the government army to get fixed employment. As vacations with the army got increased due to conflict in our area." (Youth in Abyan, who were dreaming of something else for their future)
- Used patronage and bribes to get access to support during the conflict as well as to get compensation
- Begged

Community:

- Established community defense committees to protect the area and joined the army in its war against armed and radical groups. Youth were recruited to join these committees and have been getting salaries and weapons for this work. The future of these committees and youth was not clear and of concern. (Lawder and Khanfar)
- Formation of civil society organizations to participate in the revolutionary events/demonstrations (Taiz)
- Depended on volunteers to run schools and taught instead of workers who were absent due to displacement and/or other reasons. However, due to the length of time there was a concern that volunteers would not continue without getting compensation. (Amran)
- Changed party affiliation to reduce any risk or to gain opportunities due to the changing situations of political parties as a result of the on-going tension and political transition

6. Transforming Structures

6.1. Institutions

Several types of institutions were reported by participants – mainly adult male, youth male, female youth activists, and key informants-, to be operating in the eight districts targeted by the assessment in the four governorates. These institutions included local councils and government executive institutions, formal and informal social NGOs and groups, private institutions; political parties, and INGOs. Institutions indicated by participants were classified in five major types:

1. Government institutions:
2. Political parties, ideological and armed groups
3. Private and economic Institutions
4. Formal and informal civil society organizations
5. INGOs

The most dominant institutions at districts' level were reported to be the local councils with related executive government offices (including the security, health, municipality, education, water, electricity, social welfare fund, finance, trade, tax, land authorities, agriculture/fisheries, civil service and employment, etc.). Communities' perceptions of the local councils and executive offices varied from one community to another. With the exception of Mastaba, where the local council and offices were seen as not effective at all, all other districts reported that their local authorities were still weak. Mainly male and female youth participants in the Al-Qahera district spoke about weaknesses and corruption among local councils representing the overall governance system in the country. Meetings with participants from poor communities and livelihood groups, were mainly emphasizing that all these institutions were not able to respond to their concerns (i.e. lack of security, poor living conditions, poor access to water, poor health services, power black-out, increased prices of food and goods, unemployment, poor access to finance to start business, poor education services, etc.). Few participants in Abyan and Taiz were less critical in their perceptions and sharing with groups that the limitations of the national system, governance, finance of basic services, non-poor and non-gender sensitive national policies were restricting the ability of local authorities and executive offices. The availability of the representatives of the ministry of defense was mainly indicated in Abyan, thereby linking the local community defense committees and the ministry.

In all contexts, representatives of the political parties, ideological and armed groups involved in the conflict, were reported to be available and influencing communities and decision making processes directly or indirectly. The effectiveness of these institutions was seen differently. In Mastaba (hajja), the Houthis were reported to be fully dominating the area. In Abyan, Taiz, and Amran, and Abs, parties, religious groups, and tribal leaders, were reported to be "behind the curtains" and influencing different aspects of people's life.

The influence of the private and economic Institutions was reported to be active in Taiz, more than any other governorate.

With the exception of Taiz, absence of formal and informal NGOs that represented, advocated, and provided services for specific livelihood groups, was a common phenomenon in all communities (i.e. youth associations, small farmers NGOs, petty traders NGOs, marginalized groups NGOs, conflict mitigation NGOs, advocacy and human rights NGOs, etc.). The other kind of NGOs available in Lawder, Khanfar, Abs, and Amran, were almost exclusively welfare or community based development oriented and most of them created as a result of the conflict. With the exception of Mastaba (new sorts of social groups and NGOs emerged following the conflict in all districts including social groups connected through the social web-areas (i.e. facebook, etc.), youth initiatives, and women NGOs. In Shar'ab, an NGO was created to assist in facilitating peace processes during the conflicts between tribes in the same areas.

Participants in Khanfar, Abs and Al-Qahera indicated availability of vocational training centers. However, the one in Khanfar, despite being more advanced, got destroyed during the conflict. But all these vocational centers were revealed to be for formal and typical training that was not linked to the market needs and was not designed to suit the limitations of the livelihood groups and vulnerable individuals (illiterate, required compensation for the daily wage, gender sensitivity, etc.)

