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THE ENHANCED RURAL RESILIENCE IN YEMEN (ERRY) JOINT PROGRAMME

LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL COHESION INTERVENTIONS IMPACT ASSESSMENT

2019



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Grassroots Yemen

Thabet Bagash
tbagash@grassrootsyemen.org
URL: grassrootsyemen.org



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For further information, please contact:

HYEWON JUNG

Team Leader

Economic Resilience and Recovery Unit (ERRU) UNDP YEMEN

hyewon.jung@undp.org

ARVIND KUMAR

Project Manager

Enhanced Rural Resilience in Yemen (ERRY) UNDP YEMEN

arvind.kumar@undp.org

ABBREVIATION

CMs	Community Mobilizers
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DDM	During Distribution Monitoring
DMTs	District Management Teams
ELD	Empowerment and Local Development
ERRY	Enhanced Rural Resilience in Yemen
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
ILO	International Labour Organization
IM	Insider Mediator
IPs	Implementing Partner
JCU	Joint Coordination Unit
LAs	Local Authority
LCCs	Local Community Committees
LTA	Long Term Agreement
MoE	Ministry of Education
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PDM	Post Distribution Monitoring
PY / PGI	Partners Yemen / Partners Global Institute
SDF	Social Development Foundation
SFCG	Search for Common Ground
SFD	Social Fund for Development
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
VCC	Village Cooperative Council
WFP	World Food Programme
YER	Yemeni Riyals



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of an assessment of the local governance and social cohesion interventions under the Enhanced Rural Resilience in Yemen (ERRY) Programme in Abyan, Hajja, Hodiedah and Lahj governorates in Yemen. The Governance and social cohesion review was commissioned to assess interventions, shift in capacities and conditions of local governance interventions at the community and district-levels, and capture the intended and unintended impact in the four governorates and targeted districts in terms of enhancing the service delivery aspects of the community-based resilience building process in the crisis context of Yemen.

To fulfil the research objectives, a combination of quantitative and qualitative assessment techniques and tools was used, including key informant interviews (KIIs), questionnaire, focus group discussions (FGDs), case studies, and structured observation. The assessment was carried out by Grassroots-Yemen during the period of 15 December 2018 – 15 January 2019. Specific impact indicators for the local governance and social cohesion work through Village Cooperative Councils (VCCs and Local Community Committees (LCCs) were utilized for this review in line with the Terms of Reference, after close consultation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) programme coordination team and taking into account the views of VCCs and LCC on areas of impact.

Main Findings

- ERRY is in a good position to mobilize development and humanitarian actors at the local-level to introduce a scalable and all-inclusive local governance model for bottom-up planning and actions for an integrated preparedness, resilience, conflict resolution, and humanitarian response to the needs of vulnerable people.
- Overall, the formation of the community committees was a key step toward enhancing local governance and social cohesion.

- The bottom-up local governance model indicated that the formal local governance structure has potentials to continue to function with the support of community-level institutions, primarily community cooperation committees and conflict resolution committees.
- Current small grant system succeeded in triggering communities to allocate more resources for their resilience and recovery plans.
- Creation and support for the District Management Teams (DMTs) in the *development of the district recovery plans* was a milestone in enhancing the role of the current local authorities.
- Community structures have benefited from the programme in terms of building their capacities to plan, organize, resolve conflicts, and manage community resilience plans.
- Despite the effect of the conflict on the public sector and its related consequences on all internal governance policies and procedures of local authorities, the ad-hoc community-level institutions established by the programme partners revealed unintended potential to build capacities to fill the gap of local institutions and sustain community resilience.
- This review revealed significant contribution of the project in addressing core limitations faced by vulnerable people and communities to enhance their resilience and ability to cope with shock and effects of the conflict.
- The fact that it is a precondition in the Social Fund for Development (SFD) Tamkeen approach and the methodologies of Search for Common Ground (SFCG) and Partner Global Institute (PGI) programmes to involve women in VCCs and conflict resolution actions, has opened opportunities for women to acquire diverse roles. However, women's participation in the committee decision making process, district-level planning, and trainings that take place at the district-level is comparatively weak.

Main Recommendations

- Train Community Mobilizers (CMs) from the targeted areas. The role of CMs should be built in the functions of the DMTs, VCCs, and LCCs to enhance community ownership and help the replication and facilitation of the participatory planning in other villages and districts.
- VCCs and LCCs should be trained to foster community ownership of the planning and conflict resolution processes.
- Coverage of support within each district and enhancing diversity of resources for communities should be part of future programming and capacity building of committees.
- The future design of the model should consider the formation of sub-district structures or provide resources at the district-level to do assessments and planning at the sub-district-level.
- Work should be done with communities to enhance participation of young people and marginalized groups.
- In addition to providing direct support to communities, ERRY partners should act as catalysts for mobilizing actors towards an agreed framework on how to coordinate the work, capacity building and support for community structures at various levels.
- There needs to be a supportive environment for women to reach genuine participation in decision making of the community committees.
- To scale up opportunities, ERRY should assess the following actions:
 1. Creating an integrated facilitation scheme.
 2. Expanding the vision and scope of the community-based structure.
 3. Creating networks of committees/Community-based Organizations (CBOs) at the sub-district-level in big districts to coordinate shared services.
 4. Activate the synergy/harmonization process among actors at the district-level.
 5. Facilitate a joint review process with all related stakeholders for the community-based approaches to build a common framework for minimum requirements that should be met by stakeholders working with local communities.



2. METHODOLOGY

The analysis was based on qualitative and quantitative methods including desk review, key informant interviews (KII), questionnaire for committees, focus group discussions (FGDs), case studies and group review. It also used face-to-face interviews with selected beneficiaries, programme staff and partners at the district-level, community volunteers, and community leaders at each site of the targeted sample of fieldwork visits.

The Governance and Social Cohesion Review aims to assess: (a) interventions; (b) shifts in capacities and conditions of local governance interventions at the community and district levels; and, (c) capture intended and unintended impact in four governorates and districts in terms of enhancing service delivery aspects of the community-based resilience building process in the Yemen crisis context.

The assessment covered the areas of Abyan (Lawder), Hajjah (Bani Qais and Abs), Hodeidah (Bajil and Al-Zuhra) and Lahj (Tuban and Habil Bani Jabr) governorates, ensuring a proper representation of the districts and components within each governorate.

The assessment drew upon both qualitative and quantitative data. In total, 43 FGDs, 43 survey questionnaires of community structures within 43 VCCs and 4 DTMs, 155 KIIs, 27 short stories, and 27 observations were conducted and collected in December 2018 and during the first two weeks of January 2019.



3. ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

3.1. PLANNING AND INSTITUTION BUILDING IN CRISIS CONTEXT

3.1.1. Community-based institutions – VCCs and Insider Mediators (IM)

Role of VCCs

VCCs core role was the development of community resilience plans, identifying priorities, mobilizing communities and resources, and implementing the community initiatives. Activation of VCC roles was facilitated by **training 210 community mobilizers hired by SFD**, a number that exceeded the initial target of 160 community mobilizers.

FGDs and KIIs indicated various participatory and innovative methods used by VCCs during the *community and local resources mobilization process*. These approaches included conducting community meetings, awareness sessions, and the utilization of effective social communication tools to enhance their outreach particularly with community members outside the governorate and/or immigrants from Gulf States (Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates, and Qatar).

Surprisingly, influential women, particularly traditional female leaders and educated female members of the community, reported having very effective roles in both cases of VCCs that included women those that did not due to cultural norms. According to SFD, the community mobilization process by VCCs was more active with diverse approaches in Haja and Hodeidah governorates compared to Abyan and Lahj governorates. However, this was not the case in some sites in Tuban district (Lahj) where women had greater representation in VCCs.

3. ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

Success of the Project role in engaging communities was attributed to the growing tendency among people to organize themselves and form alternative community structures to lead community resilience and response to the growing needs of vulnerable groups following the collapse of the local authority system. The Project’s support for the *development of community resilience plans* was an essential milestone in taking an integrated and bottom-up approach to strengthening resilience in affected communities.

213 community resilience plans were developed by VCCs in eight districts through local-level engagement of communities, leaders and informal/formal actors to identify community priorities and implement locally-owned recovery efforts that target local conflict drivers. Resilience plans focused on service delivery, social cohesion, basic services and livelihoods recovery to address the negative impacts of the conflict. Eventually this will contribute to stabilization in Yemen’s communities and to provide a solid foundation for the country’s recovery when the political situation allows.

“The approach used by the programme to support communities in developing resilience plans was a unique and inspiring intervention of ERRY/SFD compared to the ways of working applied by other partners when assessing communities to build their projects components,” said one of the key informants from Bani Qais.

Having skilled CMs to work jointly with communities through various participatory planning methods was an innovative, practical, and relevant approach to VCCs in rural areas and their need to produce integrated plans. The review of the sample community resilience plans prepared by CMs and VCCs revealed that plans mainly focused upon: (a) mapping priority community needs; (b) service functionality; (c) existing natural, physical and human resources; (d) identification of hazards and conflicts; (e) analysis of people’s positive and negative coping strategies; and, (f) listing potential solutions to mitigate risks and improve basic service delivery affected by the conflict. Even though most plans focused more on basic services, conflict resolution, improvement of livelihoods and the needs of vulnerable people were also incorporated to an extent.¹ Looking at the community-level bottom-up plans revealed consistency with the deficit of the physical, financial and human resource capacities and indicated in the programme’s baseline.²

A small number of key interviewees from VCCs in Bani Qais (Haja) and Tuban (Lahj) indicated that other International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) who came to support the area found gaps in the plan as at present it is difficult to do multisector assessment by communities themselves.

Figure: Categories of prioritized community initiatives



Current level of VCCs initiatives

There is no sub-district community structure in the current ERRY's interventions to develop plans at this level. Thus DMTs should be capacitated to cover this gap

¹ Resilience plans of four targeted villages in Habel Jaber District, Lahj Governorate - SFD
² UNDP – ERRY Baseline Assessment 2017

3. ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

For the *prioritization of the initiatives*, VCCs categorized their initiatives into three groups: (a) self-help initiatives that can be implemented by VCCs using their own resources; (b) compact initiatives that required small matching grants; and, (c) initiatives that required large resources for shared services with other villages. The later were incorporated by CMs in the consolidated district plan in most cases.³ In areas where there were VCCs at the district level before ERRY, the plans of the sub-district committees informed the identification of shared and large-scale projects implemented by the DMTs and SFD staff.

Implementation of community initiatives was the main milestone of building community institutions. VCCs were guided to work on brief project proposals to seek grants from the ERRY compact initiatives fund allocated for each district. This process was crucial in building the basic fundraising capacity of VCCs. Interviews revealed that selection of initiatives to be funded was done at the district-level by a small committee representing authorities and SFD.

Key roles of the committee includes: (a) receiving proposals from VCCs; (b) reviewing the extent to which proposals meet criteria of compact initiatives; (c) checking the level of contribution by communities; and, (d) making the final decision on selected proposals, taking into consideration the number of initiatives that can be funded within the fund ceiling and the total number of requests received from VCCs.

VCCs had to compete with each other for a grant. However, several key interviewees questioned the process of identifying winning proposals due to the difficulty to distinguish between capacities of VCCs in writing proposals, as well as the similarities among villages in terms of vulnerabilities and limitations to access basic services.

Providing grants based on “a request-based manner” may be an issue for improvement given the challenges that can be faced by VCCs in writing successful proposals due to the lack of appropriate training. In most sites, this was learned by working with CMs who have diverse skills and the ability to coach VCCs.

One of the shared practices in nominating winning proposal was the selection of initiatives that can be used by many villages. Interviewed SFD staff members indicated that this criteria was easier to use in areas where they had sub-district cooperation committees established before ERRY. Within the current programme, no resources were allocated to establish VCCs at sub-district-level or to afford consultancy expenses for needs assessment and plan development at this level. SFD staff proposed implementing a pilot sub-district-level planning and implementation in Tuban and Bani Qais. However, development of sub-district plans was limited to consolidating resilience plans of communities within each sub-district focusing on initiatives shared among different villages and were categorized by VCCs as large-scale projects.⁴

As a result of resilience planning and the active role of VCCs, **414 self-help initiatives were implemented using community resources**. The small-scale initiatives implemented by VCCs and targeted communities with matching grants from ERRY reached **321 and benefited 56,175 individuals**.⁵ **Work opportunities were created for 201 CMs** during the resilience planning process. More details on how VCCs utilized available resources and linkages to implement their initiatives will be provided within the following sections on service delivery and horizontal and vertical relations and linkages.



³ Confirmed by SFD project staff at community and Headquarters-levels.

⁴ Refer to the three categories of community initiatives illustrated in previous parts of this section.

⁵ This includes 214 infrastructure projects. ERRY UNDP Reports 2017 and 2018.

3.1.2. VCCs Leadership, Decision Making and Influence of Women in Needs Prioritization

The total number of elected community members for the VCCs leadership reached 2,178 in 231 VCCs in 8 districts. According to SFD programme staff, the nomination and election process of VCCs members were preceded by various community awareness sessions on the importance of VCCs, their role and the democratic nomination process. Best practices toward building a reasonable leadership level of VCCs included the requirement of 30% adult members participation in the VCC member elections and 50% female representation in the VCCs leadership structure.



