

United Nations Development Programme

MULTIDIMENSIONAL LIVELIHOODS ASSESSMENT IN CONFLICT AREAS IN YEMEN:

# INTEGRATED SUMMARY REPORT



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This Report is based on the findings of the *Multidimensional Livelihoods Assessment in Conflict Affected Areas in Yemen*, led by **UNDP Yemen** with **CSO** and field work by Interaction.

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United Nations Development Programme



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## Acronyms

CSO	Central Statistical Office
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GoY	Government of Yemen
HCT	Humanitarian Coordination Team
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labor Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KII	Key Informants Interviews
LNGO	Local Non-Governmental Organization
MOPIC	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
NDC	National Dialogue Conference
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
QL	Qualitative
QN	Quantitative
SLF	Sustainable Livelihoods Framework
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organisation

## FOREWORD

The military strife in Sa'adah, from 2004 to 2010 adversely affected the livelihoods of most of the Yemeni people. The limited resources that were intended for poverty reduction efforts were diverted to support military operations in Sa'adah, which resulted among other factors in the deterioration of social indicators i.e. number of people living under the national poverty line went up from 34.2% in 2006 according to the Household Budget Survey (2005/06) to almost 54% according to Joint Socioeconomic Assessment of 2012. Furthermore, this situation was exacerbated by the consequences of the Youth Peaceful Revolution of 2011, where military operation shifted to the capital city Sana'a and extended to central regions (Taiz and Ibb) and the southern region of Aden, Abyan and Lahej. As a result of instability in many parts of Yemen, the number of internal displaced persons increased to over half a million during 2011/12 and many of the communities' livelihoods opportunities were either fully or partially damaged.

As part of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) peace initiative of 2012, a Transition Plan for Development and Stabilization was articulated to address among other genuine issues, restoration of social basic services and the post conflict revival of livelihoods opportunities of the affected population. Towards this, earlier this year an agreement was signed with the office of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Yemen to undertake a multi-dimensional livelihoods assessment in conflict affected areas. This dedicated work was carried out in close collaboration with the Central Statistical Organization (CSO), and the four Governorates of Abyan, Amran, Hajjah and Taiz were covered in the first phase. The assessment has highlighted valuable information on the characteristics of the conflict induced constraint the societies faced and the coping mechanisms that they adopted during the crisis period and thereafter. More importantly, the assessment has also covered the aspects of social cohesion and conflict prevention, which will contribute to peace building in the future. Along with the outcome of the National Dialogue Conference (NDC), the output of this assessment will be used to articulate the national planning frameworks, programs and projects in order to strengthen communities' resilience to overcome the impact of human-made and natural disasters.

On the behalf of the Government of the Republic of Yemen, I would like to extend our gratitude and appreciation to UNDP for this strategic support and looking forward to working together in 2014 and extend this assessment to additional Governorates.



Dr. Mohammed Saeed Sa'adi

Minister of Planning and  
International Cooperation





## Preface

The aim of the 'Multi-dimensional Livelihoods Assessment in Conflict Affected Areas' is to provide a comprehensive understanding of livelihoods opportunities and gaps in vulnerable governorates in Yemen. The assessment provides, for the first time, a holistic view of the livelihoods systems of people at household and community level. It includes sources of vulnerability, their asset base, jobs, businesses, household structure, coping and adaptive strategies, as well as how these change as result of shocks and stresses resulting from conflict and disasters.

I trust that this assessment will help us to better understand the impacts of conflict, as well as the effect of various interventions we design and implement to address the needs of vulnerable communities and households in Yemen. It provides a base-line for sound decision making, policy development, and program design relevant to current needs.

At this initial phase, the governorates of Abyan, Hajjah, Amran and Taiz have been assessed, a second phase covering 5 more governorates will be implemented in the first quarter of 2014. The assessment has been carried out in close cooperation between UN agencies in Yemen, led by UNDP, and the Government of Yemen, led by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and including the Ministries of Agriculture and Irrigation, Fisheries, Technical and Vocational Training, and Social Welfare and Labor. Non-Governmental Organizations have also contributed through the Early Recovery Working Group under the Humanitarian Country Team. The Central Statistics Office and UNDP have implemented the field work, led the analysis, and we are now pleased to present the findings.

I trust this assessment will serve as a useful tool to the Yemeni Government and its partners in Yemen, and that this can enable all of us to better fulfill our commitment of providing improved, efficient and empowering support to the people of Yemen, particularly to homes and communities highly exposed to conflict.



Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed

United Nations Resident and  
Humanitarian Coordinator



## 1. Introduction

This document summarises the findings of the Multidimensional Livelihoods Assessment in Conflict Affected Areas which focussed in this phase on 4 Governorates: Abyan, Amran, Hajjah and Taiz. The aim of the study was a comprehensive assessment in conflict affected and most vulnerable governorates in Yemen, at the household and community level to enable an understanding of the inter-related dynamic between conflict and livelihoods. This understanding is critical since the existing very limited data on livelihoods predates 2011. Not only was existing data not reflective of the huge changes in people's livelihoods since the national and localised crises, it was also very fragmented, and existed in a few narrow sectors. For sound decision making, policy development, and program design relevant to current needs a comprehensive up to date baseline was required. Such a baseline would provide the evidence base for design and monitoring of Resilience Building programs, of which Livelihoods and Local Economic Recovery of affected households would be a core component. Disaggregated findings would allow a programming focus on women, youths and ethnically marginalized groups within governorate level specific environs.

The Assessment was designed for use by Government of Yemen (GoY), UN agencies and NGOs in joint and unilateral programming. The assessment will also enable the GoY, international agencies, as well as other development partners in the country to establish baselines and a monitoring system to track livelihoods trends, including the impact of interventions. The assessment results are important for evidence based development of Government's priority actions: in support of crises affected Yemenis who yearn for quick peace dividends to sustain the peace in the country; and the national economic revival efforts. The findings of this assessment will feed into the formulation of the post transition national planning framework.

In fulfillment of an agreement between UNDP and GoY, the assessment was initiated at the request of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) 'Sustainable Livelihoods and Employment Generation' working group to support the UN Joint Vision for Support to the Government of Yemen Transition Plan, co-chaired by MOPIC and UNDP with ministries of Agriculture and Irrigation, Fisheries, Technical and Vocational Training and Social Welfare and Labour, UNDP, WFP, FAO, ILO, IFAD, IOM & UNHCR as members; and the HCT joint Early Recovery and Food Security cluster livelihoods working group, with UN, INGO & LNGO members. The assessment methodology and tools, including a household questionnaire and qualitative studies, were developed through these two coordination mechanisms in order to ensure that findings meet the needs of all partners and that the model is replicable. In partnership with the Central Statistics Office, UNDP has committed to implement the field work and lead the analysis and presentation of findings.