In Abs and Al-Qahera, the only districts that indicated an availability of a few banks, people with ideas, clear plans and sufficient skills to start their own income generating projects complained about the difficulty to obtain credit with affordable interest rates. Incubators livelihood programs were highly prioritized by the male and female youth to be able to have access to credits with low interest rates and less collateral requirements.

This assessment did not come across any type of program or ideas by stakeholders on guiding youth to find employment or to create their own livelihood projects. Most groups encountered were not aware of any programs or existing institutions that could provide support to face the different concerns raised. This revealed a lack of information on available possibilities.

INGOs were reported working more in Abs (Hajja), Abyan, and few in Taiz and Amran. (Most of them were working in humanitarian assistance, training of youth, food security, health, and WASH. Very few INGOs were involved in income generating and livelihood activities. However, meetings with few of their staff indicated future plans to enhance involvement in this sector. Meetings with participants indicated that people were interested to see better targeting mechanisms in the work of INGOs, awareness on programs and eligibility criteria, more participatory approaches, and visits to communities to monitor, check performance, and reduce biases of their local partners from government and civil society organizations.

There was a perceived lack of Institutions at the district level in terms of:

- Enhancing access to information on conflict and livelihood activities
- Preparedness
- Coordination among livelihood groups and related advocacy groups
- Coordination among government institutions, NGOs, INGOs, private sector, and other stakeholders

Wage laborers in most areas revealed that the current institutions and programs were ignoring their needs and limitations.

Box 15: The forgotten group (the case of wage laborers)

The “forgotten group” (the case of wage laborers)

In most areas, wage laborers emphasized that their vulnerability context required better attention, programming and policy change by all related stakeholders and at various levels. They described themselves as the most dominant group, most productive, most vulnerable, most prone to risks and accidents, and yet the most stigmatized, least paid, least targeted by social protection programs, had no representatives or advocacy structures, and did not have any system to support them when sick or when they face work accidents.

6.2. Policies:

The following issues were shared by participants during their analysis and responses to the different components of livelihood frame work illustrated in previous sections:

1. Policies related to fighting armed groups and protection of victims (when government decides to fight armed groups, safety of people and their properties should be taken into account, in the worst scenarios, initial steps to protect people should be in place including avoiding cities, community preparedness, alternative shelters, transportation, etc.
2. Policies on arms control should be communicated and enforced. All people should be treated alike regardless of their position in government, tribe, social class, region, etc.
3. People in conflict and hazard areas should get access to information on the types of conflicts and shocks that are currently active, their impact, appropriate coping strategies, and the available support programs and how to access them.
4. People asking for policies that protect their shelters and lands from armed groups during or following the conflict.
5. Policies on compensation for shelter for IDPs and returnees should be communicated. Lack of information led to more exploitation of the poor and access to compensation reached by those who got linkages and know the process and related departments.
6. Financing health care, equity and access of the poor to health services (including exemption of the poor, reproductive health, emergencies and primary health care, costs/fees of services, etc.)
7. Policies to manage access to markets and reduce closure on markets by armed groups. In non-conflict areas, petty traders asking for protection from the suddenly imposed restrictions by municipality and local authorities.
8. Policies to enhance daily wages and rights of the wage laborers.
9. Communication of tax policies on products and small enterprises to avoid exploitation of petty traders and owners of small businesses that are practiced by corrupted tax men. Policies on grievance and complain were also raised among the needs in this aspect.
10. Exemption of the poor to basic education and training was raised as an entitlement that was not applied even for those who were getting support from Social Welfare Fund, who carry official ID cards indicating their rights to free education for their children.
11. Modifying the current policies and types of the vocational training that was reported being not appropriate for common livelihood groups, their educational level, inability to cover expenses and clothes, inability to get other resources to cover daily needs of their families if having joined a training, etc.
12. Operational costs for public services in general and in remote areas was specifically indicated as very limited and restricting health, educational, and agricultural facilities from providing effective services and respond to the needs of the poor and those entitled to get exemption from fees of these services.
13. Division among community members that resulted from the conflict, reduced the effectiveness of local and indigenous norms among farmers in the distribution of irrigation water that came through valleys and dams. People indicated the need for organizing policies to restrict overuse and block of the natural resources by powerful groups or communities close to the source of the water (valley, dam, etc.)
14. The SWF support requires change in its policies to increase the value of money provided for the poor as well as have better targeting mechanisms to avoid leakage of the money to the non-poor.
15. Complicated judiciary system: The conflict and related challenges to cope with its impact increased tension among families. Women pushing to get their inheritance that used to be controlled by their brothers experience obstructions. Women indicated that the current environment and complicated judiciary system restrict them from controlling their part of the inheritance.
16. Policies of compensation for damages in agriculture and fishery sectors due to shocks related to seasonal, natural, or animal disease outbreak, or conflict. People indicated lack of clarity on the compensation, program, or types of available interventions. They hear sometimes that a certain family managed to get compensation from governorate or national based authorities.