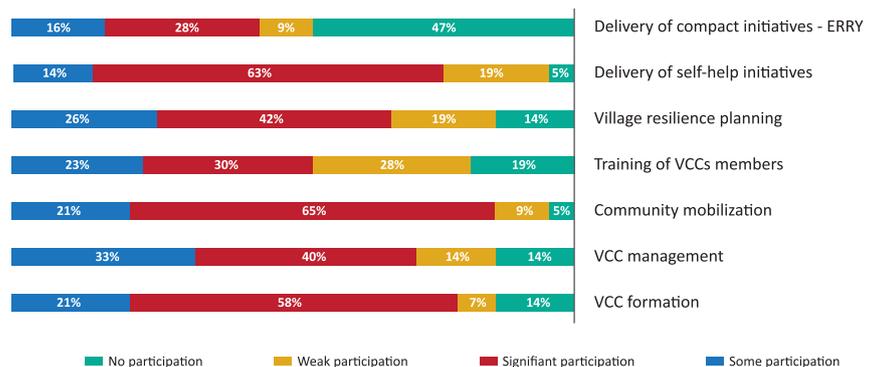
Overall, just under half of the VCC members are women (44% in the South and 46% in the North). **The share of VCC structures with women’s participation is 83% in the Southern and 100% in the Northern project districts.** Difficulty was encountered in finding the rate of young people in the committees due to the lack of detailed information about the members. However, the study used participatory approaches to reach the average at each site and estimated an average of 12%.

Almost three-quarters of respondents in the Abyan and Lahj districts and more than half of the respondents from the Northern districts indicated that women face challenges with regards to their participation in VCCs leadership. This was also confirmed in interviews with key informant interviewees. In addition, 62% of survey respondents in the northern districts and 58% of respondents in the Southern districts reported that women face challenges with regards to the implementation of community initiatives.

There are various types of community initiatives to address women vulnerabilities still within the traditional stereotypes. Most initiatives included a livelihood training for women focused on sewing, production of handcrafts, and agriculture. The role of community women in the rehabilitation of community services was also limited to cooking meals for male workers in most cases. Women’s ability to gain income through participation in rehabilitation of community assets was restricted by domination of activities that are seemingly more appropriate for men (construction). Additionally, the lack of alternative solutions to reduce the heavy load of households responsibilities, unpaid work in agriculture, lack of outside care for children during initiatives, lack of alternative solutions to reduce time consuming process of collecting fire-wood and fetching water, also affected women.

The fact that it is a precondition in the ERRY programme to involve women in VCCs and conflict resolution actions, has opened opportunities for women to acquire diverse roles. Women having a role in the committees took on the analysis of needs and functioned as planners, resources mobilizers, raising awareness and community mobilizers, workers in initiatives and facilitators of conflict resolution actions. Overall, **women’s participation** was reported to be comparatively strong in terms of community mobilization (65% significant participation); delivery of initiatives (49% – 63%); initiating meetings to form VCCs (58%); as well as in village resilience planning (42%). However, women’s participation in VCC decision making processes, district-level recovery planning, and trainings for VCCs that take place at the district-level is comparatively weak.

“In our area, we have many women’s associations and the female members of committee are more active than men – the role of men is almost non-existent,” said a beneficiary at al-Baitra village, al-Afioh, Lahj



Responses on **attendance for** male and female members during VCCs meetings varied among results from the VCC questionnaires and the results from interviews with key informants especially female members of the VCCs. Different reasons were identified by research participants with regards to the factors that influenced women's effective participation in the meetings of VCCs.

The **main influencing factors** reported for the Southern governorates were cultural restrictions, illiteracy among women in rural areas, negative attitudes by men (in particular husbands and conservative family members), the heavy load of women's household responsibilities, and limited affordability of transport to participate in VCC meetings or trainings when done outside the village. For the Northern governorates, the main factors limiting women's attendance in VCCs' meetings were identified as women's illiteracy, load of women's household responsibilities, and limited experience in organizational issues and management of committees and community projects compared to men. In addition, VCC meetings in the North are often held in the afternoon, a time that prevents women from participating due to social norms. The assessment also found that the **best practices** for women to make their voices heard during meetings of VCCs was during participatory community mapping exercises facilitated by CMs, or when accompanied by traditional women leaders in the north or by educated female members from women's associations in the south (formal Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) or traditional women self-help groups).

“Until recently, we did not know about the importance of women's participation in projects and committees. But after SFD raised our awareness and informed us on why women should be involved, we now acknowledge that women's role is equally important as men's,” said a female VCC member of Assawma.

The limited **departure/ turnover of VCCs** key members of the committees also came in support of the people's belief in the importance of the community structure. Therefore, the main reasons for the departure of some of them was either death or displacement to other areas or having limited time to carry out the duties of a committee member. Replacement procedures varied as well. 55% of respondents indicated that the committee members took the decision; however, strikingly, 10% of the responses indicated that the **selection of the new/replacement member – as well as documenting VCCs achievements** and plans – were done by the programme staff, particularly the CMs.

According to female research participants, rehabilitation of public services projects supported through initiatives (more than 75% of compact initiatives are focused on health, WASH and education) were highly **relevant to their needs and had a positive impact** on their lives. Female presence in planning and structure of VCCs has influenced men to prioritize basic services. However, some female FGD participants reported that initiatives other than rehabilitation of the community school would be more relevant for women (e.g. access to safe water, reproductive health or access to toilets or projects to enhance agricultural livelihood opportunities for women).

FGD participants also indicated that men have more influence on the **prioritization for district recovery plans** than women, as they use their connections to community leaders, local authority members, facilitators of community mapping and influential members of the executive offices to sway decisions towards their own priority areas. Few female members of the DMTs who participated in the district-level prioritization meetings noted that most initiatives selected included solving conflicts between men or to avoid tension that may occur between male community leaders if their villages are ignored. In all locations within Local Governance (LG) initiatives, meetings with VCCs indicated that the success of their initiatives involved solving small conflicts to have initiatives implemented.

Despite the effect of the conflict on the public sector and failure of all internal governance policies and procedures of local authorities, the ad-hoc community-level institutions revealed unintended potential to build capacities to fill the gap of local institutions and sustain community resilience. For example, a model of using an NGO/CBO management system to manage VCCs was applied in Tuban with commitment to use the SFD introductory guidelines on community-led resilience, responsibilities of VCCs, adapting tools/forms for conducting and documenting the community resilience plans, etc.

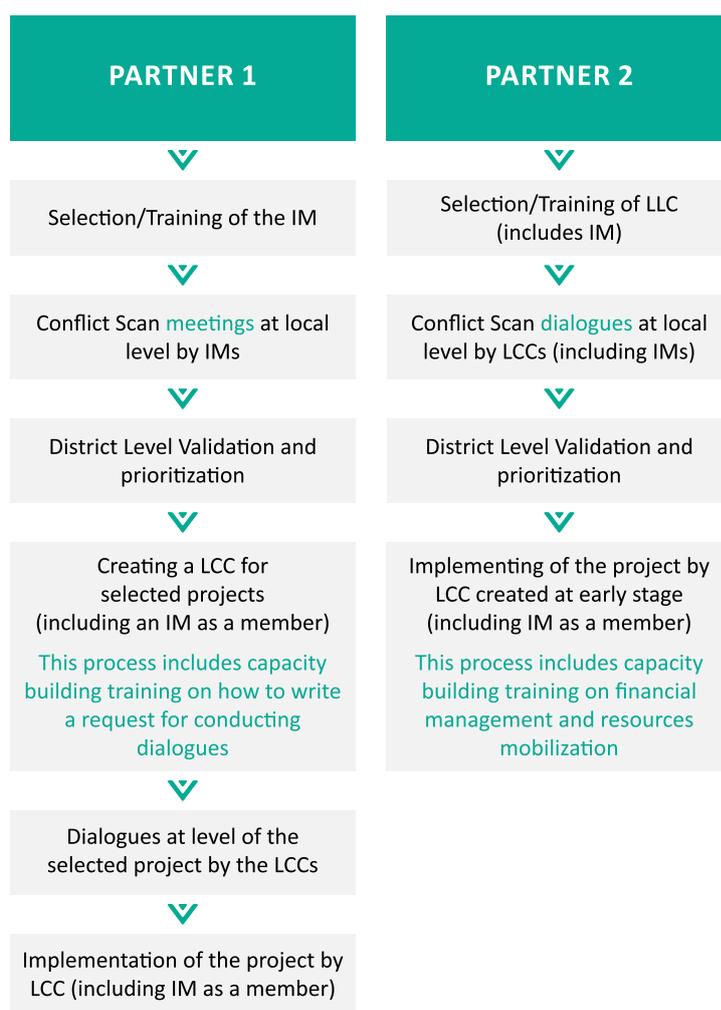
Other encouraging factors include the commitment to involve women in VCC management in rural areas despite their limited experience in management of collective community projects, attending the supportive short and ad-hoc training by SFD staff and CMs on planning and writing proposal to access matching grants from the programme and other humanitarian actors in the area. Future programmes should assess possibilities to develop a basic capacity building programme for community structures including capacities to enhance horizontal and vertical coordination and linkages with actors.

3.1.3. Role of Insider Mediator

To support locally-driven conflict resolution the project has successfully managed to mobilize and to build the capacity of Insider Mediators (IMs) is crucial. **A total of 228⁶ IMs** (30% female) were trained by the project partners⁷ and deployed to communities to initiate the Community Dialogues with the participation of the affected people, conflicting parties, and members from the local authorities. According to project documents, the role of IMs was to create awareness among the targeted communities, facilitate dialogue process and mentor communities to implement self-initiatives. The IMs were provided training courses to build their negotiation skills, mediation and conflict resolution.

Due to the small size of the social cohesion sample sites visited during this assessment, the assessment relied upon qualitative data from the fieldwork and the desk review in assessing social cohesion interventions.

The desk review revealed that terms like “dialogues”, “meetings”, “committee capacity building training”, were used differently by partners leading to some misleading figures/results. For example, in the PGI reports the term “dialogue” was used for the initial scan conflict meetings at the community level. But in the SFCG, it was used for dialogues on the selected conflicts/issues for the small grants. Similarly, “training on proposal writing and management” by one partner was used mainly for training on how to request small budgets for running a dialogue session. Based on the fieldwork during this assessment, the *core activities to facilitate the locally-driven conflict resolution interventions by ERRY* are illustrated in the following figure.



Fieldwork revealed that IMs facilitated the **creation of Local Community Committees (LCCs)** to work with, during the community conflict resolution processes. In all visited sites, the IM was considered a member of the LCC. The difference being that, in the PGI sites, LCCs were created at the onset of the project implementation to facilitate ERRY activities, including tracking needs, priorities, conflicts, and small development projects. However, in the SFCG sites committees were created after nomination of the prioritized community projects to manage the related community dialogues and manage the implementation of the grant in close collaboration with communities and related SFCG technical, procurement and financial staff.

Identification of local conflict

A number of community conflict scan meetings/dialogues at the local-level were conducted by IMs (SFCG), LCCs and IMs (PGI). They **had 62 meetings involving 909 participants.**⁸ Interviewed IMs indicated that they worked together with local authorities/LCCs in the participant selection for each meeting/dialogue, ensuring that a diverse and representative set of voices were present during the discussions of conflicts and possible local solutions. Following the conflict scan meetings at the sub-districts level, the IMs (SFCG) and LCCs (PGI) developed a conflict scan report for each district.

At the district-level, a comprehensive workshop was set up at each district to validate results from the conflict scan process and prioritize conflicts and related solutions for the small grants allocated by ERRY for each district. There was a high level of satisfaction with the conflict scan meetings because they were organized at the sub-district-level with participants from the local communities, even if some villages complained of not being represented in the conflict scan.

⁶ Partners final reports and evaluations

⁷ 73 IMs by SFCG, and 131 IMs by PGI

⁸ Partners have different terms for the initial community scan sessions at the local level (i.e. “meetings” for SFCG, “dialogues” for PGI)

Community dialogues and their facilitation

The community dialogue is a forum where conflicting parties meet, discuss and identify the conflict resolution.⁹ During this process, IMs were trained to write funding requests from SFCG to run dialogues. Among the best practices identified during this process was the involvement of women in the dialogues. **About 33 community dialogues were supported by SFCG involving 691 participants (32% were women).** According to one of the community leaders interviewed in this assessment, the dialogues focused more on who was involved in the conflict and less on those who were affected by it or on how the micro-projects would benefit vulnerable group(s).

The role of community leaders was crucial in using traditional methods to bring conflicting parties to an agreement. Recruiting female co-facilitators of the community dialogues and validation workshops at the district-level was emphasized by an interviewed female IM to enhance female participation and get more women oriented towards conflict resolution projects. Involving traditional women leaders was also reported to be effective for reducing the domination of male leaders and sheikhs, to have women voices heard, and share the unrecognized conflicts faced by vulnerable families.

Conflict resolution implementation

Conflict resolution interventions that have been implemented to resolve the local conflict, reached 48 small projects implemented through 60 small grants provided by the project.¹⁰ LCCs were trained to write grants for running a dialogue,¹¹ resources mobilization, and financial management.¹² Project staff provided mentorship support to both insider mediators and LCCs, to lead the conflict resolution implementation with their ownership.

Limited resources from authorities with deterioration of local resources were attributable to the protracted conflict and increased conflict over shared resources. Collapse of local authority with the instable governance led to the emergence of new influential actors that either occupied public resources, secured them on behalf of community, or supported the operations of the public services. For community initiatives to succeed, compensation to get the power to control these assets back to community had to be settled in most cases. Public services that are shared among different villages are more complicated within the current social and political context. Similarly conflicts between Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) and host families tend to be more on inheritance of the expanded families (housing, land, etc.).