## 2. Specific Objectives



Keeping warm in the market.

**The specific objectives of the exercise were therefore to provide gender, age, and sub national disaggregated data and analysis with a focus on the following:**

- Overview of the national livelihoods and employment context;
- Overview of individual Governorate livelihoods and employment context;
- An understanding of the impact of the change in access to livelihoods on conflict dynamics and vice versa;
- Identification of the rural and urban areas and groups particularly affected by poverty and livelihoods insecurity;
- In depth analysis of different livelihoods systems of the population in these areas especially landless women and smallholder farmers, at household and community levels; and an understanding of the constraints, factors and process that contribute to poverty and vulnerability of these areas and population;
- Coping mechanisms in priority districts, especially the different strategies of diversification of livelihoods sources in these areas in crisis (including emigration);
- An understanding of the local labour market demand and supply;
- An understanding of local economic market opportunities and identification of opportunities and capacities for livelihoods diversification at the local level, in rural and urban areas;

**In addition the following issues of social cohesion/conflict prevention were incorporated:**

- The extent to which the communities have come into contact with violent conflict events or specific violent conflict impacts during the crisis. Specifically, this includes areas of residency and resource use exposed to different violent conflict events and impacts.
- The degree to which the communities and households are negatively affected by changes due to the increase of violent conflict. This type of sensitivity is largely determined by the relationship of individuals, households, or a community to resources impacted by violent conflict, and by the degree of dependency on those resources.
- The potential or capability of a community, especially IDPs and returnees, to adjust to and recover from impacts on them of conflict.



### 3. Methodology



Builder measuring a metal foundation.



## The assessment was carried out in 3 distinct but interconnected steps:

**3.1. Desk Study:** The desk study was based on the review of:

- available literature on livelihoods and conflict in Yemen;
- reports and surveys prepared by international and national organizations in the various governorates; and
- interviews with relevant government agencies, UN agencies, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other international organizations.

**3.2. Qualitative Participatory Analysis:** Research questions centered on the form and impact of conflict, vulnerabilities, livelihood activities, assets, capabilities entitlements, coping strategies, transforming structures, institutions, and ideas for early recovery, resilience programming and policy change. These questions were infused into the field research tools which included the following:

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



### 3.3. Quantitative Household Survey:

The 2004 national census was used as the sampling frame, as it is the most recent frame available for the surveyed population with its administrative structures and enumeration areas. A total of 1,764 households from 98 enumeration areas were used. Sampling was designed to be reflective of the characteristics at the governorate level. The instrument used to guide the interview was semi-structured questionnaire<sup>1</sup> that included questions covering the following topics:

**Section 1:** Housing Characteristics

**Section 2:** Household & Demographic Characteristics, including education, employment, and skills

**Section 3:** Livelihood Strategies including main sources of income and food

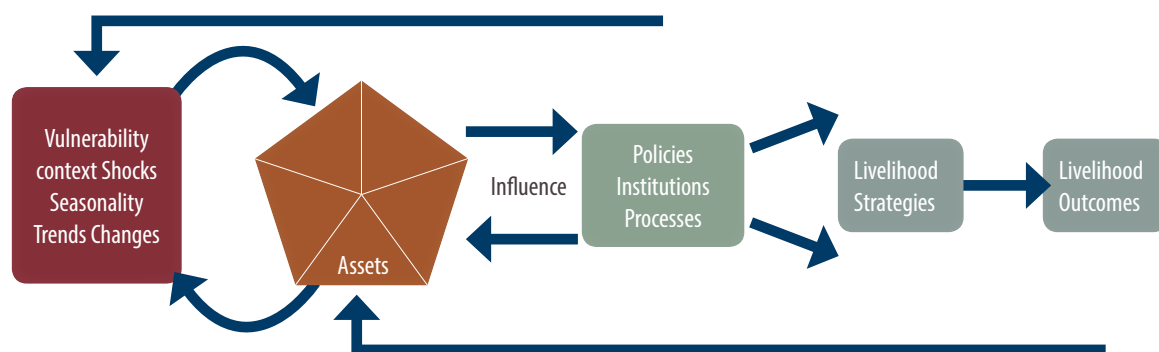
**Section 4:** Effects of Conflicts and Coping Strategies

**Section 5:** Household Assets

**Section 6:** Household Access to Remittance, Credits or Loans.

We used the livelihoods -conflict analytical framework shown in Figure 1. This analytical approach emphasizes a focus on strengths and assets on which rebuilding and recovery can take place.

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



<sup>1</sup> The questionnaire is available as an annex to the full report of the quantitative survey analysis.

## 4. Findings



Trimming water pipes

In this section we first present a brief background and context. This contextual review was important both to provide the reader with a good sense of what had already been documented but also to provide us with a guide to design and implement the assessment and as a basis for interpreting and checking our findings. Following this is the main section on our findings in which we present the integrated results of our qualitative and quantitative field surveys.

#### 4.1 Background and Context:

Yemen's total resident population was 23.83 million people in 2011. The estimated figure for 2013 is 25.23 million, of which 49.1 percent are women. Yemen's population is young, with an estimated 42 percent of the population under the age of 15, 23 percent between 15 and 24 years old, and 67–70 percent under the age of 25. The population is scattered across rural areas: 71.1 percent of the total population and 70.5 percent of total households in 2011.<sup>2</sup> The four selected governorates constitute about 25 percent of the total Yemeni population, with approximately 50 percent are women and about 80 percent live in rural areas. While poverty affected approximately one third of the Yemeni population in 2006, this rate increased to more than half of the population (54.4 percent) in 2011. It should be noted that rural poverty increased to 59 percent in 2011 from its pre-crisis level of 47.6 percent.<sup>3</sup> Of the selected governorates Amran had the highest poverty rates (63.9 per cent based on 2006 figures) followed by Hajjah (47.5 percent), Abyan (45.6 percent) and Taiz (37.8 percent). Most of the poor live in the rural areas ranging from 70.5 percent in Amran to 41.5 percent in Taiz. Poverty rates can reach as high as 90 percent in some districts of these governorates.

The desk study provides full contextual details based on available secondary sources, of the livelihoods and conflict situation in Yemen as whole and of the selected governorates in particular. After a brief analysis of the structure of the Yemen economy, the literature available on the impact of the crisis on employment, skilled and unskilled and the differential impact on women are discussed. It is pointed out, for example that in 2011 91.4 percent of Yemeni's made their living in the informal sector however, poverty and informality are not necessarily linked in Yemen, as elsewhere, since about two thirds of the wealthiest Yemeni's make their living in the informal sector. Further the 2011 crisis resulted in higher unemployment rates, because an increasing number of employees in the private sector lost their jobs. Employees in the public sector, however, mostly kept their jobs but were affected indirectly by reduced purchasing power as a result of high inflation rates, delayed payment of salaries and the physical displacement of employees from areas affected by conflict.