17. Investment in agriculture in public lands and mountains: land tenure policies and procedures were indicated to be not clear to people and accessible mainly to people in power or those who have strong connections with the related departments at the central level.
18. Change in current credit policies including high interest rates, guarantees required from the poorest families and those who have no fixed salaries to ensure repayment, short repayment schedules, fines on delay in repayment, etc.
19. People were questioning the role of government and the available policies in protecting youth, children, women from conflict impact; recruiting youth and children as soldiers, harassment of women by armed groups, etc.
20. Policies to secure roads, schools and health facilities from the occupation of armed groups
21. The need for encouraging policies and a supportive environment to involve youth and women in the market in different livelihood activities (motivational, acknowledgement, grants, free formal and informal vocational trainings, tools, etc.
22. Equitable policies for marginalized ethnic groups (akhdam) and victims of early marriage.
23. Policies to enhance saving practices among different livelihood groups and communities (i.e. saving groups, compulsory membership in any sort of saving to be eligible for credit, insurance, etc.)
24. Policies to organize and facilitate coordination among relief and development organizations in their early recovery and post-conflict intervention in collaboration with local stakeholders
25. Policies to ensure adherence to a sound code of conduct and ethical practices by all stakeholders during conflicts, relief work, etc. Public awareness of such policies is needed in order to avoid any sort of exploitation, harassment, etc.
26. Policies on the right to access information on conflict, shocks, appropriate coping strategies, entitlements, available support programs, complain and grievance systems, etc.
27. Equitable, livelihood oriented, and pro-poor price policies (i.e. of basic food items and essential livelihood requirement including prices of the diesel for agricultural and fishing purposes)
28. Policies to protect and ensure stability of the electricity services, especially for areas affected by the very hot climate.
29. Policies to control over-use of chemicals in agriculture affecting other livelihood activities in the area such as bee keeping.
30. Policies to restrict expansion of Qat over other crops and the related overuse of water in Qat cultivation

7. Priorities and Recommendation for early recovery and resilience

In light of the above key findings, the following early recovery and resilience priority recommendations are proposed by the researchers, based on the perspectives of different respondents involved in this study and the evidence collected.

Key urgent protection priorities:

Some priorities were indicated by participants in different communities as grave issues and require urgent attention and action by all stakeholders at all levels. These issues include:

- Protection of some conflict prone areas of perceived high level of insecurity and lack of safety like Khanfar, Lawder, Al-Qahera, and Mastaba districts. All still considered conflict-prone areas and the need for protection mechanisms was highly emphasized
- Protection of specific vulnerable groups including IDPs and returnees from Abyan, families that lost breadwinners, families with disabilities and mental health problems due to conflict, women and children in Mastaba (Hajja) living under the siege by Houthis, harassment victims, people living close to areas where landmines were buried by armed groups, malnutrition cases, people blocked from accessing water and health services, youth and child soldiers, victims of child trafficking, drug addictions, and early marriage, jobless returnees from Saudi Arabia, imprisoned citizens by Houthis, marginalized groups (akhdam), poor and large families with no or very limited income, wage laborers and livelihood groups restricted from doing their activities such as animal grazing, beekeeping, petty traders in urban centers, etc.
- Protection of key community projects, that were destroyed or stopped due to the conflict or are still occupied by armed groups, was prioritized in some areas such as the infrastructure in Abyan, Thula water projects, all schools and health facilities occupied by Houthis in Hajja, or by armed groups in Shar'ab (Taiz).