This review did not tend to analyze the conflict triggers. However, review of the types of issues revealed from the conflict scan, indicate that conflict issues and suggested solutions in most sites were about basic services covering a wide range of themes: water, education, road, electricity, health, youth, sewage, etc. Limited cases of other types of triggers were reported (social, political, economic, or institutional, displacement, and marginalization). FGDs and interviews with key informants indicated that selection of the community initiatives were influenced by the limited understanding of communities on the project's focus compared to work of other INGOs involved in humanitarian and resilience aspects, limited framework and participatory approaches used in the community-level analysis of conflict triggers, and the limited amount of fund for the community initiatives.

Overall, supporting community services projects through a conflict sensitive approach was found to be a promising approach for building a replicable bottom-up peace building process. However, work of **IMs and community committees should be guided by a wider framework and participatory approaches of conflict analysis that covers all possible triggers of conflict.** A communication strategy around the aims of the project at the community-level is needed to enhance reaching more genuine community interventions beyond the current initiatives that are more driven by: (a) basic services orientation; (b) neglecting many social factors of conflict, such as tribal revenge; (c) effects of internal displacement and related conflicts between IDPs and host communities on resources, rights of marginalized groups to land and housing; (d) women's rights and harassment faced by women on local transportation and during the collection of wood for household fuel; (e) increased conflict over inheritance and housing particularly for women; and, (f) large descended families hosting relative returnees/IDPs, etc.

Acceptance of community-based institutions and IMs

There was unanimously a high-level of satisfaction with IMs among KIIs in their areas compared to the moderate-level of satisfaction among people from other villages within the sub-district. Overall, they were relevant and effective in engaging the community in the conflict scan and identifying solutions processes.

⁹ In this assessment, such identification reflects the experience of SFCG in running dialogues to address the prioritized conflicts to reach agreement on specific solutions that will be supported by ERRY. The term "dialogue" in the PGI model used mainly for the initial conflict scan meeting at the community level.

¹⁰ 19 intervention through 33 small grants by SFCG and about 29 interventions by PGI

¹¹ In the SFCG interventions

¹² In the PGI interventions

3. ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

Acceptance of women in VCC (50%) has influenced the focus of community-level initiatives from infrastructure to priority-based initiatives (education and health). In summary, local communities were engaged in the community-based initiatives. The initiatives managed to address the impact of the crisis at a micro-level and have helped communities to rebuild the social structure of the community. The interventions focused to re-establish VCCs, have demonstrated a sense of ownership and showed encouraging results of setting the tone for community governance in the protracted crisis.

Some indicators for people’s interest to have their own structures to bridge the gap created because of the collapse of the local councils, are reflected in the active interaction of establishing the committees and meeting the requirements related to the representation of women and certain social groups, including young people in the structure of these committees. The continued work of local committees and their growing activities, whether with support from the programme or from other sources, is an indicator of the community’s acceptance and a clear evidence of the awareness on the need for having entities representing them and for seeking support from the district to recover from the impacts of the crisis. Without the role of the project intervention in building mobilization and linkages between community structures and actors, seeking support from district-level would have been impossible given the effect of conflict on local systems and central funding. Linkages were supported by the development of community committees, enhanced capacities to mobilize more resources through horizontal and vertical channels, connection with private sectors, and current humanitarian organizations. Working through the local institutions was a major approach in facilitating linkages, coordination, and collaboration.

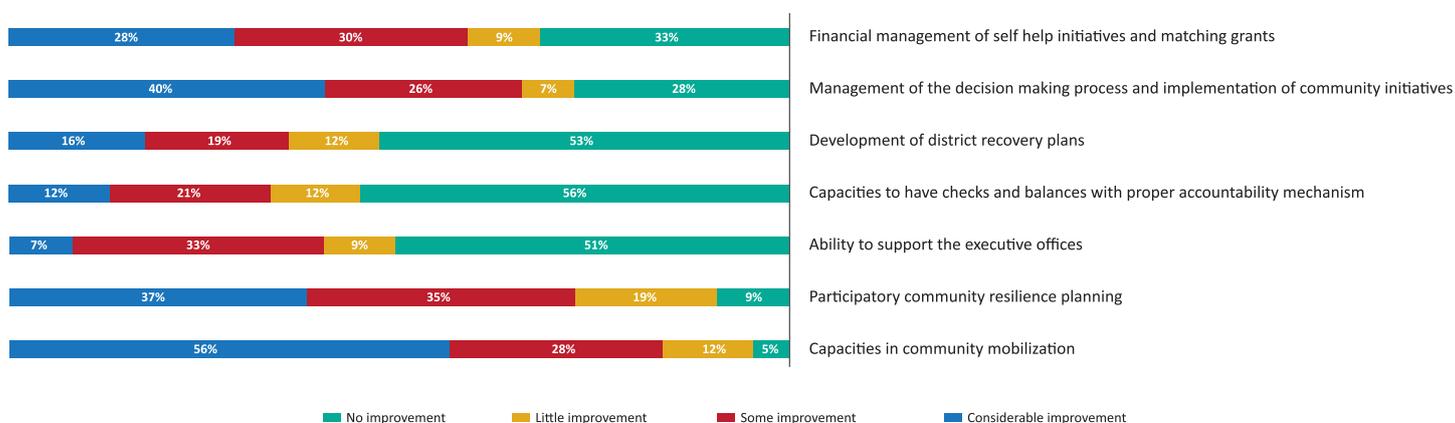
“The anonymous champions behind the strength of the committees, the solutions they have reached, and the success of their efforts in implementing the initiatives were the facilitators of the program, they gave us the keys to success,” said one of the leaders of a local council.

3.1.4. Overall skills and capacities developed

To analyze the reasons behind the occurring change, or the lack of it, in committee capacity, some indicators were verified during the field visits – including: (a) holding meetings before and after the programme intervention; (b) the structure, visions and goals; (c) the rate of meeting attendance at the present time; (d) documentation of the achievements and the financial aspects; (e) the existence and extent of supporting documentation; and, (f) the extent of participation of female members in the various activities of the Committee.

Members of the community committees participating in the survey reported **an improvement** in regards to their capacity for community mobilization. **56% said their capacities improved to a large extent and 28% reported some improvement.** Other areas of significant or some improvement reported by community committee members were also related to community-driven planning and implementation of small initiatives, including participatory community resilience planning (combined value of 72%), management of decision-making processes and implementation of community initiatives (66%), and financial management of self-help initiatives and matching grants (combined value of 58%). However, members reported little or no improvement with regards to their capacities to influence local authorities, notably with regards to having checks and balances with proper accountability mechanisms and developing district recovery and conflict mitigation plans.

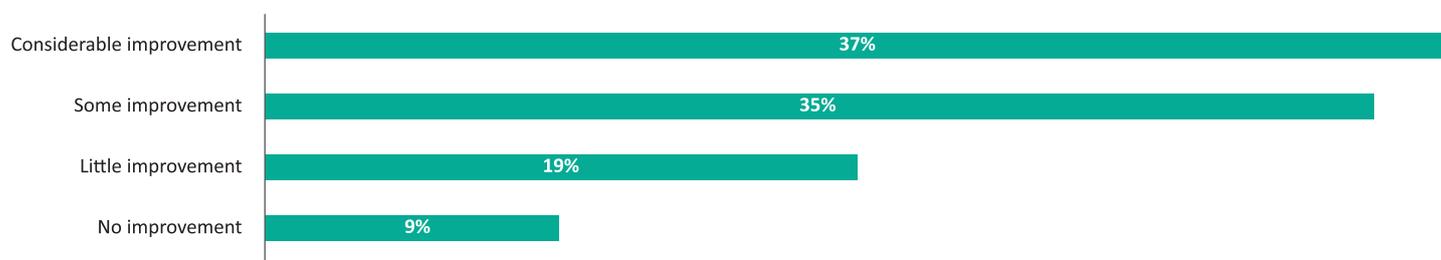
Percentage of VCCs with Female Representation



3. ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

Regarding KIIs, all interviewees stated that they have benefited from the programme in one way or another in terms of building their capacities to plan, organize, and manage community resilience plans. However, key informants and participants in focus group discussions mentioned that capacity building approaches applied by the programme were perceived to be rather informal (i.e. members built their capacities by joining the community mobilizers during the process of needs identification, prioritization, and validation of the plans with related stakeholders at district-level). They also mentioned that availability of educated members in some committees was an advantage. In rural areas, however, the level of education and financial literacy is limited, particularly among women members.

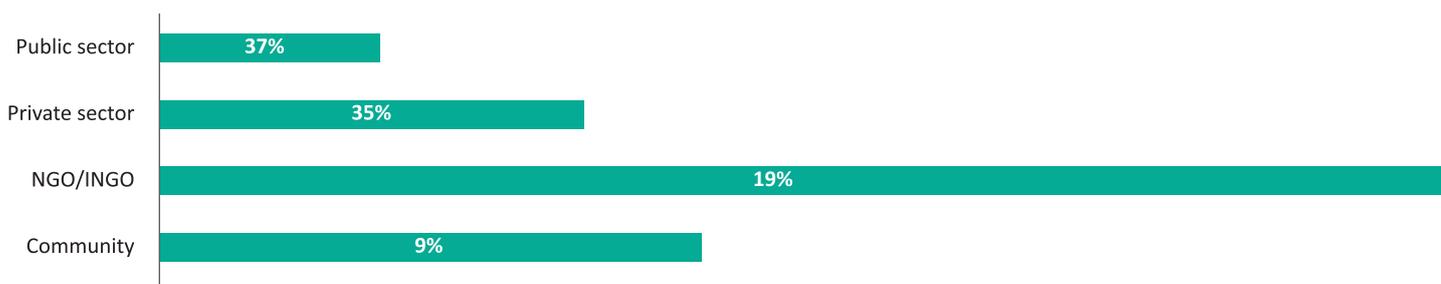
Improvement in VCC capacities to develop resilience plans without the support of CMs/consultants



The extent of improvement of community committees' capacities to develop resilience plans without the help from CMs was reported by 82% of community committees' members participating in the survey, reporting a large or at least some change with regards to their capacities to develop resilience plans without the help of CMs. However, some key interviewees mentioned that ownership of plans is limited in their committees because the entire process was led by CMs. Similarly, leadership of the citizen monitoring committees at the district-level is led by technical and financial officers employed by implementing partners during the monitoring of the initiatives' implementation.

IMs interviewed highlighted areas for gained capacities, particularly conflict scan and mediation approaches, awareness and community mobilization on conflict issues and projects, and management of community projects. Key suggestions for improvement, according to IMs, included: (a) providing more follow-up support for IMs; (b) increasing of the number of female trainers; (c) diversifying the channels of communication for the call for IMs (not only through the local authority); (d) identifying mechanisms on how to manage a workshop with participants of different educational backgrounds, including sheiks; and, (e) delegating more authority to local partners. Sustainability of the IM role was built on the assumption that selecting IMs from local influential leaders contributes to building conflict resolution practices within the social structure. Some IMs work with local councils, the public sector, or in community mobilization with INGOs at local-levels.

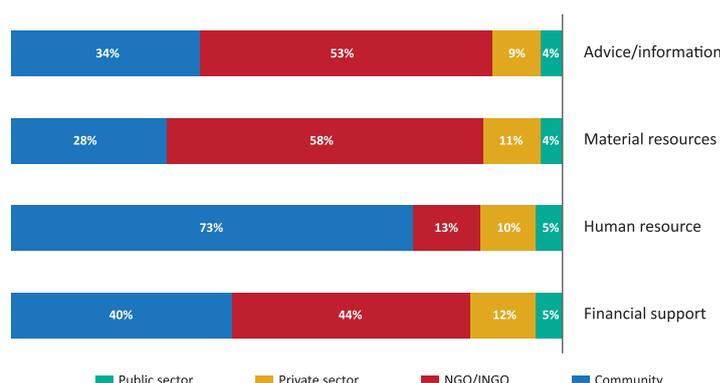
Linkages/relations established by community structures according to stakeholder type



Liaising and linkages

All community committees managed to establish relations with NGOs/INGOs. 42% of the community committees initiated working relations with influential community figures at the community and district-level, and 33% have managed to establish links with the private sector. Only 16% of community committees managed to link into the public sector at local and district-level. The challenges experienced by community committees to establish working relationships with public offices can be attributed to the collapse of the local authority system, limited capacities of the available local councils, and the deficit of the central fund.

Types of resources allocated by community committees from various stakeholders



Survey data indicate that community committees have managed to mobilize different resources from various sources. **The data reveals that community committees continue to depend to a high degree on international funding through NGOs/INGOs (including the ERRY) for material resources (58%), advice and information (53%) and financial support (44%).** However, communities themselves have also contributed significantly with their own resources, providing human resources (73%), but also contributing financially (44%). Support from the public sector was rated 4% - 5% across all four types of resources, even below contributions from the private sector (9% - 12%).

Mobilization of community resources for the initiatives was triggered through the ERRY small grants scheme. Availability of humanitarian organizations in all districts of the current ERRY Programme is a very good opportunity to enhance abilities of the community to implement their resilience plans at village and district-level. However, the ability of some community committees to mobilize more resources from other entities (e.g. private sectors, INGOs etc.) was limited due to the committees' limited experience in writing project proposals and insufficient ability to do proper marketing of their resilience plans.