Analysis on the way Yemeni's make their livelihoods in agriculture (qat, coffee, fruits, etc.) honey production, livestock, and fisheries, is followed by a discussion of the construction, infrastructure, electricity, water, and basic public services, including the way conflict has impacted on these and the way deficits in these lead to conflict. The literature on food security is then reviewed and followed by

<sup>2</sup> Source: Central Statistical Organization, Republic of Yemen, 'Statistical Yearbook 2011'.

<sup>3</sup> World Bank, United Nations, European Union, Islamic Development Bank, in collaboration with the Government of Yemen, represented by the Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, 'Joint Social and Economic Assessment for the Republic of Yemen', 31 August 2012.



an identification of documented coping strategies. Private and public assets were severely damaged during the crisis, particularly in cities which witnessed civil unrest. Artillery shells fired from heavy and light weapons resulted in most of the cases in partial destruction of external walls and windows. The construction sector is one of the largest employment sectors in Yemen, particularly for poor people in urban areas and rural migrants. Most of the workers are young people, since many of semi-skilled and unskilled labourers are 15–24 years old. The sector suffered enormous losses during the crisis, particularly because most construction works funded by foreign investors and the government were suspended. Private investment dried up abruptly, and thousands of informal labourers lost their jobs. Real estate sales came to a virtual halt during the crisis.

Yemen continues to suffer from electricity cuts because of the past and ongoing sabotage of the transmission lines in Mareb.

Education services were seriously disrupted as a result of the armed conflicts and the occupation of schools primarily by Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Part of the educational infrastructure was also damaged during the 2011 conflict. The crisis led also to high rates of absenteeism among students, teachers and administrative staff.



The 2011 WFP study<sup>4</sup> showed that the number of severely food-insecure households nearly doubled between 2009 and 2011, rising from 12 percent to 22 percent of the population by December 2011. This meant that an additional 2.7 million Yemenis had become severely food-insecure. The level of

4 World Food Program. 2011. Food Security Report.

severe food insecurity declined to 17.9 percent in 2013. Nationally, 60 percent of the households do not have enough food in 2013 and are forced to continue using destructive consumption-related coping strategies such as eating less preferred foods, smaller meals, and fewer meals per day.<sup>5</sup> Both the 2011 and 2013 WFP surveys found that the most food-insecure are the smaller households, women-headed households, uneducated households, families depending on agricultural wage labourers and the poorest and indebted households.

The lack of livelihood assets such as employment, education, water and land has contributed significantly to conflict. For example it is estimated that together land and water conflict account for about 75 to 80 percent of all conflict in Yemen. The low level of education has resulted in a low level of critical thinking skills leading to easy acceptance of dangerous ideologies. Traditional laws and practices continue to constrain women's ability to secure their livelihoods.

The complex ways in which lack of livelihoods assets interact with conflict can be illustrated by the lack of water. Recently, the number of local and national-level conflicts over water has increased. For example, confrontations over access to a natural spring erupted in the Al-Mashana district of Ibb governorate, killing two men from local families. Responding to this, even the Minister of the Environment said that the entire country — not just Ibb — is in the middle of a water crisis. This, he assessed, has caused an increase in fights, as locals scramble to ensure that they will not be left without access to the shrinking resource.



Fetching water from a public well

<sup>5</sup> World Food Program. 2013. Food Security Report.



However, the relationship between water scarcity and conflict is not limited to these deadly scrambles at local wells. It is also helping Al-Qaeda gain legitimacy. For example, in the southern highland areas now controlled by groups linked to Al-Qaeda, water is a powerful currency, as control over the resource is a key priority for villagers to deal with localized tribal and intercommunal violence over control of wells and water sources, particularly in the highlands. "When al-Qaeda takes control over these areas, it necessarily brings with it a semblance of authority where no central authority has been able to establish a foothold. Villagers often welcome this new authority, which establishes control over water supplies and manages disputes, as a positive alternative to total anarchy and uncertainty. As such, water becomes a way for al-Qaeda to gain support and grow its influence among residents and tribes in the highlands."<sup>6</sup>

Land is an equally contentious issue. There is currently no effective land registry providing a national service with complete authority, and no formal 'technical' registration system or national land authority that performs cadastral surveys of agricultural land. Communal land, usually grazing land, is by far the most prevalent form of land tenure. It has enormous significance in rural livelihoods, despite being the least productive and valuable land per unit of area. Yemenis are very well aware of their traditional rights. However, they are far less aware of their constitutional and legal rights.<sup>7</sup>

In rural areas, villagers and tribesmen frequently clash over land, typically over contested ownership subsequent to heredity, such as disputed claims of ownership of land within families, or over more marginal pieces of land in tribal borderlands. Because so many rain-fed terraces on the upper slopes of the mountains have been abandoned, it places immense stress on the more productive areas in the land below. Marginal land has minimal value outside providing a surface to collect rainfall. However the ability to drill a borehole and subsequently irrigate the land (mainly for qat production) has raised its potential value.

Rural land conflicts also occur over the right to work. For example, an oil company operates on land with almost no agricultural value. If tribesmen can assert ownership of the land, however marginal, they will have the right to provide goods and services to the company operating on it. Because oil companies pay well for their goods and services, tribesmen frequently fight bitterly over the right to work based on ownership of land.<sup>8</sup>

Recent assessments of livelihoods and conflict related issues done by other organisations such as USAID, UNDP, OCHA, UNHCR, mostly in 2012 were also reviewed and their findings summarised. In the next section we present the findings of our field assessments.

<sup>6</sup> J. Alic, OilPrice.com, 3 May 2012.

<sup>7</sup> H. Thompson, 'Landmines and Land Rights in Yemen', Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

## 4.2 Integrated Results of the Qualitative and Quantitative Surveys:

The utility and limitations of each of these approaches and the value of integrating qualitative (QL) and quantitative (QN) methods of assessments are described in the literature especially from the World Bank. (See for example Rao and Woolcock ).<sup>9</sup> We used mainly the parallel approach with some iteration in which the researchers were able to discuss the research questions before hand, analysed the data themselves against these questions and cross checked their findings during data analysis. There were no major divergences in the data produced except in the case of fishing in Abyan which was probably due to some anomaly in the QN data collection and would require further investigation. Time constraints prevented a second round of field work on this occasion. While the QN data allowed us to measure correlations between various sets of relevant variables, the QL assessment provided deeper understanding of the local level processes at work through which conflicts, shocks and stresses impact the livelihoods of the communities and how the livelihood deprivations lead to conflict. The QN report utilised the findings of the QL assessment to understand and explain its correlations and thus represents to a large extent the integrated findings.