Recommendations and priorities for early recovery and resilience:

The main priorities and recommendations for early recovery and resilience shared by participants focused on strengthening preparedness adaptive capacities, improving livelihoods, governance and coordination mechanisms and policies.

Strengthening preparedness capacities

- Promoting positive attitudes towards importance of preparedness schemes at different levels building on indigenous and Islamic history in these aspects and tackling any negative attitudes that were built due to misinterpretation of some religious concepts.
- Building various early warning and awareness systems that provide people with the relevant information on different expected conflicts and shocks in each area, expected vulnerabilities, sound coping strategies and available support programs for each type of shock and affected group and how to access them. Selection of awareness channels and approaches should take into account

effectiveness of each approach and their ability to target each community, livelihood groups, cultural and gender differences.

- Assessment of the indigenous knowledge and early warning systems in some sectors (i.e. informing villagers when a flood/valley is coming from mountains due to heavy rain in mountainous areas (Shar'ab), tribal systems used in preparedness and calling for unity when the area faces threats from armed groups (Lawder), etc. The negative impact of the conflict on such indigenous systems should also be assessed and alternative approaches checked and piloted if needed.

Establishing community based preparedness structures and building their capacities in analysis of shocks and conflicts, participatory planning, mitigation, assessment of all available resources and their locations and how to use them during conflict/shock (i.e. alternative shelters, water resources, financial resources, alternative plans, etc.)

- Promoting saving schemes
- Most preparedness interventions focus on national, governorate, and community levels. This study emphasizes the need to help each livelihood group (i.e. petty traders, wage laborers, farmers, fishermen groups, etc.) and each vulnerable group (i.e. marginalized groups) to have their own preparedness and representative structures that link their needs and plans to the overall community/district preparedness plans. Such structures will also enhance the sharing of information among the same groups and strengthen their advocacy and lobbying voices. Building on the lessons learnt from the experience of few marginalized groups, NGOs in Taiz can provide a basis for more efforts to establish and enhance preparedness structures for livelihood groups, although their experience was still limited to community based development and advocacy and did not reach preparedness level.
- Establishing a task force of district, local government, NGOs, INGOs, livelihood groups representative structures, and the private sector to link local preparedness into wider development plans
- Participatory assessment of vulnerable groups and households in each community and providing prevention and protection services, using appropriate and participatory targeting while avoiding social, political, ideological, distance, and gender biases. Access to secured shelter, roads, access to WASH, nutrition, education, health services, work and markets, security and safety was reported as very weak in most communities assessed in this study and should be priorities in the protection interventions. The previous section on urgent priorities and other sections of the report indicated more details on urgent protection issues in each community.
- Enhancing involvement of different networks and stakeholders in advocating and expanding the preparedness mechanisms.
- Enhancing the involvement of available research institutions and creating “think-tank” institutions committed to mobilizing preparedness concepts and mechanisms. Conflict in some areas like Taiz, already contributed to the emergence of many informal entities that can be assisted to enhance their capacities, focus and ways of working.
- More advocacy and pressure still required by related stakeholders at national and governorate levels to enhance government spending on preparedness, operational, information systems, and capacity building budgets for executive government offices at community level (i.e. health, education, agriculture extension, etc.). Demonstrable models should be supported and promoted by available INGOs and donors working in conflict prone areas to be used for advocacy and promotion purposes.