Current small grant system succeeded in triggering communities to allocate more resources for their resilience and recovery plans. It reduces committees' dependency. Conducting advocacy and direct support to build linkages between district and/or community-level structures and other actors have been growing. However, the role of ERRY's coordination units at the central and governorate levels in promoting local governance structures, catalyzing more linkages, and development of community structures in fundraising and networking ERRY coordination units should incorporate active strategies. These will serve as a catalyst or facilitator in promoting the importance of strengthening current local governance structures and mobilizing all actors at community and district-levels to contribute in enriching resilience and recovery plans and allocating of resources for their implementation.

Accountability/ transparency

The engagement of leaders and elites was positive, because most disputes in Yemen are resolved by influential people using traditional methods. However, very few key informants indicated that partners should reconsider the heavy reliance on community leaders, sheikhs and other elites for the selection of IMs and LCCs – particularly when they can sometimes be the source of, or are often involved in, conflicts. They noted that IMs and elites who are the entry point to the community process can set the criteria without being too involved in the process and LCCs structure. **To minimize the possibility of a conflict of interest** amongst those from the elite group who are valued by the community, they could function as IMs and role models in other districts, but not in their own. The inclusion of sheikhs as IMs in other districts has the potential to scale-up the project by replicating the modified approach among other community leaders.

“The role of the committee was and still is important and helped getting initiatives and projects started. Also, due to the absence of the local authority, the committee now is representing the village, and without a representation the situation could be much worse,” said a member of a local council.

It was also found that there was relatively low-level of participation among marginalized groups and IDPs. To increase participation of these vulnerable groups, some key informant interviewees strongly recommended having a quota of IMs from marginalized groups, IDPs, and from persons with disabilities, to mobilize these groups. Despite the relatively low-level of female participation as IMs, there were female role models, which were commendable in Abs district. It is strongly recommended to build upon this experience to change the stereotypical view that women are unable to participate in conflict resolution for cultural reasons.

To increase the status of women and mobilize them to participate in community process, it was also recommended to set a quota of female train the trainers. Exchanging experiences between women from other governorates to learn from their experiences would also be effective in building women empowerment and raising awareness of the issue.

The formation of the LCC dominated by IMs may be efficient, but there is a risk of undermining community representation and ownership. Local representatives should be trained to foster community ownership, and avoid a situation where IMs play a double role of being a player and an IM. Similarly, the heavy reliance on CMs in leading the participatory mapping and resilience planning of VCCs hinders the ownership of the process and VCCs' capacities to utilize similar approaches in their own future work. It will be an added value of the ERRY future programmes to invest in building capacity of specific members from each committee to play the role of IMs/CMs. Moreover, the budget ceiling for micro-projects should not be the reason why a project is rejected.

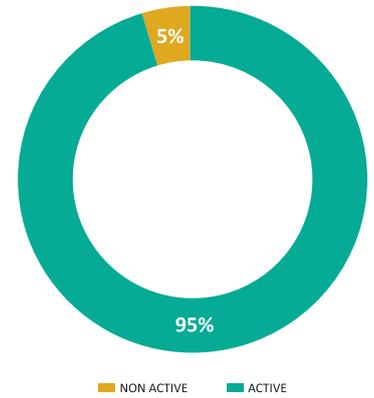
3.1.5. Functioning of VCCs

The local governance intervention under ERRY suggests that a hybrid local governance model with the composition of bottom-up and top-down approach can ensure that the formal local governance structure will continue to function with the support of community-level institutions, primarily community cooperation committees and conflict resolution committees. **95% of the committees revealed to be functioning.**

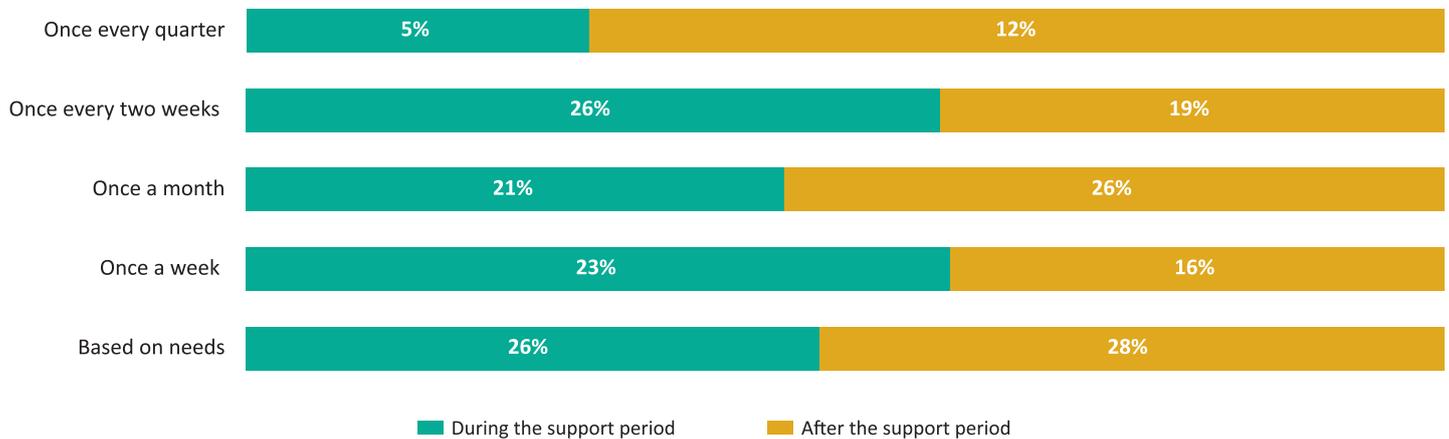
All functioning VCCs surveyed have developed resilience plans addressing priority needs, including basic service provision and finding responses to urgent needs. The plans were designed through a bottom-up planning process facilitated and supported by ERRY. Few representatives of committees indicated that their vision when they created the committee was limited to implementing the initiative agreed with ERRY. However, afterward, they became more committed to sustain the solidarity work and linkages with various stakeholders and run more initiatives.

The responses of committees to the questionnaire in both models (LG and SC) showed commitment of members towards attending committees’ meetings. However, the meetings’ regular schedule varies from one committee to the other, based on the level of the implementation of the initiatives.

Status Of The Committee



Schedule of meetings during and after the support period



Community structures strengths and areas of improvement

Main common strengths	Main common weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation culture • Increased attitude to get organized and meet community needs • Relations and linkages with authority • Possibility to mobilize local resources to some extent • Women’s participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow vision with limited organizational and management skills, guides, procedures • Dependence on IMs/CMs. Need for more integrated facilitation and participatory skills to mainstreaming conflict, gender, needs of specific vulnerable groups, protection and accountability issues. • Limited communication strategies and tools • Unclear vision and identity to expand linkages with stakeholders (i.e. not a local authority, CBO/NGO, etc.) • Lack of VCC networks/ sub-district committees, or a coordination mechanism to link with higher levels • Limited resources with a high level of community needs, and large number of villages to serve and prioritize and limited fundraising skills • Limited exposure to positive coping strategies, technologies, and schemes. • Exposure/orientation (either development, or humanitarian, or conflict). Challenges to analysis humanitarian and conflict issues
Main common opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility to build on previous experience with ERRY • Diversity of stakeholders (i.e. humanitarian, conflict, resilience, etc.) • Unrecognized indigenous practices to build on community- led programs (social banking, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict if not able to cover all villages • Lack of consensus and endorsement by local authorities and/or stakeholders on how to work with VCCs to enhance and sustain their role

3.1.6. District Management Teams (DMTs)

Overall, the local governance intervention under ERRY suggests that a hybrid local governance model, with the combination of the bottom-up and top-down approach, can ensure that the formal local governance structure continues to function with the support of community level institutions, primarily VCCs.

At the district-level, DMTs were formulated to support the executive agencies and local councils to maintain the district-level governance function. With regards to the accountability mechanism for checks and balances, a citizen-led monitoring team, representing communities, was established to monitor the progress and quality of the service delivery projects implemented by the local authorities.

Role of DMTs in District Recovery Plan

ERRY’s creation and support for the DMTs in the *development of the district recovery plans* was a milestone in enhancing the role of the current local authorities. Eight district recovery plans were developed, while district-level service delivery projects are currently being implemented in these districts in the areas of education, health and the WaSH sector. The effort is also focusing on strengthening the horizontal and vertical linkages that promote social cohesion and the social contract in the targeted districts.

“The approach that was adopted by the programme to support local authorities through the DMTs was very beneficial. The role of DMTs in developing recovery plans with the local authority was way more comprehensive, when compared to the role of other stakeholders who approached local authorities mainly to analyze and implement activities within the focus of their thematic area. The district recovery plan was helpful to understand and gather information about the overall context of the district needs,” said the head of the local authority in Bani Qais.

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Using skilled community mobilizers/ consultants to work jointly with DMTs to consolidate plans from the sub-district and the community-level, was reasonable and practical for the local authorities. Review of sample district recovery plans prepared by CMs and DMTs revealed that plans focused on: (a) the mapping of priority needs; (b) the functionality of services; (c) the mapping of existing natural, physical and human resources; (d) the identification of hazards and conflicts; (e) an analysis of people's positive and negative coping strategies; and, (f) a list of potential solutions that would mitigate risks and improve basic service delivery. Although the focus of most district recovery plans was oriented toward basic services, conflict resolution, improvement of livelihoods and the needs of vulnerable people were also assessed and incorporated to some extent in the recovery plans¹³. This is consistent with the deficit of the services due to the prolonged conflict and the overall lack of funding¹⁴.

Similarly, key interviewees from the DMTs complained that other INGOs who came to support the area did not find the district recovery plans informative enough to design their humanitarian interventions and that they had to take on a more detailed assessment, focusing on their preferred humanitarian themes.¹⁵

Prioritization of the District Level Recovery Initiatives

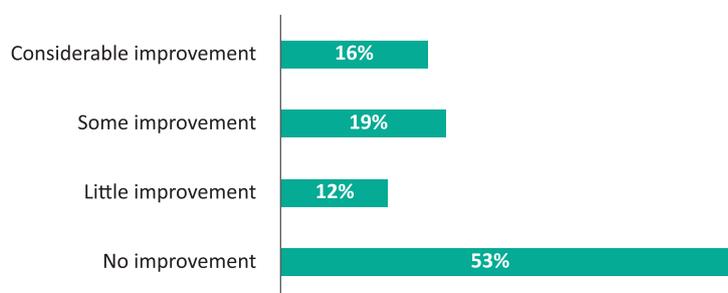
In each district, SFD community mobilizers and DMTs organized a workshop with the aim to consolidate results from the community resilience plans and to prioritize recovery initiatives for the small grants allocated by ERRY for each district. DMTs and local authorities focused mainly on major project requests at the center of the district and projects of shared services at the sub-district-level. DMTs faced some challenges to do the mapping of the needs by themselves in areas where there were no sub-district cooperation committees.

“The community is now able to overcome many difficulties and adapt to the toughest conditions. The project contributed with YER 500,000 (approximately USD \$2000) per initiative, and 30 initiatives in the district were supported. The committee sought support from engineers in the district who provided help in the studies and consultancies for free. The committee formed the focal point between the local people and both public and private agencies implementing the projects. Certain approaches were adopted for service provision involving the local people in service delivery to their village or neighborhood and forming a community monitoring structure from the same village or neighborhood,” said the Chairman of the Planning Committee in Lauder district.

Leadership in project prioritization

There was a high level of satisfaction with the prioritization process among key informant interviewees from the local authorities and DMTs. Eight key interviewees from VCCs complained that their VCCs were not represented in the district recovery planning process. Involvement of women in this process was reported to be the lowest among all activities run by ERRY. According to a female member of the DMT, this process was dominated by community leaders and influential figures in the district. Similarly, contribution of the community committees to influence district recovery plans was also reportedly weak.

Improvement in VCC capacity to influence district resilience plans



Ways of working with executive and local authorities: transparency and accountability

One of the limitations of this assessment is that information on the DMTs relations and ways of working with executive and local authorities is limited due to the small number of DMTs visited and the lack of core members in sites during the fieldwork. According to the head of the local authorities in the Lauder and Bani Qais districts, the approach used by the programme to support local authorities through the DMT was very beneficial. The role of DMTs in developing recovery plans with the local authority was more comprehensive compared to the role of other stakeholders who approached local authorities mainly to analyze and implement actions within the focus of their thematic area. DMTs with the support of CMs provided the local authority with a comprehensive district recovery plan that was helpful to identify the overall needs of the district and promote the plan with other stakeholders.

¹³ District recovery plans provided by SFD

¹⁴ UNDP – ERRY Baseline Assessment 2017

¹⁵ (i.e. Food, Nutrition, WASH, Protection, livelihoods, etc.)

The main strengths indicated by DMTs' members were the availability of members from the main sub-committees of the local authority, the representation of the executive offices, the great support and connection with leaders, and the previous experience in working with SFD on community projects before the conflict. The training provided by SFD for the DMT and the Citizen Control Committee on planning, procurement, financial management and resources mobilization, although limited, was also considered valuable for the work of the DMTs. There were also some cases of mobilizing resources through humanitarian organizations by the DMT/local authorities using the district plan.