### 4.2.1. Vulnerability Context:

The vulnerability of a household or community is determined by the intensity and duration of the factors producing shocks and stresses, the extent of exposure, and their capacity to cope and recover. Those that are able to cope and recover and in so doing transform themselves to be better able to cope and recover to future shocks are said to be resilient. Households and communities can be rendered vulnerable as result of depletions in their human, social, natural, physical and economic asset base, and thus face multiple vulnerabilities. Deprivations in capabilities such as the ability and motivation to innovate and adapt and the loss of entitlements such public goods and services also contribute to and compound vulnerability.

The household survey focused on the effects of conflicts, which the qualitative assessment complemented, providing insights to some of the issues raised, and also sought to explore natural disasters and seasonality as well as shocks and stresses. .

The results of the household survey confirmed that most households reported having been affected by conflicts in one way or another and even households in the better-off quartile were not at all immune. All those whose livelihoods were said to be affected by conflicts were prompted to identify the onset date of the conflict, and 67 percent referred to the 2011 political conflict while 28.8 percent referred to the year 2010. The main 2011 armed conflicts in addition to the Arab Spring uprising which started in Taiz, were the war against Al-Qaeda and Ansar Al- Al-Sharia'a in southern governorates; Houthis related conflicts in northern governorates with the government, with Islah Political party in Amran, and with the tribes in Mastaba and neighboring areas; and tribal conflict. Tribal conflict was reported in most areas but its impact was considered minimal and temporary.

<sup>9</sup> Rao ,V and Woolcock, M. [sources.worldbank.org](http://sources.worldbank.org)

Shocks and stresses were mainly due to: insecurity; road blocks and banditry; increase in price of productive resources; markets' closure; loss or lack of access to productive resources; and loss of livestock (displacement/shooting / looting/landmines). The following quote illustrates the tragedy.

*"We sold thirty sheep for ten thousand Yemeni Riyals to pay for evacuation to Aden"* (male participant in FGD, Lawder district, Abyan Governorate).

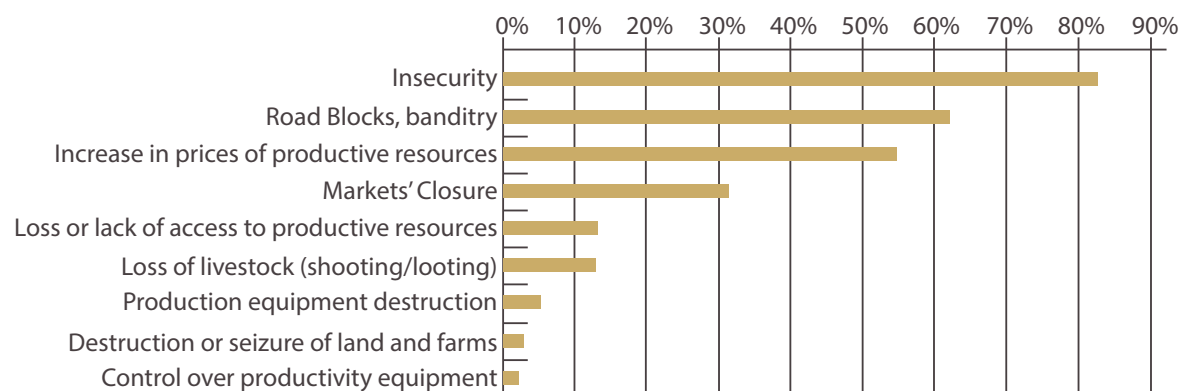
*"We lost all our sheep, they were all killed on landmines. We still have a problem, animal herding was the responsibility of women, but when the military camps were setup here with soldiers everywhere, women could not go out herding, and not to mention landmines in the grazing areas as the main problem that remains"* (male participant in FGD, Khanfar district, Abyan Governorate).

The qualitative assessment provided further insights into these effects. For instance, in Mastaba (Hajja governorate), male and female participants in FGDs were enraged by the closure of Souk A'hem (A'hem market), which was once their weekly market, and its closure resulted in the loss of livelihoods for many people in Mastaba and the surrounding areas. Houthis are still in control of the souk and they use it as military barracks.



Dealing on a street market

Fig 2: Relative impacts if various shocks and stresses



Most rural communities but especially those in very hot areas like Abs, Khanfar and Mastaba and qat growing areas like Shar'ab were overwhelmed by the increase in water prices after the conflict, caused by massive increases in the price of fuel, restrictions on access to some sources, and increased use of water for growing qat.

Non-conflict sources of shocks and stresses such as restriction on migration and border crossing to Saudi Arabia was said to be the most important factor affecting the livelihood context in Abs and Mastaba in Hajja governorate being located in the border area with Saudi Arabia. This situation affected opportunities for employment in Saudi Arabia, the trade and business activities in Abs, and movement of goods and trade across the borders. Repatriation also increased the number of jobless returnees in Abs and Mastaba, exacerbated tensions within HHs, and worsened conflict over ownership of land. Flood, drought, animal disease outbreak, and decline in price of some crops like tomato, mango, and banana affected rural agricultural areas, and cascaded to urban areas involved in marketing and selling agricultural products. Women in these areas involved in agriculture, livestock rearing and beekeeping were worse affected.

The vulnerability context of communities affected by conflict is often made worse by the impact of unpredictable natural disasters such as heavy rains and floods. This is very evident in the case of houses with damaged walls, roof and floors which can no longer provide safe shelter. A huge disparity exists here between the wealth groups with 55.2 percent of the better off having durable buildings compared to only 2.6 percent of the poorest.

In the western part of Abs district (Hajja governorate) fishing activities come to a halt during winter due to the strong winds, increasing the vulnerability of members of this livelihood group for whom fishing is the main income (boat owners and fishing wage laborers). Boat owners are affected, but daily wage laborers working in fishery are hardest hit because they have neither savings nor assets to convert into cash to pay for food.

The interactions between conflict and non-conflict shocks and stresses severely increased vulnerability.

#### 4.2.2 Livelihoods Assets:

As mentioned before people's livelihoods depend on assets, activities like business and labor, capabilities and entitlements. In this section we report on their asset situation. Assets are measured in terms of 5 capitals summarized in the table 1.