Strengthening adaptive capacities:

- Promoting positive attitudes towards sharing positive coping and adaptive strategies and tackling all related common superstitious ideas that may hinder sharing successful approaches with others.
- Improving understanding of trends and their local impacts is a crucial introductory task in planning, designing, and promoting adaptive strategies.
- Providing people with the relevant information on different conflicts, shocks, their impact and the best coping strategies done by others in the same context. Selection of awareness approaches on coping strategies should take into account trusted effective approaches for each community, livelihood groups, cultural and gender differences.
- Enhancing involvement of different networks and stakeholders in promoting practical adaptive strategies.
- Building confidence and flexibility to learn and experiment, following awareness on negative adaptive approaches and their impact.
- Enhancing the involvement of available research institutions in assessing and promoting innovative adaptive schemes, building on various experiences including experiences in other countries with a similar context.
- Areas for further research: Extending the assessment of the indigenous adaptive knowledge and practices is recommended by this study. Given the scope of the assessment and its focus on conflict-livelihood interaction, various coping strategies people pursue to deal with food insecurity, climate change, natural, and seasonal shocks on their livelihoods were not intensively covered as it was the case of coping strategies to meet the impact of the conflict. Thus, more detailed research of non-conflict related coping and adaptive strategies in some livelihood activities (i.e. agriculture) is still needed to reach better understanding of the sound practices that can be mobilized among farmers, and wage-laborers in the agriculture sector. Similarly this can be done in other sectors (e.g. fishery, trade, etc.)

Improving livelihoods

- Tackling the perceived high level of insecurity and lack of safety in the conflict prone communities, markets, and roads. Fighting armed groups should take into account the safety of citizens, their shelters and livelihoods capital assets.
- Ensuring appropriate living conditions with secured shelter, access to water and sanitation, access to electricity, education facilities, and health services. Key issues to focus on include; reconstruction of shelters, refinancing projects interrupted during the war, getting armed groups out of the schools and health facilities, and supporting the finance of health care, education, and cost of electricity in areas of very hot climate.
- Awareness raising on self-employment and small enterprises.
- Promoting access to various skills to diversify job opportunities. This study emphasizes the need to modify the vocational training approaches to fit with the majority of livelihood groups and their limitations. Participatory assessments of market needs and opportunities should inform the plans of vocational trainings. Skills needed to build confidences, management and marketing skills, dealing with financial institutions, and enhancing attitudes to self-employment should also be incorporated and promoted. The need for encouraging policies and a supportive environment to involve youth and women in the market in different livelihood activities (motivational, acknowledgement, grants, free formal and informal vocational trainings, tools, etc.
- Improving access to markets and employment and reduce closure on markets by armed groups. In non-conflict areas, petty traders asking protection from the suddenly imposed restrictions by municipality and local authorities.
- Control of the prices of basic food items and essential livelihood requirements including the prices of the diesel for agricultural and fishing purposes.

- Change of current credit policies including high interest rates, guarantees required from poorest families and those who have no fixed salaries to ensure repayment, short repayment schedules, fines on delay in repayment, etc.
- Ensure appropriate payment value and schemes for daily wage workers
- Establishing community and livelihood-based organizations and building their capacities in technical issues and “how” to run their livelihood activities, analysis shocks and conflicts and their impact, prepare participatory mitigation plans, access to resources, accessing related information, networking and linkages with other organizations and stakeholders, advocacy and lobbying skills, etc.
- Establishing networks of local livelihood organizations and building their capacities to raise their voices and participate in the planning, programming and policy making in issues affecting their livelihoods.
- Building livelihood organizations adaptive capacities (including access to information on adaptive schemes, saving schemes, insurance, etc.)
- Supporting access to, and sustainable management of, productive assets (i.e. land, irrigation schemes, sea and fishing areas, etc.)
- Enhancing involvement of different networks and stakeholders in advocating and expanding support to livelihood groups including research and think-tank institutions
- Implementing different motivational initiatives for livelihood groups and individuals (acknowledgement of female workers, butchers, carriers, cleaners, youth successful projects, farmers associations, etc.).

Improving governance and coordination

- Enhancing coordination mechanisms, sharing of information, and adherence to ethical issues in relief and development work among all stakeholders at the community level (government, NGOs, INGOs, etc), ensuring sound participation of local authorities, organizations, and livelihood groups representative structures.
- Enhancing the enabling environment for integrated, pro-poor, gender sensitive, decentralized and participatory interventions on livelihood and conflict.
- Advocacy and policy work at different levels to address underlying trends, of a systemic nature, and policy issues (including national expenditures and commitment to livelihood, protection, health financing; tax and market policies, protection programs and targeting mechanisms, grievance systems, transparency, distribution of wealth and participation, control of armed groups, etc.)