The district recovery planning and prioritization of initiatives within the local governance component and the district-level conflict validation and prioritization meetings within the social cohesion component, were cited to be dominated by members of the local council and local authorities, while there was very limited representation from the community-level. Representation of villages at this level was dependent on the ability of the IMs/CMs to represent the communities. It was found that a gap in communication occurs between the community and local authorities because there is no feedback to local communities on why their villages were excluded from supported projects.

Improvement issues

The lack of a central fund for local councils and the inability of some executive offices to function, have limited the role of DMTs to effectively facilitate more activities in support of the local authorities and executive offices. For some members, the role of DMTs is still very limited and focuses mainly on the development of the district plan and the monitoring of its implementation. With the current resources, DMTs depend on outputs from SFD CMs in terms of bottom-up planning. They work mainly on consolidating community resilience plans (mainly large-scale initiatives) into one district recovery plan jointly with SFD CMs.

Activating other roles, such as the promotion of plans with other stakeholders, was reported to happen only in areas where the head of the local authority provided space for DMTs to act on their behalf. For some interviewees, DMTs can act as a coordination mechanism at the district-level to mobilize stakeholders. Disregarding this opportunity has led to a gap in coordination that is now covered by various departments of the local council or by specific influential members of the local authority from time to time, limiting the opportunity to mainstream some actions of the district recovery plans. Clarity on the role of DMTs is limited in some sites and they are assumed to be included to interventions with SFD.

Creating a Citizen Control Committee, despite being noted to be very effective in quality monitoring and transparency of recovery projects funded by ERRY, was considered by few DMTs' members as something that should be incorporated in the responsibilities of DMTs instead of creating many parallel structures that would need additional resources to become sustainable.

Linkages between VCCs and DMTs

Issues related to linkages between VCCs and DMTs were covered in the previous section. It is important to highlight particularly the following:

1. The need for an intermediary structure (Cooperative Committee or a network of the existing VCCs at sub-district-level) to bridge the gap between VCCs and district-level, especially on shared services.
2. Activating the coordination mechanism at the district level to mobilize actors and harmonize ways of working together and supporting communities.
3. Investment in capacity building of VCCs and DMTs to stimulate more resources for the district and community plans.
4. Catalyzing a pilot coordinated model: piloting a joint and integrated model in one district (conflict, recovery, resilience, humanitarian, etc.) model of different ERRY partners (for joint and integrated assessments, joint and integrated community and district plans, joint basket fund managed by IPs and DMTs and building their capacities to apply similar approach in the future, etc.)

3.2. SERVICE DELIVERY

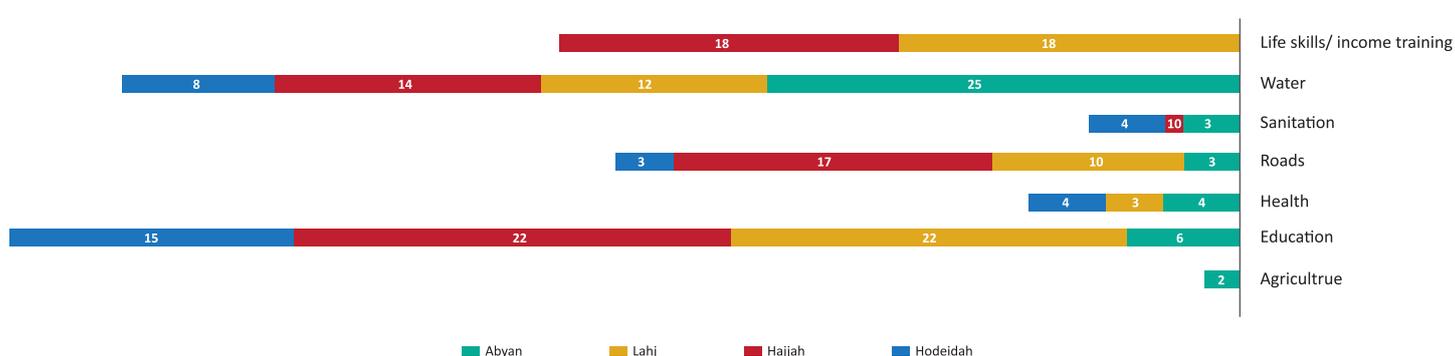
3.2.1. Community-Based and District Recovery Initiatives

3.2.1.1. Prioritized Sectors

The desk review of the ERRY database revealed that water and education, road networks, life skills and capacity building for livelihood opportunities were the key priorities of initiatives in the four targeted governorates. These are followed by health, sanitation and agriculture.

Interventions in Hajja and Lahj clearly stood in line with priorities identified in the baseline, particularly in needs related to education, livelihood, and road networks. Hodeidah was also on the top of priority governorates. However, reports from partners indicated challenges during the implementation of projects in the Hodeida district due to the escalated conflict, lack of freedom of mobility and security issues.

Sector priorities of people initiatives by governorate



3.2.1.2. Process of selecting initiatives

In terms of *community resilience initiatives*, VCCs were guided to work on brief project proposals to seek grants from the ERRY compact initiatives fund allocated for each district. Selection of initiatives to be funded was done at the district-level. Thus, VCCs had to compete to gain grants. Identifying the successful proposals was done by SFD and DMTs. However, selection of district recovery project builds on the list of recovery initiatives identified at the sub-district-level or from the VCCs resilience plans that include a list of services that are shared with other villages.

As described in previous sections, the selection of *district recovery initiatives* is done at the district-level by local authorities and DMTs. Although all VCCs indicated forming a sub-committee to act as a *citizen monitoring scheme* during the implementation of the initiative, project reports and interviewed staff, revealed that the citizen monitoring scheme was created for and supported by the major projects (recovery initiatives) at the district-level. Creating these schemes is considered a core action by the project, towards building transparency and control practices for major procurement and implementation actions led by the local authority. The average amount allocated for each district recovery project is USD 70,000. It was reported that ERRY is the only project that re-activated monitoring of major bids and procurement, managed by local authorities since 2015. This is a joint technical and financial committee representing local authority, SFD and people.

3.2.1.3. Impact of resilience and recovery initiatives

Overall, KIIs and FDGs revealed that VCC members and beneficiaries, both men and women, indicated that resilience plans have also improved community attitudes towards organizing themselves with the aim of mobilizing resources and building linkages with various actors to implement community resilience initiatives, instead of waiting for external support. This is important in the current context of the prolonged conflict and in the absence of a central funding. Acceptance of women in committees (50%) has influenced the focus of community-level initiatives from infrastructure to priority based (education and health).

Overall, local communities were engaged in the community-based initiatives. The initiatives managed to address the impact of the crisis at a micro-level and have helped communities rebuild the social structure of the community. The intervention for re-establishing the VCCs demonstrated a sense of ownership and showed encouraging results of setting the tone for community governance in the protracted crisis. In terms of the number of beneficiaries by sector, community initiatives reached a larger number through health interventions, water, road networks and education.

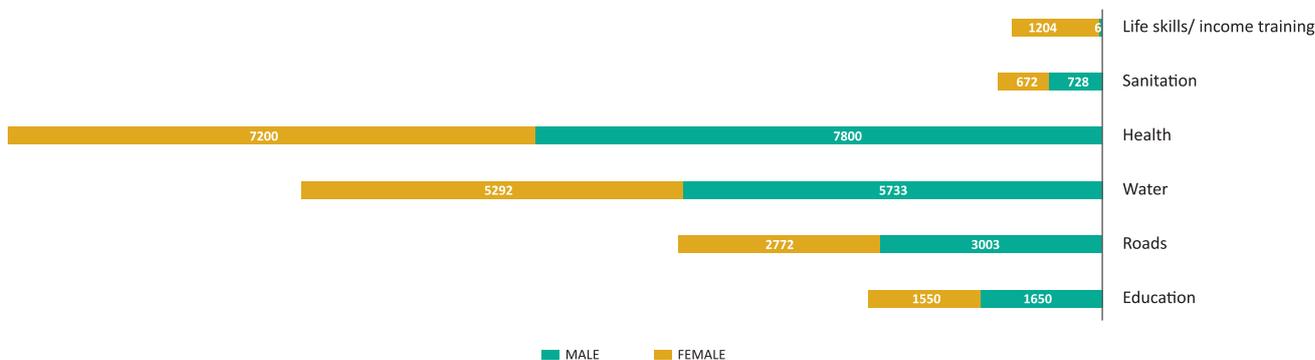
3.2.1.4. Service improvement

Services delivered were highly **relevant**, and the community initiatives remain a priority need in the targeted areas. The Project operated in areas of needs that are consistent with the humanitarian response plan. Partners had prior presence and experience in the targeted areas. This review revealed a **significant contribution of the project in addressing core limitations faced by vulnerable people and communities to enhance their resilience and ability to cope with shock and effects of the conflict.**

Desk reviews, FGDs, and interviews with beneficiaries indicated examples of increased opportunities to gain income to meet basic emergency needs, increase access to improved community assets and services, enhance personal skills, enhance attitudes and norms at the community and households level towards women participation, and the importance of collective actions.

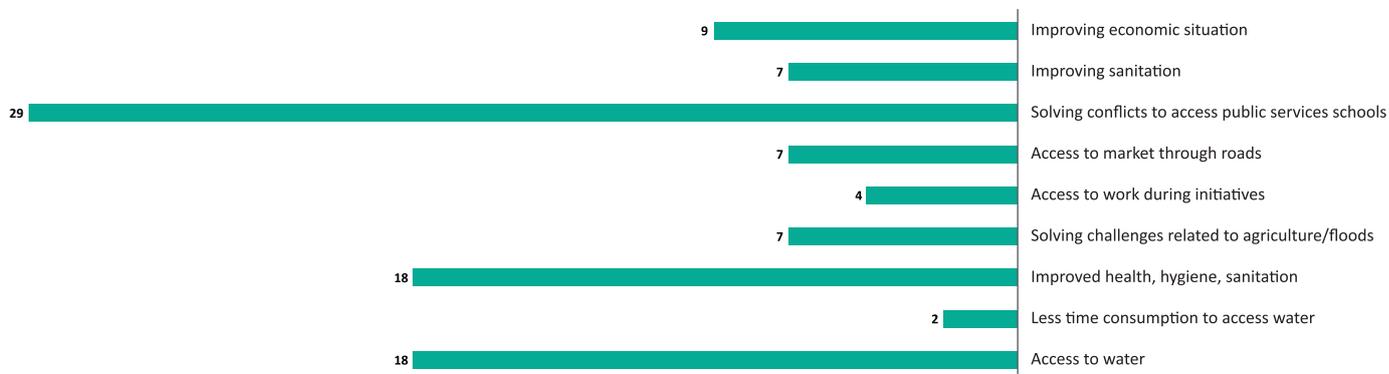
Women value the role of the project in enhancing their access to different resources. Examples varied depending on the initiatives implemented in each locality. Main improvements shared were related to access to roads, schools for children, sanitation in schools, water, health facilities, and improved purchasing power of some vulnerable women to access food during their participation in the rehabilitation activities, representation in most community committees (50% average) established by the project to run community initiatives. Few work and income generation opportunities emerged through rehabilitation of community assets (roads and water for irrigation). Hardship faced by women to reach market and health services during emergency and/or delivery were reduced due to the improved roads.

Benefeciaries of small scale initiatives



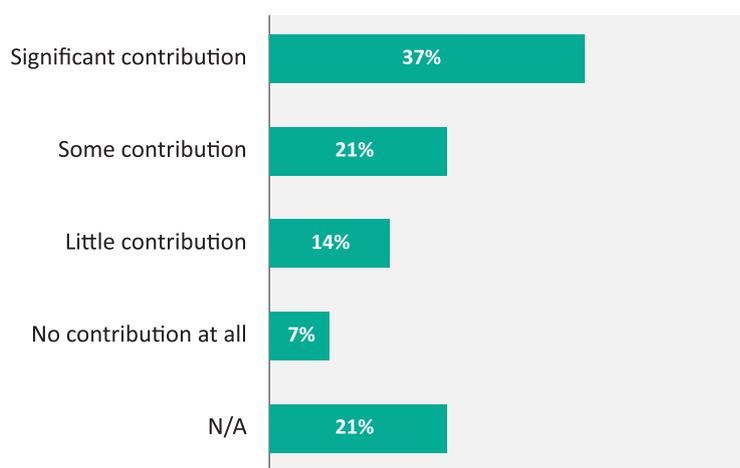
Overall, the assessment data indicate that community members value the impact of committees and initiatives on service delivery. FGD participants were asked to list the main types of impact of the self-help initiatives and then select the most important impact area. The results of this exercise, as summarized below, indicate that the contribution of committees towards solving conflicts related to public services was considered important by community members. In addition, improved access to water as well as health awareness and hygiene were also mentioned as important impact areas in 18 FGDs respectively. Nine FGDs identified improved access to schools as well as improved the economic situation in their community, respectively, as a direct impact area of the committees' work.

Impact of initiatives - 45 FGDs



“Our village needed this project because there was a conflict between the local people of the village on the distribution of water from the water scheme; we needed to complete the pipeline. The initiative did and we resolved the conflict. Before there was no water and we used to travel to the Almarashida water scheme, spending two-and-a-half hours on the road. Most of the time we had breakfast and then we were back at lunch time. After the initiative of drilling the water well and repairing the scheme, things have improved. The impact has been great. This project alleviated the suffering of having to bring water from far away. Households are aware of the need to conserve water because it is treasured as it has lifted the suffering of children and women bringing water,” said a member of the Alhasiki committee.