**Table 1: Livelihood Capitals and some indicators used to measure them**

Capitals	Relevant Indicators
Human	Household characteristics, level of education, available skills, participation in the labor force, age dependency ratio, and health particularly disability and chronic diseases
Physical	Housing and shelter, water supply system and sanitation facility used by households, household assets, transport infrastructure, and telecommunications
Social	Social fabrics and networks, including support and gifts from friends and relatives, ability to influence and participate in decision making, gender roles, rights and entitlements
Financial	Salaries, livestock, remittances, access to credit, support from Social Welfare Fund, food security
Natural	Landholding, food security and agriculture, access to common resources, rainfall and vegetation, land use and environmental degradation



#### 4.2.2.1 Human Capital:

Education is an important indicator of human capital and is generally positively associated with higher income. The right to free education is a basic right in Yemeni constitution, and there is a global body of evidence correlating the effect of education on, among others, reducing violence. The illiteracy ratio is 33.1 percent (23.7 male and 42 female). There are 16.4 percent (18 male and 14.9 female) who can read and write, but never attended formal education. Those who reached basic education constitute 21.1 percent (24.2 male and 18.1 female). While these levels are not directly correlated with the recent violence they demonstrate an underlying source of vulnerability. Enrollment drastically varies by wealth quartile (77.5 percent in the top quartile compared with only 35.1 percent in the lowest quartile) signaling an equity issue. Enrollment by gender shows an obvious gender gap with enrollment among boys being 64.4 percent and among female 47.1 percent.



Girls at their rural school

In the population aged 6 to 17 years of age, 32.9 percent did not enroll in the education year 2012/2013 of which 28.2 percent are male and 37.6 percent are female. The reasons for non-enrollment in school in 2013 were explored. The three most common reasons were no school; lack of interest in education; and lack of money to pay for schooling. The qualitative assessment revealed several issues related to lack of money: either the household could not pay for the cost of uniform and school kits (notebooks, pens, etc.), children drop out from school to make a living and contribute towards household's income, and girls particularly drop out, because they cannot afford to buy the school uniform - not that the school asks for it, but for fear of embarrassment. The security concerns did not come up in the household survey as an issue constraining children from going to school although it was one of the key issues raised in the qualitative assessment, which is that landmines



in Khanfar (Abyan Governorate), and Mastaba (Hajja governorate) preventing children from going to schools. Another issue that was not reported in the household survey, but was captured in the qualitative assessment was sexual harassment from youth on the way to school, and was a reason for girls not going to school in Mastaba (Hajja governorate) and Al-Qahera (Taiz governorate). Sexual harassment is a sensitive issue that may not be reported by household. Also the sensitivity around security issue and landmines may inhibit reporting by households out of fear of being punished.

We found a direct relationship between education and the labor force participation although over all labour force participation is now around 20.5 percent on average, as it was before 2011, with the poor doing slightly worse and the better off slightly better.

The overall prevalence of disability reported among persons aged 15 years and over is 6.3 percent. Disaggregation of disability by geographical location shows that Hajja governorate with 7.6 percent has the highest proportion of disability followed by 6.5 percent in Taiz, 5 percent in Amran and 3.5 percent in Abyan.

Using WHO standards, the proportion of households with crowding condition constitutes 54 percent of the total sample. Crowding by region shows that households facing crowding conditions constitute 65.4 percent of the rural household while in urban it is 34.6 percent. By geographical location, Abyan seems to be the worse with 69.6 percent followed by Hajja with 64.9 percent, Taiz, 49.5 percent while the lowest proportion of overcrowding was reported in Amran at 40.4 percent. By wealth quartile, households with crowding conditions are the highest proportion of the lowest quartile, and prevalence of crowding seems to decrease with the increase in wealth.

#### **4.2.2.2 Physical Capital:**

Physical capital refers to housing characteristics, water and sanitation, the source for fuel and lighting, and asset ownership. Housing characteristics include dwelling ownership, quality and safety of building, and the source of energy for lighting and cooking. The following data provides a sense of the general situation of physical capital in the governorates. We will subsequently illustrate the changes in access to or ownership of all 5 capitals among various livelihood groups before and after conflict.

Overall, households living in a durable building constitute 88.4 percent. By wealth quartile, almost all the households (98.4 percent) of the top quartile live in a durable building that have permanent structure, and the proportion of households with a durable building seems to decline in the lowest quartile. Details on roof, walls, floor etc were also determined.

On average, households connected to piped water network constitute 30.3 percent of the total households in the sample with Amran and Hajja among the lowest at around 15 percent. In terms of sanitation, there are 19.6 percent of the households without any appropriate facility. At the governorate level Hajja is the worst with 42.9 percent of its households without appropriate sanitation followed by Amran with 19.5 percent, then Abyan with 10.8 percent and finally Taiz with 8.8 percent having no sanitation.

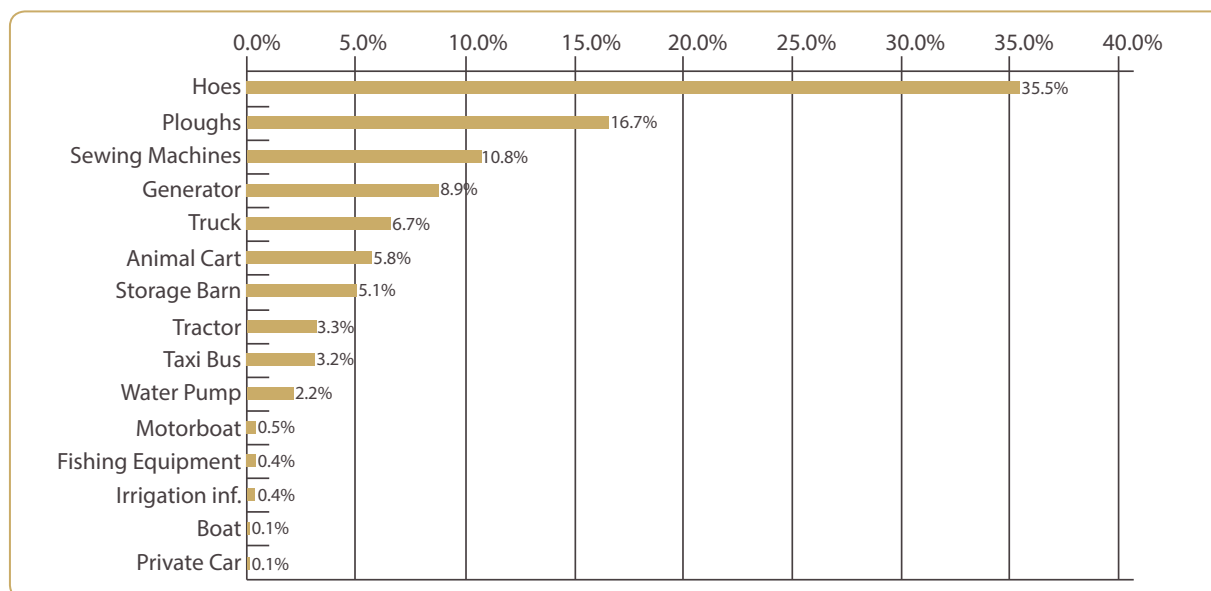
The most frequently owned assets reported by households include wood stoves, kerosene stoves, mobile phone, TV, hoes, gas cooker, fridge, washing machine among others. Information on households' physical assets was used to compute the household wealth index as a proxy measure of wealth by conducting principal components analysis (PCA) using wealth-related variables to compute the wealth index.