Contribution to enhancing social cohesion and thus building peace



3.2.1.5. Social cohesion and peace building

IMs contribution to enhancing social cohesion and peace building was been very important. According to the project output reports, **48 of the 60 small grants provided by the project were allocated to conflict resolution initiatives.** They were often designed to address challenges related to public service provision through social cohesion interventions with community authorities and committees.

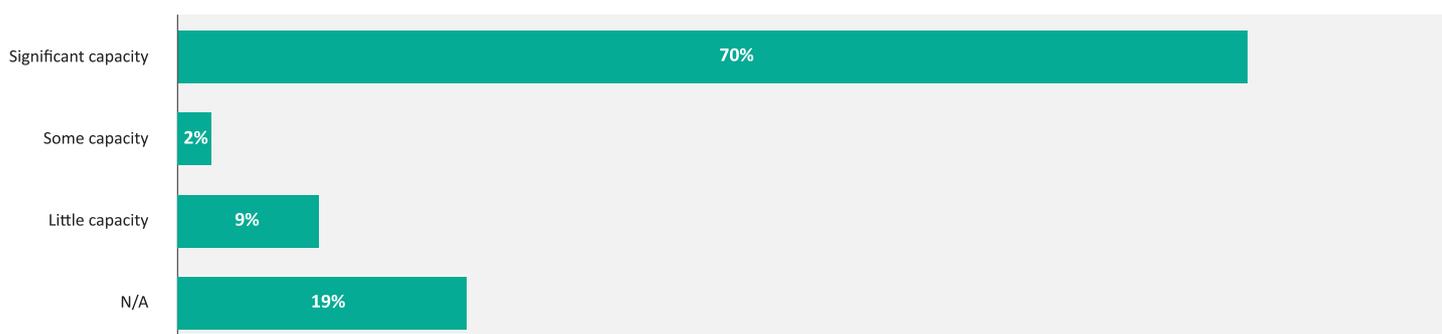
According to the survey, 37% of committee members interviewed stated that the project contributed in a significant way to social cohesion and thus peace building. Another 21% thought that the project had at least some positive effect in this respect. However, one-in-five committee members reported that the project had little or no impact on social cohesion and peace-building in their communities.

Interviews with community members revealed that committees were often considered as an informal network to mediate and solve problems. In about one-third of the FGDs with beneficiaries, participants reported that committees have contributed to solving tensions in their communities. In FGDs with beneficiaries, participants highlighted the positive impact on social cohesion generated by the deliberate efforts made by committees to engage all groups represented in the community in the implementation of initiatives.

Evaluation participants identified limited availability of resources as a challenge for committees with regards to reducing tensions among the local population. In a context where needs constantly exceed the available resources and vulnerabilities reach comparable levels in different communities, there is a risk that tensions remain high or even increase between villages if one location is benefitting from project resources, while another one does not.

In addition, the ability – or the lack thereof – of committees to communicate effectively on aspirations/vision, roles, plans, limitations, achievements, and financial concerns, was identified by interviewees as a key factor for the impact that committees could have on reducing tension and building community solidarity and cooperation as well as trust with authorities and supporters.

Improved capacity to instil community ownership as a result of the project

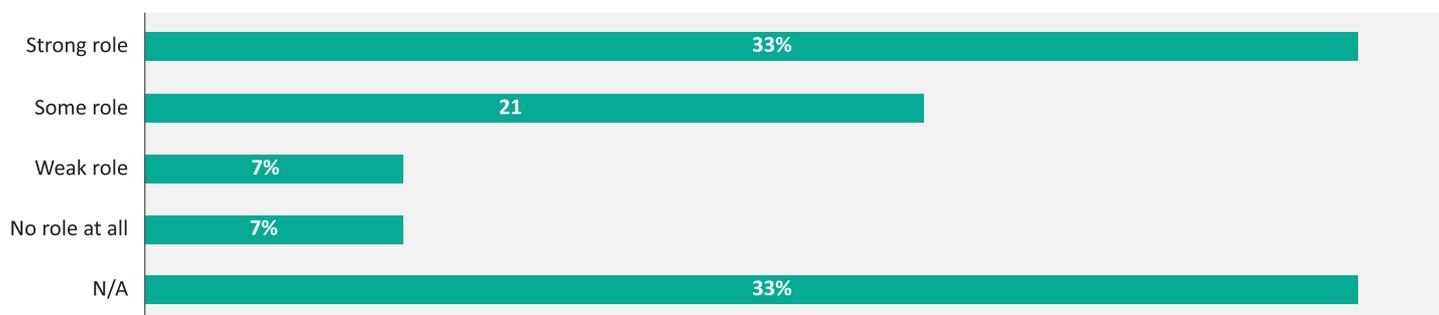


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3.2.1.5. Community Ownership of Resilience Plans and Actions

During the survey, 70% said that they considered committees to have significant capacity to infuse community ownership with regards to resilience plans and actions, with positive effects towards community engagement and solidarity, which in turn led to the reduction of a conflict possibility.

Extent of the role of committees in building trust with local authorities



3.2.1.6. Role of committees in building trust with local authorities

In addition, 33% of the participants reported that committees play a strong role in building trust with local authorities, and another 21% attributed committees at least some role in this domain. Only 14% of research participants thought that committees have a weak or no role at all in building trust with local authorities. This perception contradicts the reality of committee interactions with local authorities described above, as they are characterized to have rather weak linkages and to receive limited support from local authorities.

“In this Village Cooperation Council, the strong relationship between the community, the private sector and humanitarian organization resulted in better resource mobilization. The Council was able to build two additional classrooms previously funded by the programme, while it recently started the construction of another two. Now there are in total 6 classrooms, benefiting around 594 people. The village’s female representative contributed by donating the land on which the project was constructed, something that demonstrates how the role of women in the VCCs as a role model is inspiring and motivates stronger community participation in the implementation of initiatives,” said a member of the Alzubaidi village, Bani Qais district VCC.

3.3. STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

At the national-level

At the national-level, the main institution working toward strengthening local governance is the Social Fund for Development (SFD). SFD’s board is headed by the Prime Minister and it brings together the Ministers of Social Affairs, Planning and International Cooperation, Local Administration, Finance, Education, and Technical Education and Vocational Training, as well as representatives from NGOs, the private and banking sectors and experts.

Established in 1997 by the law number 10, SFD aims to contribute to the realization of the goals of the national social and economic development plans for poverty reduction (DPPRs).¹⁶ It plays a key role in supporting local authorities through village councils and district development teams for more than 20 years. SFD is currently implementing activities in 65 districts, with funding from the World Bank (41 districts), as well as the European Union (EU) and Department for International Development (DFID) (eight districts respectively). ERRY, the program under review, supports SFD activities towards community resilience planning in eight districts.

With the increasing humanitarian needs in Yemen, **the international support efforts** focus mostly on the humanitarian response. In this context, efforts to develop mechanisms and models for local governance and social cohesion have remained insufficient, uncoordinated and have so far involved a limited number of players.

However, among international actors, including UN agencies, INGOs, consortia etc., there is a lack of harmonization with regards to concepts and mechanisms related to activating local governance and social cohesion. It has also been observed that while some programme concepts reference strengthening local governance and social cohesion as expected indirect effects, they lack clear goals and indicators that would facilitate monitoring and assessment in this regard.

¹⁶ SFD Yemen, About SFD - Background and objectives, <http://www.sfd-yemen.org/content/1/42> and Board of Directors, <http://www.sfd-yemen.org/content/1/7>, both accessed on 20 January 2019.

As notable exceptions, two NGOs, Search for Common Ground (SFCG), and Partners Global, have been very active in fostering local culture for mediation and local conflict resolution through local intermediaries. For instance, SFCG has been working with local partners since 2017 through a community dialogue approach to reduce the risk of intercommunal violence in three governorates in Yemen. The organization also works with youth, both inside and outside of schools, to promote their understanding of and contribution to the development of opportunities for peaceful conflict resolution at the local-level. This is important in a context where youth is often mobilized by conflict parties as agents of violence. By strengthening the capacities of youth – and youth leaders – and their capacity to transform local conflict, the SFCG initiative contributes to increasing the communities’ social cohesion and resilience to violence.¹⁷

Partners Global and their national branch office, Partners Yemen, have been working since 2012 aiming to enhance the linking of civil society and local community into national-level dialogue. Specifically, they have been working with local organizations to enhance their ability to support citizens’ engagement in the political transition process. As the conflict and, correspondingly, the state of the Yemeni political landscape have evolved, the organization has shifted its support to civil society and local voices to help them navigate the tumultuous lines of communication with national political actors, with the aim of mobilizing responses to their communities’ most relevant needs. In this way, Partners Global continues to promote a civic culture of accountability and active participation, even in the context of conflict, promoting transparency in decision-making, community awareness, and dialogue to bridge local with national-level advocacy for reconciliation and reform.¹⁸

In addition, CARE International in Yemen with funding from the EU as well as the UK Conflict, Safety, and Stability Fund (CSSF) is currently implementing social cohesion and peacebuilding programming (individually and through a consortium set-up), applying an approach that builds on the SFCG methodology.

In terms of bi-lateral cooperation, the German Corporation for International Cooperation GmbH (GIZ) launched in 2016 the Good Governance Cluster initiative, a demand-driven programme, which promotes cooperation between public and civil society actors with the aim of supporting accountability and inclusiveness.¹⁹ In addition, between 2016 and 2018, GIZ has also worked to improve conditions for non-violent conflict resolution through the provision of training and coaching for civil society organizations to develop conflict-reducing and peacebuilding measures.²⁰

Since 2017, GIZ has also provided technical and financial support to local and strict authorities in Hadramaut and Dhamar governorates to implement small-scale projects that help stabilize people’s living conditions as well as state and civil-society structures.²¹

¹⁷ SFCG Yemen, <https://www.sfcg.org/yemen/>, accessed on 20 January 2019.

¹⁸ Partners Global, Local engagement for advocacy and dialogue (LEAD) in Yemen, <https://www.partnersglobal.org/program/local-engagement-for-advocacy-and-dialogue-lead-in-yemen/>, accessed on 20 January 2019.

¹⁹ GIZ, Good Governance Cluster (GGC) Yemen, <https://www.giz.de/de/downloads/giz2017-en-ggc-yemen.pdf>, accessed on 20 January 2019.

²⁰ GIZ, Peacebuilding in Yemen, <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/54543.html>, accessed on 20 January 2019.

²¹ GIZ, Support for the stabilization process: Promotion of small-scale measures by local administrative structures, <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/57675.html>, accessed on 20 January 2019.

	Local Authority	Structure supported by Some Ministries	Local Governance SFD		Social Cohesion SFCG & Partners	Other Programs
District Level	<p>Local Council and Sub-Committees</p> <p>Executive Offices</p> <p>Local Council members representing villages/ sub-districts</p> <p>Indigenous /tribal solidarity schemes and self-help groups (to access finance, work opportunities, catastrophic health assistance, protection, etc.).</p>	<p>In addition to local authorities</p> <p>District Health Council (DHC)</p> <p>PC (Parents Council)</p> <p>etc.</p>	<p>In addition to local authorities</p> <p>DMT</p> <p>Citizen control scheme for major projects</p> <p>Coordination Unit Includes technical staff from SFD – started in 1 governorate but paused</p> <p>CMs</p>		<p>In addition to local authorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LCCs (including IMs as members) • NGOs 	<p>In addition to local authorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive offices • NGOs • CBOs
Sub-District Level		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Facility Committee • School Parents Council • Other Projects/Beneficiaries Committees 	<p><u>Initial areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-District Committees • CMs • VCCs 	<p><u>New areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMs • VCCs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LCC (includes IMs and formed pre-conflict scan – by PGI) • Committees to manage Conflict resolution initiative (includes IMs – formed post-conflict scan and validation workshop) by SFCG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs/CBOs • Staff/CMs/ volunteers • Traditional leaders • Beneficiaries Sectoral Project Committee (based on Humanitarian Clusters, or other thematic areas like Livelihoods, WASH, Water, Food, Shelter, Nutrition etc.) • Women Groups/ livelihood groups
Village Level						

An increasing number of donors have shown interest in supporting initiatives to enhance local governance and social cohesion. The literature review as well as key informants interviewed, identified several donors currently supporting programmes in this area. These include the European Union, the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the UK Conflict, the Stability and Security Fund (CSSF), the World Bank (WB), different US Government agencies as well as the German Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ).

At the Local Level

Snapshot of the various community structures applied by stakeholders at the local-level.