#### 4.2.2.3 Economic and Financial Capital

Financial Capital refers to the financial resources that households are using to attain their livelihood outcomes and includes flows and stocks that can contribute to consumption and production. It is the cash or assets that enable households to adopt different livelihood strategies to subsist. Indicators relevant under this section include salaries, remittance, and access to credit, support from Social Welfare Fund, food security, productive assets, and livestock.

Wages and salaries are one of the main financial sources for households. The proportion of households whose resources varies by type of wage labor are 13 percent non-agriculture, 6 percent agriculture, and 1 percent fishing. Households whose members have regular governmental salary constitute 13 percent while those who have regular salary (other than the governmental) 7 percent. Overall, livestock holders currently own on average 1.42 cows (between 1 to 15), 4 goats (between 1 to 70), 4 sheep (between 1 to 50), a camel (between 1 to 5), and a donkey (between 1 to 5). Production and/or sale of qat were reported as the main source of income for 11 percent of the households. Production and/or sale of food crops 3 percent and production and/or sale of other agricultural crops 4 percent. Household productive equipment is distributed as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Distribution of households by their productive assets.



Households who reported receiving a remittance at least from one of the sources (a family member working in another governorate, a relative living abroad, pension, or the SWF) constitute 25.6 percent. Households who access credit constitute 15.2 percent of the total sample. By wealth quartile, the proportion of households who access credit seems to be the highest in the lowest quartile (19.0 percent), and this decreases gradually to reach 11.2 percent in the top quartile. This appears to be related to the use of credit for consumption for survival for the poorest rather than for investment by the better off. Households who reported having cash in hand constitute seven percent of the households of which 5 percent said they keep the money in the pockets or at home while two percent reported other form of savings. In Abyan, 24 percent of the households seem to have cash in hand. Bank deposits were only reported in Amran, but this was meager (one percent).

#### 4.2.2.4 Natural Capital

Indicators under the natural capital include landholding, access to common natural resources, food security and agriculture, rainfall and vegetation, land use and environmental degradation

Households with access to land in rural areas constitute 68.6 percent irrespective of the type of access (owner, renter or sharecropper), while the proportion of households who do not have any form of access to land constitutes 31.9 percent of the rural population. Rural households who generally have no access to land are considered vulnerable. Only 20 percent of the households own arable land, while 56.3 percent are sharecroppers, and 23.6 percent are tenants. By governorate, Taiz has a relatively higher proportion (28.3 percent) of its households who own the land followed by Amran (20.3 percent), Abyan (13.8 percent), and Hajja (10.9 percent). In terms of farming practices, over two thirds (68.5 percent) of the farming households said their land is rain-fed, 2.7 percent are irrigated



Traditional ploughing with donkeys.

and 28.8 percent rely on rain-fed and irrigation. Overall, the average cultivated landholding is 4.59 hectare. This, however, varies by quartile in the poorest has on average 2.47 hectare, the poor 2.51 hectare, the less poor has 4.06 hectare and better off has 9.25 hectare.

Households who are not using modern fuel for cooking depend upon access to forest, bushes and common areas to collect wood for cooking. Findings show serious fuel scarcity in all 4 governorates but especially in Abyan where 92.7 percent of households using wood have no access and Amran where 76 percent have no access. The situation in Taiz and Hajja is slightly better with but still over half of the households (53.9 and 53.1 percent) have no access. Access to grazing areas was said to be secured for 42 percent of livestock keepers while 56.9 percent claimed having no access. Access to water for agriculture was not included in the quantitative questionnaire.

#### 4.2.2.5 Social and Political Capital

Social capital refers to social resources upon which households draw in pursuit of their livelihood outcomes. Social capital is developed through social networks and connectedness, membership in more formalized groups, and relationships of trust and reciprocity. During the field assessment, different social and political assets were revealed and varied among communities and within different groups. The types of social assets included availability of common solidarity and mutual support, relations at the household and community level, availability of supportive formal and informal NGOs and community structures, and ability to participate in decision making processes.



Builder grasping wire cables

## Solidarity and mutual support

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

## Membership in formal and informal groups, networks, and NGOs

The NGOs in Lawder, Khanfar, Abs, and Amran were almost exclusively welfare or community based development oriented and most of them were created as a result of the conflict. With the exception of Mastaba, new sorts of social groups and NGOs emerged following the conflict in all districts, including social groups connected through the social web-areas (i.e. face book, etc.), youth initiatives, and gender orientated NGOs. In Shar'ab, an NGO was created to assist in facilitating peace processes during the conflicts between tribes in the same areas. Men from Al-Qahera and Shar'ab in Taiz, Lawder in Abyan and Amran indicated that they have linkages to some individuals at the national levels in various ministries. However, NGOs that represent, advocate for or provide services to specific livelihoods groups e.g. small farmers, petty traders etc., were only found in Taiz governorate.



## Household and Community Relations

As a result of the conflict household and community relationships became strained and this led to a fragmentation of social capital and adoption of negative coping strategies<sup>10</sup> which we will described later. This fragmentation can be illustrated by the following:

- Increased tension at the community level due to the spread of different political and ideological ideas in all districts.
- Reduced power of the traditional leaders, due to the power of some emerging groups like Houthis in Mastaba (Hajja), community defense committees and armed groups in Abyan, armed groups participating in the looting and political confrontations in Taiz.
- Increased division among communities (all) and stigma against a few livelihood groups (i.e. petty traders in Abyan who came from northern governorates, farmers in Raida (Amran), who originally came from neighbor areas despite having lived in Raida more than 20 years.
- Spread of arms (all areas) and tendency to achieve greater rights by using arms (all areas)
- Increased youth tendency to join the armed and looting groups, and military for income and protection. Increased negative attitudes towards the government.
- Al-Qaeda and Ansar al-Sharia made use of the social division and marginalization of some groups in Lawder and Khanfar to mobilise youth from the lower social classes, providing income opportunities and awakening the attitudes of being marginalized by the community. In Abs and Mastaba (Hajja), it was indicated that youth and children from different marginalized groups were targeted by Houthis, smugglers, drug dealers and sex traffickers.

### 4.2.2.6 Comparison of the total asset base of livelihood groups before and after conflict:

We compared the total asset access and ownership situation of all major livelihood groups including wage laborers, petty traders, and salary workers. In general there was a significant shrinkage in the asset base of all categories. This is illustrated in the diagrams below with reference to wage laborers in Mastaba (Hajja) and Al Quahera (Taiz), petty traders in Lawder (Abyan) small farmers in Mastaba and fishermen in Khanfar (Abyan).

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<sup>10</sup> Negative coping strategies are adopted purely for survival, which have harmful effects, and which are not sustainable. See section 4.3.

Figure 4: Wage Laborers assets (Mastaba, Hajja)

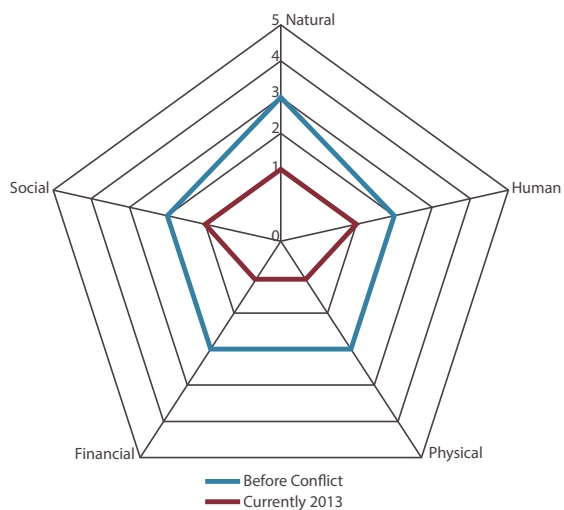


Figure 5: Wage Laborers assets (Al-Qahera, Taiz)

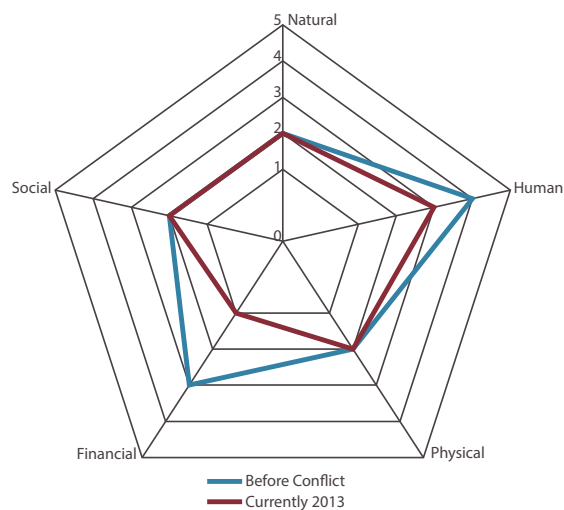


Figure 6: Petty Traders (Lawder, Abyan)

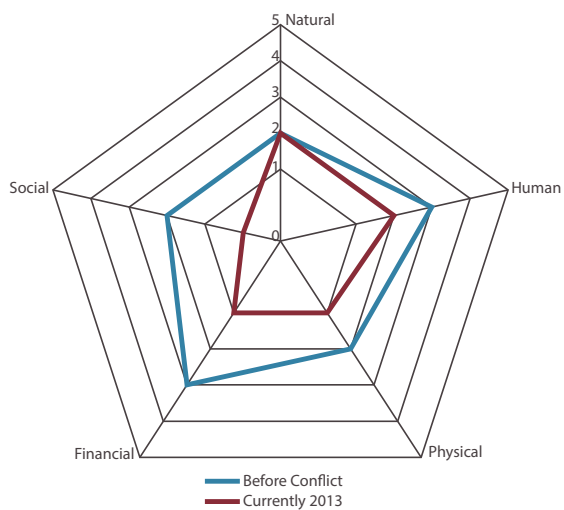
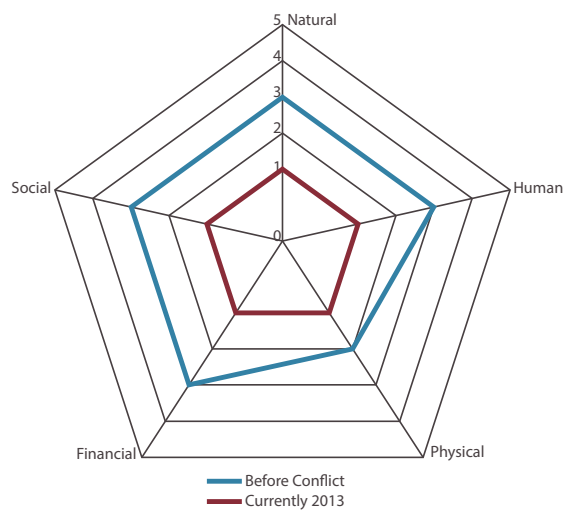
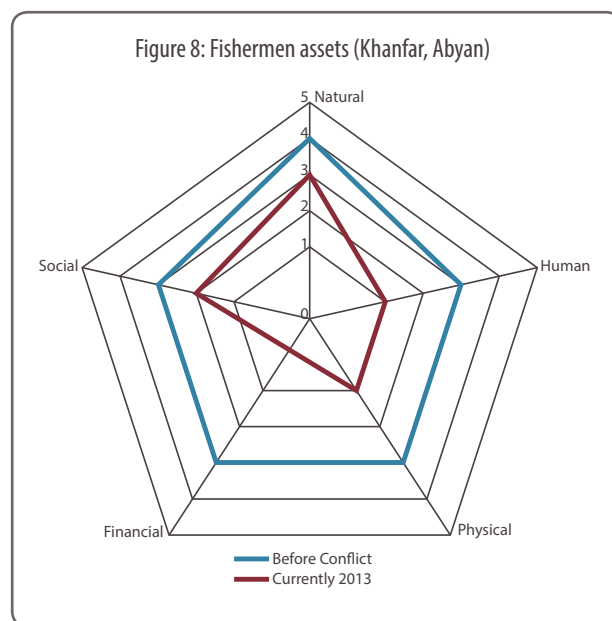


Figure 7: Small Farmers (Mastaba, Hajja)





### 4.3 Coping and Adaptive Strategies:

Various strategies have been used by families and communities to make the most of their limited resources and to survive the negative impacts of conflict. Many of these coping strategies have had a very negative impact. Such strategies included reducing consumption both in quality of food and in number of meals, selling crucial household assets, taking children out of school to work to support the family, the continuation of livelihood activities in a risky environment where they did not have clarity on the maps of landmines or still got shot at by armed men occupying the area or even joining armed groups, drug dealers and smugglers.

To cope with health and housing constraints people are shifting to traditional healers, living in damaged shelters with very poor sanitation using home based systems to look after pregnancy and delivery, diluting milk powder for babies, not seeking vaccination where movement was restricted by armed groups, getting water from contaminated sources and using harmful sources for energy and cooking purposes such as burning wood indoors.

General socio-economic challenges have forced them into accepting forced and early marriage of girls to armed men, allowing children to travel illegally to work in Saudi Arabia stopping livelihood activities of the poorest rural women to avoid cultural restrictions and fines imposed on them when rearing animals in the land of others because they were pushed off their own land, or moving to avoid impact of agricultural chemicals on their beekeeping activities. Divorce rates, domestic violence and mental health problems seem to be on the rise. Girls are taken out of school to protect them from harassment on the road. Many communities have started forming armed vigilante groups for their own protection and this sometimes endangers youth and leads to increased violent conflict.