Analysis of advantage and limitations of working approaches at local-level among actors

Stakeholders at local-level: Opportunities and areas of improvement

Main common strengths	Main common weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some examples of cooperation within ERRY IPs: Ex. SFD – Solar (SFD – FAO – VH- SDF) in Hodiedah/Hajja • Some examples of cooperation with non-ERRY partners FAF – Shelter and Protection clusters – Abyan SFD – GIZ- SFCG - CSSF • Integrated interventions when more than one stakeholder working via same community committees in few sites SFD – WFP (Hajja) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of coordination and synergy at the district-level • Various approaches and orientation that may lead to unintended impact on the functions and sustainability of community structures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Different community mobilization and assessment agents (IMs, CMs, VCCs, community figures, volunteers, micro-project community committee, etc.) ○ Different levels of community participation (just consultation, information, or partnership), participation and leadership of the community (end or a means) involvement through the project cycle or at initial stage only) ○ Different thematic issues and terms for names and expectations from Committees (humanitarian, resilience, conflict, data only, etc.) ○ Different introductory channels at the district level and with committees (NGO, etc.) ○ Different levels of prioritization and approval of grants for initiatives ○ Different capacity building approaches and theme for community structures ○ Different ceiling of small grants and different grant provision approaches ○ Different requirements for eligibility for fund and different ways in releasing fund (in kind, etc.) • Non efficient use of resources by stakeholders • Creating parallel committees, and plans • Shallow interventions due to the limited resources of each partner when working alone- ignoring high priorities • Duplicated activities
Main common opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility to promote consensus around a common framework for local governance structures and ways of working with them. • Possibility to expand coverage and initiatives of community committees with villages committees and DMTs as main window for stakeholder’s work at community and district-level – thus reducing tension over resources between communities and will increase people trust in the community structures. • Possibility to develop integrated guides and train all CMs/ IMs/VCCs/volunteers to use to ensure that community mapping and plans are comprehensive and fits various stakeholders (conflict oriented, humanitarian oriented, and resilience and governance oriented, etc.). • Possibility to create/pilot a joint coordination/and community mobilization team for all stakeholders for efficient use of resources, coverage, and reaching high impact initiatives through joint basket fund, etc. Thus shifting programme role from a supporter through small grants to a catalyst/mobilizer of actors. This will also emphasize the commitment of all stakeholders to mainstream local governance as a cross-cutting theme in their future programs. Such joint work will also can lead towards a taskforce for improving models of local governance and advocating lessons learnt at higher level particularly reducing the gap of current response work and the transitional movement to recovery and development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible collapse of some committees or increased people mistrust by their committees when stakeholders create new or use different entry points at the community-level. • Communal conflict when supporting VCC initiatives that represent a cluster of villages with similar vulnerabilities. • Competence among stakeholders on influential figures, best committees, IMs, CMs, etc.

3.4. LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL COHESION IN CRISIS CONTEXT

3.4.1. Parameters

3.4.1.1. Leadership and participation

- Wide promotion and advocacy of the current model of community leadership of resilience and response actions through activated/created local structures at community and district-levels.
- Ensuring community structures legitimacy entitlements and practical access to assistance and services in relation to resilience building, health services, including sexual and reproductive health, compensations, cash transfers, community-based insurance, credit, employment.
- Strengthening community structures: Ensure all community decision-making structures have clear visions, representative structures, participatory resilience/recovery plans, and basic financial management procedures, and procedures to ensure genuine women participation so that actors could better understand the various community structures and how they work and link.
- Promotion and strengthening use of integrated participatory analysis, planning and decision-making in different resilience, humanitarian and social cohesion interventions to ensure enabling participation of women and disadvantaged groups in all stages (community analysis, mapping of resources, prioritization, and implementation).
- Promotion of alternative and diverse approaches to ensure effective role for women in the leadership of local governance and social cohesion structures and initiatives, should be explored and supported. Forms of involving women in rural areas in the leadership can be through involving traditional women leaders and women's formal and informal CBOs, Self-help groups, and women's livelihoods cooperatives. This should also address alternative solutions to address women's time poverty to enhance women's opportunities to effectively participate in the leadership of community resilience.

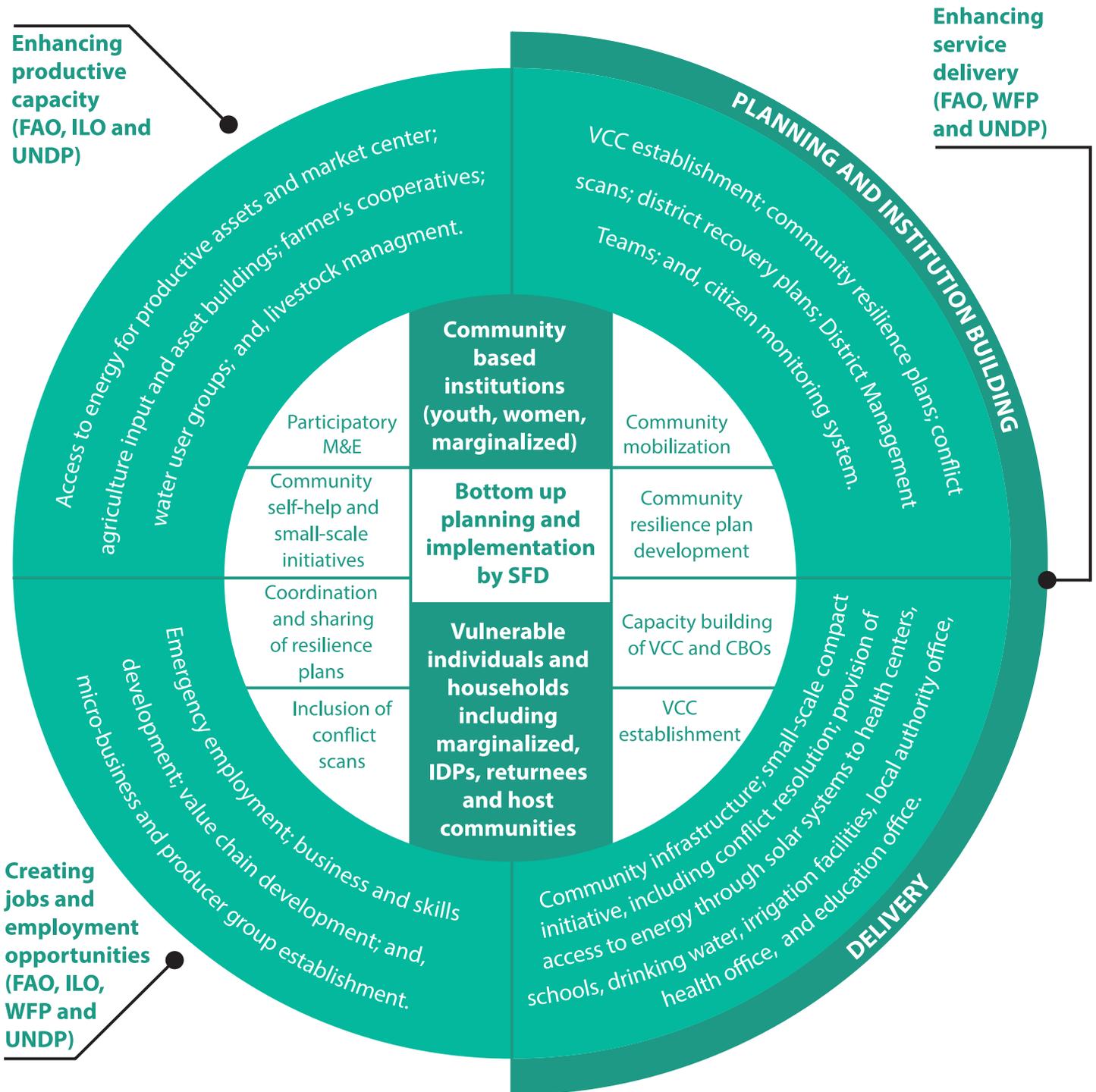
3.4.1.2. Transparency and accountability

- Ensuring community leadership of the accountability, coordination, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Working with and building capacities of communities in this aspect should be agreed and harmonized among different actors involved in current initiatives to build communities resilience local governance, social cohesion, humanitarian, etc.) to ensure community ownership, sustainability and stronger cross fertilization and clarification of responsibilities.
- Frameworks of actors for resilience building, local governance, social cohesion, and community empowerment should be built on integrated bottom-up participatory approaches and plans to ensure ownership and sustained efforts for their implementation and follow-up at grassroots levels. Frameworks expected to establish simple and gender sensitive measures for progress and impact to measure improvement accordingly by local structures and women groups, and community-led programmes.

3.4.1.2. Social cohesion

- Avoiding creation of parallel community structures for social cohesion. Rather actors should build on current community structures involved in resilience building and response to emergency needs.
- Avoiding limited resources and targeting (one village approach) to reduce tension and conflicts among communities on resources.
- Building capacities of community structures and community mobilizers in facilitation of participatory an integrated community analysis, mapping of resources and conflict triggers, in decision making and prioritization process of initiatives, and participatory approaches in management of initiatives and mitigate expected negative results.

3.5. ENHANCING SERVICES DELIVERY – MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS IN CRISES CONTEXT



Current local governance and resilience model used by the programme for the crisis context includes three pillars:

1. Enhancing service delivery
2. Enhancing or creating jobs and employment
3. Enhancing productive assets and capacities

The model focused on core areas of interventions needed to help communities cope with the effect of crisis and build back better. However, to assess effectiveness of the model, this review did not come across an experience at the community-level where IPs jointly targeted specific number of HHs/villages with an integrated package of services (covering the three pillars of the model).

This review suggests the following requirements for the success of service delivery and local governance under the current resilience and local governance model:

Service delivery

- Enhancing capacities of local governance structures at community and district-levels and service providers on a range of topics and skills to ensure that they have the knowledge and capacities to carry out their initiatives and related duties, and ensure relevant services are provided in an equitable manner. The purpose of this process should be to transform community male and female leaders and prepare them as community mobilizers and agents of change, while preserving tradition and community values.
- Actors should come with an agreed basic guide for minimum requirements in the management of services related to different thematic areas as a unified guide for community structures and service providers to define responsibilities for both parties to better understand the ways of working of each other in enhancing services and escalating coverage, resources, and impact.
- Ensuring community leadership of the accountability, coordination, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of service delivery. This includes working with and building capacities of communities in this aspect should be agreed and harmonized among different actors involved in current initiatives to build communities resilience local governance, social cohesion, humanitarian, etc.) to ensure community ownership, sustainability and stronger cross fertilization and clarification of responsibilities.
- Avoiding limited resources and targeting (one village approach) to reduce tension and conflicts among communities on resources.

Building capacities of community structures and community mobilizers in facilitation of participatory an integrated community analysis, mapping of resources and conflict triggers, in decision making and prioritization process of initiatives, and participatory approaches in management of initiatives and mitigate expected negative results.

- Ensuring community structures legitimacy entitlements and practical access to assistance and services in relation to resilience building, health services, including sexual and reproductive health, compensations, cash transfers, community-based insurance, credit, and employment.

Local governance

- Ensuring community structures legitimacy entitlements and practical access to assistance and services in relation to resilience building, health services, including sexual and reproductive health, compensations, cash transfers, community-based insurance, credit, and employment.
- Strengthening community structures: Ensure all community decision-making structures have clear visions, representative structures, participatory resilience/recovery plans, and basic financial management procedures, and procedures to ensure genuine women participation so that actors could better understand the various community structures and how they work and link.
- Promotion and strengthening use of integrated participatory analysis, planning and decision-making in different resilience, humanitarian and social cohesion interventions to ensure enabling participation of women and disadvantaged groups in all stages (community analysis, mapping of resources, prioritization, and implementation)
- Promotion of alternative and diverse approaches to ensure effective role for women in the leadership of local governance and social cohesion structures and initiatives, should be explored and supported. Forms of involving women in rural areas in the leadership can be through involving traditional women leaders and women's formal and informal CBOs, Self-help groups, and women's livelihoods cooperatives. This should also address alternative solutions to address women's time poverty to enhance women's opportunities to effectively participate in the leadership of community resilience.
- Ensuring community leadership of the accountability, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the local governance model. This includes working with and building capacities of communities in this aspect, should be agreed and harmonized among different actors involved in current initiatives to build communities resilience local governance, social cohesion, humanitarian, etc.) to ensure community ownership, sustainability and stronger cross fertilization and clarification of responsibilities.
- Introducing an integrated facilitation scheme by merging roles of IMs, CMs and humanitarian community mobilizers towards more comprehensive, integrated, and participatory community mobilization, assessment, planning, and linkages building. These facilitators should not be assigned as members of the community structures.

3. ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

- A community-based structure can represent one community, if possible, and could be established as a Cooperation CBO (community-based organization), prepared to take on an integrated role (i.e. resilience, conflict resolution, and humanitarian activities) with space for sub-committees to activate women participation, accountability, etc.
- Creating networks of committees/CBOs at the sub-district-level in big districts to coordinate shared services.
- Piloting a synergy/harmonization scheme at the district-level to coordinate linkages between community committees and stakeholders. District-level structures assessed before being assumed to play this role. This can be run jointly by stakeholders as a model for local authorities and DMTs to learn and adapt.
- Avoiding creation of parallel community structures for social cohesion. Rather actors should build on current community structures involved in resilience building and response to emergency needs.
- Avoiding limited resources and targeting (one village approach) to reduce tension and conflicts among communities on resources.
- Building capacities of community structures and community mobilizers in facilitation of participatory an integrated community analysis, mapping of resources and conflict triggers, in decision-making and prioritization process of initiatives, and participatory approaches in management of initiatives and mitigate expected negative results.

For the programme to address these issues, a task force can be assigned to review the community-based approaches by different stakeholders and their related unintended impact on the sustainability of the current attempts to build local governance structures at the community and district-levels. In this role, ERRY can ensure synergy among stakeholders and could build a common framework for minimum requirements that should be met by stakeholders working with local communities to ensure sound contribution by all in creating a supportive environment for scalable local governance structures in their communities.

ERRY should act as a catalyst to mobilize actors, develop guides on the agreed common framework, and advocate to mainstream local governance as a cross-cutting issue within the current humanitarian work in Yemen. When referring to this as cross-cutting issue, it is meant to include best practices in establishing community structures at various levels, stakeholders' ways of working in facilitating community mobilization, planning processes, capacity building, supporting emerging initiatives, and documenting learning from monitoring of progress, impact, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability aspects of actions done through community structures. This can also include agreement on common terms, type of structure (i.e. committee Vs CBO, etc.), integrated participatory tools for community mobilization and planning, possibility of harmonized funding mechanism in some piloted sites, size of grants, prioritization schemes, eligibility criteria, unintended impact on sustainability of the local governance structures due to the lack of synergy among stakeholders, how to mitigate such impact, etc.



4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This assessment revealed that ERRY is in a good position to create a scalable and all-inclusive local governance model for bottom-up planning and actions for an integrated preparedness, resilience, conflict resolution, and humanitarian response to the needs of vulnerable people. It was observed that there is a momentum related to people's tendency to organize themselves to improve their resilience, culture of solidarity and indigenous informal organization practices; as well as a significant diversity of stakeholders, including the well-experienced ERRY and others, that can build on this momentum.

- Overall, the formation of the VCCs/LCCs was a key step towards enhancing local governance and social cohesion. Resilience plans and availability of small grants have improved community attitudes towards organizing themselves with the aim of mobilizing resources and building linkages with various actors to implement community resilience initiatives, instead of waiting for external support.
- The hybrid local governance model with the composition of bottom-up and top-down approach indicated that the formal local governance structure has potentials to continue to function with the support of community-level institutions, primarily community cooperation committees and conflict resolution committees. 95% of the committees revealed to be functioning.

All functioning VCCs surveyed have developed resilience plans addressing priority needs, including basic service provision and finding responses to urgent needs. The plans were designed through a bottom-up planning process facilitated and supported by ERRY. Representatives of committees indicated that their vision when they created the committee was limited to implementing the initiative agreed with ERRY. However, afterwards, they became more committed to sustain the solidarity work and linkages with various stakeholders and run more initiatives.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Current small grant system succeeded in triggering communities to allocate more resources for their resilience and recovery plans, reducing committees' dependency. Conducting advocacy and direct support to build linkages between district and/or community-level structures and other actors have been growing. In addition to ERRY, availability of humanitarian organizations in all districts of the current ERRY Programme is a very good opportunity to enhance abilities of the community to implement their resilience plans at village and district-level.
- ERRY's creation and support for the DMTs in the development of the district recovery plans was a milestone in enhancing the role of the current local authorities. Eight district recovery plans were developed, while district level service delivery projects are currently being implemented in these districts in the areas of education, health and the WaSH sector.

The effort is also focusing on strengthening the horizontal and vertical linkages that promote social cohesion and the social contract in the targeted districts. 213 community resilience plans were developed by VCCs in eight districts through local level engagement of communities, leaders and informal/formal actors to identify community priorities and implement locally-owned recovery efforts that target local conflict drivers.

Resilience plans focused on service delivery, social cohesion, basic services and livelihoods recovery to address the negative impacts of the conflict. Eventually this will contribute to stabilization in Yemen's communities and to provide a solid foundation for the country's recovery when the political situation allows.

- Community structures stated that they have benefited from the program in one way or another in terms of building their capacities to plan, organize, resolve conflicts, and manage community resilience plans. The extent of improvement of community committees' capacities to develop resilience plans without help from CMs was reported by 82% of community committees' members participating in the survey, reporting a large or at least some change with regards to their capacities to develop resilience plans without the help of CMs. IMs interviewed highlighted several areas for gained capacities, particularly conflict scan and mediation approaches, awareness and community mobilization on conflict issues and projects, and management of community projects.
- Despite the effect of the conflict on the public sector and failure of all internal governance policies and procedures of local authorities, the ad-hoc community level institutions revealed unintended potentials to build own capacities to fill the gap of local institutions and sustain community resilience. This included, for example, the model of using NGO/CBO management system to manage VCCs was applied in few districts, commitment to use the simple introductory guides provided by SFD around concepts of community-led resilience, responsibilities of VCCs, adapting tools/forms for conducting and documenting the community resilience plans, etc.

Other encouraging factors include commitment to involve women in VCC management in rural areas despite their limited experience in management of collective community projects, attending the supportive short and ad-hoc training by SFD staff and CMs on planning and writing proposal to access matching grants from the programme and other humanitarian actors in the area.

- As a result of resilience planning and the active role of community structures, 414 self-help initiatives were implemented using community resources. The small-scale initiatives implemented by VCCs and targeted communities with matching grants from ERRY reached 321 and have benefited 56,175 individuals. Work opportunities were created for 201 CMs during the resilience planning process. Several examples on how VCCs utilized available resources and linkages to implement their initiatives revealed for service delivery and horizontal and vertical relations and linkages.
- Community initiatives supported by the project operated in areas of need are consistent with the Humanitarian Response Plan. Partners had prior presence and experience in the targeted areas. This review revealed a significant contribution of the project in addressing core limitations faced by vulnerable people and communities to enhance their resilience and ability to cope with shock and effects of the conflict. Services delivered (more than 75% of compact initiatives are focused on health, WASH and education) were highly relevant, and the community initiatives were and remains a priority need in the targeted areas. The presence of women in planning and structure of VCCs has influenced men to prioritize basic services.

Desk reviews, FGDs, and interviews with beneficiaries indicated high satisfaction of the project in terms of: (a) increased opportunities to gain income to meet basic emergency needs for vulnerable groups by working in rehabilitation; (b) increased access to improved community assets and services; (c) enhanced personal skills; (d) enhanced attitudes and norms at the community and households level towards women participation; and, (e) importance of collective actions. In all locations within LG and SC initiatives, meetings with community structures indicated that the success of their initiatives involved in a way or another solving small bending or emerging conflicts to have initiatives implemented.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Women value the role of the project in enhancing their access to different resources. Examples varied depending on the initiatives implemented in each locality. Main improvements shared were related to access to roads, schools for children, sanitation in schools, water, health facilities, and improved purchasing power of some vulnerable women to access food during their participation in the rehabilitation activities, and representation in most community committees (50% average) established by the project to run community initiatives. Few work and income generation opportunities emerged through rehabilitation of community assets (roads and water for irrigation). Hardship faced by women to reach market and health services during emergency/ delivery were reduced due to the improved roads.
- The fact that it is a precondition in the ERRY programme to involve women in VCCs and conflict resolution actions, has opened opportunities for women to acquire diverse roles. Women having a role in the committees took on the analysis of needs and functioned as planners, resources mobilizers, raising awareness and community mobilizers, workers in initiatives and facilitators of conflict resolution actions. Overall, women's participation was reported to be comparatively strong in terms of community mobilization (65% significant participation); delivery of initiatives (49-63%); initiating meetings to form VCCs (58%); and, village resilience planning (42%). However, women's participation in VCCs' decision making processes, district-level resilience planning, and trainings for VCCs that take place at the district level is comparatively weak.

Main recommendations

- The role of CMs should be built in the functions of the DMTs/VCCs to enhance community ownership and help the replication and facilitation of the participatory planning in other villages and districts.
- LCCs and their micro-level conflict resolution projects are influenced by IMs. This is a risk that may undermine community representation, conflict of interest policies, and accountability. This also raises doubts for the conflict scan process and the prioritization. LCCs should be capacitated to foster community ownership of the conflict scan and mediation, while situations where IMs play a double role should be avoided.
- In a context where the needs constantly exceed the available resources, and vulnerabilities reach incomparable levels in different communities, there is a risk that tensions will remain high or even increase between villages, if one is benefitting from a project, while others do not. Thus the current design should be reviewed to increase resources and coverage of support to community structures.

To reduce dependency, ERRY should also invest in training VCCs/LCCs/DMTs in project designing and fundraising and in promoting access to various fund opportunities. Enhancing involvement of different networks and stakeholders in supporting local governance structures is also important. This can include involvement of different networks and stakeholders in promoting the role of VCCs while diminishing the negative impact of different modalities in working with VCCs. Stakeholders can increase the overall project resources to cover more villages within a sub-district to reduce the pressure on VCCs to respond to the enormous needs in the villages they represent and to prevent tension between villages. If this is not possible, a committee should be developed for each village or community instead of having one committee for multiple villages.

- The lack of a cooperative committee at the sub-district-level or a network of VCCs to assess and work on shared services, reduces VCCs' ability to influence district plans and leads to communal conflict over the limited resources that can be allocated to one VCC. Thus, the future design of the model should consider the formation of sub-district structures or provide resources at the district-level (DMT) to do assessments and planning at the sub-district-level.
- There is a limited clarity among community structures with regards to their identity and future direction. It is important to help committees to identify clearly their identity and scale up their role and linkages (i.e. are they part of the local authority, what is their connection to a CBO or an NGO, etc.). Organizational structures and decision making will be positively changed if the project addresses this issue. Committees indicated their difficulties in accessing fund from many institutions and humanitarian partners due to the deficit in their legal status documents. Similarly, this limits their ability to effectively agree on their aspirations/vision, roles, plans, documentation of achievements, setting financial and administrative policies and procedures.
- No data was available on the extent of participation of young people and marginalized groups particularly in the Committees structure, DMTs, IMs, and CMs. To increase participation of these vulnerable groups, we strongly recommend having a quota to replicate the positive mainstreaming that is already achieved for women in the committees.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Availability of various stakeholders and players is an opportunity for building community's ability to meet their needs and expand their relations and linkages towards implementing resilience plans. However, lack of harmonization of stakeholders and ways of working with the communities, combined with the limited capacity of committees to cope with the diversity of requirements, may turn the opportunity to a threat with regards to the sustainability of the local governance structures. ERRY should shift to act as a catalyst for mobilizing actors towards an agreed framework on how to coordinate the work, capacity building and support for community structures at various levels.
- The role of women was a critical success of the programme. However, to enhance their ability to influence plans and services, this programme should build on best practices indicated in different sites, such as the involvement of traditional women leaders, etc. Alternative approaches can be also explored, such as creating sub-committees for women within VCCs.

Promoting women-led community organizations to diversify women participation in channels in local governance and social cohesion should also be considered. This includes building their capacities in technical skills and know-how about running their initiatives, including shocks and conflicts analysis, impact measurement, participatory mitigation planning, accessing resources and related information, networking and linkages with other organizations and stakeholders, etc. Gradually the programme could establish networks of micro-associations of women and could help to raise their voices and facilitate their participation in the planning, programming and decision-making processes of local governance schemes (VCCs/DMTs, citizen control, etc.).

There are several ways of engaging women in rural areas to the local governance. For example, reducing the time-consuming house work by showing them how to save time using appropriate technology or new techniques, would increase women's productivity and lead to turning traditional women leaders to agents of change, while it would facilitate the establishment of women village solidarity banks and community-based emergency preparedness mechanisms that can be led by women to address women's unmet needs: women's livelihood cooperatives for safe access to alternative fuel solutions for cooking, light and heating, alternative shelter, and alternative livelihoods such as drying crops, fruits and vegetables, small scale HH/community based fish farming, etc.

To scale up opportunities, ERRY should assess the following actions:

1. Creating an integrated facilitation scheme: merging roles of IMs, CMs and Humanitarian community mobilizers towards more comprehensive, integrated, and participatory community mobilization, assessment, planning, and linkages building. These facilitators should not be defined as members of the community structures.
2. Expanding the vision and scope of the community-based structure. One committee should represent one community, if possible, to reduce conflicts. Committees can be established in different forms – such as Cooperation of CBOs (community-based organization) – and would be prepared to have an integrated role (i.e. resilience, conflict resolution, and humanitarian activities) with space for sub-committees to activate women participation, accountability, etc.
3. Creating networks of committees/CBOs at the sub-district-level in big districts to coordinate shared services.
4. Piloting a synergy/harmonization scheme at the district level to coordinate the linkages between community committees and stakeholders. DMT should be assessed before being assumed to play this role. This can be implemented jointly by stakeholders as a model for Local authorities and DMTs to learn and adapt.
5. Forming a Task Force representing various stakeholders to review the community-based approaches (within conflict resolution initiatives, resilience, humanitarian, etc.) used by different stakeholders, and the unintended impact on the sustainability of the current attempts to build local governance structures at the community and district-levels.
6. Catalyzing this by ERRY can ensure synergy among stakeholders and would facilitate building a common framework for minimum requirements that should be met by stakeholders working with local communities, to ensure sound contribution by all when creating supportive environment for scalable local governance structures in their communities.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7. Coordination Unit of ERRY at various levels should act as a catalyst to mobilize actors, develop guides on the agreed common framework, and advocate to mainstream local governance as a cross-cutting issue within the current humanitarian work in Yemen. Emphasis would be given on best practices in establishing community structures at various levels, stakeholders' ways of working in facilitating community mobilization, planning processes, capacity building, supporting emerging initiatives, and documenting learning from monitoring of progress, impact, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability aspects of actions implemented through community structures. This would also include agreement on common terms, type of structure (i.e. committee Vs CBO, etc.), integrated participatory tools for community mobilization and planning, possibility of harmonized funding mechanism in some piloted sites, size of grants, prioritization schemes, eligibility criteria, measurement of unintended impact on sustainability of the local governance structures due to the lack of synergy among stakeholders, how to mitigate such impact, etc.



United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Economic Resilience and Recovery Unit
UNDP Yemen
PO Box 551
Sana'a, Republic of Yemen
www.ye.undp.org