The extent to which coping strategies were adopted by different cohorts can be illustrated by the following : 64.4 per cent of poorest households had fewer meals per day compared to 13.7 percent of the better off while 46.4 percent of the poorest reduced their food quality compared 36.4 percent of

the better off. Increase in local food production, which could be considered one of the more positive adaptive strategies was adopted by about 7 percent percent of the poor and only 2.7 percent of the better off.

Some of the less harmful coping strategies include borrowing money based on trust rather than at high interest rates, using motor cycles for transport instead of cars, used water shortage as an opportunity to sell water and make some money.

#### **4.4. Entitlements:**

This refers to the range of public goods and services normally provided by the state or state supported entities as well as the rights that citizens are entitled to enjoy and for which the state has obligations.

While the surveys did not set out to measure this aspect directly, it became clear during both field surveys that state capacity to deliver on any or all of these have declined since 2011. Public goods and services include security of person and property, public infrastructure like roads, electricity and communications, health and education services. Rights include the full range of human rights: civil, political, economic, social, and cultural as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its subsequent conventions and to which Yemen is a signatory.

#### **4.5. Institutional and Policy Issues:**

For people to achieve adequate, secure and sustainable livelihoods, they need an enabling institutional and policy framework. Institutions here refer to the formal and informal rules that govern what people can do and not do to improve their livelihoods as well as the organisations that can help or hinder them. Public policies are the particular directions, guidelines and programs which are put in place at either national or local levels to get desirable activities to be implemented.

In general we found a very weak institutional and policy framework with regard to access to justice and the rule of law, property rights, labour rights and business rights especially for micro, small, and medium businesses.

The most dominant institutions at districts' level were the local councils with related executive government offices (including security, health, municipality, education, water, electricity, social welfare fund, finance, trade, tax, agriculture/fisheries, civil service and employment, etc.). Perceptions of the local councils and executive offices varied from one community to another. With the exception of Mastaba, where the local council and offices were seen as not effective at all, other districts reported that their local authorities were still weak. People in the Al-Qahera district spoke about weaknesses and corruption among local councils representing the overall governance system in the country. Participants from poor communities and various livelihood groups, emphasized that none of these institutions was able to respond to their priority concerns such as lack of security, poor living conditions, poor access to water, poor health services, power black-out, increased prices of food and goods, unemployment, poor access to finance to start business, poor education services, etc.). A few participants in Abyan and Taiz were less critical of local bodies and suggested that the national system, governance, finance of basic services, national policies lacking sensitivities to poor and gender issues were restricting the ability of local authorities and executive offices.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations



Children playing on a building site

Conflicts as well as non-conflict sources of shocks and stresses since 2011, due to underlying vulnerability and events during the revolution and confrontations with AQAP, have left the livelihoods of the majority of the people in the 4 surveyed conflict-affected governorates in a weak and precarious situation. There has been a significant shrinkage in all aspects of the asset base (human, social, political, natural, physical and economic). Options for livelihood activities, whether as labour or small business, are few. Coping strategies which are being adopted to survive are largely unsustainable and in many cases harmful. The institutional and policy framework to support people's livelihoods is hardly in evidence. The result is that the people in these governorates, and especially those in the poorest and poor categories, are subject to a self-perpetuating vicious downward cycle. Conflict and non-conflict shocks and stresses have increased their poverty and vulnerability whilst these conditions are in turn causing more conflict and related drivers of poverty and vulnerability.

Assessment results confirm that most households have been affected by conflicts in one way or another. Even better-off households were not immune to the shocks and stresses. Of those affected 67 percent referred to major impacts from the 2011 conflicts. Whilst conflict was the major source



of vulnerability its effects were compounded by other non-conflict sources of shocks including restrictions on migration and border crossing to Saudi Arabia, drought, floods, animal disease outbreaks and seasonal shocks. Conflicts disrupted livelihoods mainly through high levels of insecurity, road blocks, banditry, increase in prices of productive resources and markets' closure. Loss or lack of access to productive resources, loss of livestock, destruction of production equipment and seizure of land and farms etc. had a smaller impact. On the other hand the lack of livelihood requirements such as employment, education, water and land has contributed significantly to conflict. For example, poorly educated youth are more vulnerable to recruitment into armed factions and it is estimated that together land and water conflict account for about 75 to 80 percent of all conflict in Yemen. And so we have a complex downward spiral of the conflict- livelihoods dynamic.

People in general, but especially the poorest, have been forced to adopt a range of coping strategies, many of which can have harmful long-term consequences. These strategies include reduced meals and quality of food intake; distress sales of household assets; taking loans to pay for medicine, food and rent; a shift towards traditional healers, home delivery of babies and dilution of milk powder for infant feed; living in damaged shelters with poor sanitation; joining armed groups, smugglers, drug dealers; forced early marriage of girls; children dropping out of school to earn income or avoid harassment. In general terms it has become clear that

- Conflict has inflicted harmful consequences on the livelihoods of the entire population, with life-threatening implications for the poorest in all regions. It is imperative that if this vicious cycle is to be broken, all stakeholders must commit to resolve and prevent conflict and support non-violent ways to build society.
- Restoration and development of people's livelihoods require a holistic approach addressing multiple elements at the individual or household level and how they link with the broader economic environment at local, regional, national and international context.
- Building resilience of livelihoods and the broader economy requires sustained peace building efforts, a stable and conducive political environment, inclusive economic development policies and programmes, promotion of private sector investments that generate decent employment, impartial and efficient judiciary based on rule of laws, social protection measures and effective government interventions that support the above.

So the questions that naturally arise are what needs to be done, and more importantly what can be done, in this dire situation? How should activities be prioritised and sequenced in relation to resources and capacity, which respectively need aggressive mobilisation and rebuilding?

**Recommendations** are presented in two categories. First are some immediate and short term responses and second a more programmatic approach.

The immediate and short term actions urgently required are measures to support the most vulnerable groups, who have been forced into harmful coping strategies. These groups include IDPs and returnees, families without a breadwinner, families with a member who has disabilities or mental health problems due to conflict, women and children living in districts under siege by Houthi forces, victims of harassment or discrimination, people living close to areas contaminated by explosive remnants of war, families with malnourished children, and people blocked from accessing water and

health services. To complement this focus on the most vulnerable groups, a range of policies need to be adopted, enforced and clearly communicated to the communities. Policies would include: government measures to protect people's lives and livelihoods when government forces engage armed groups in a given area; arms control; equal access to justice regardless of political affiliation, tribe, social class or position in government; and compensation and provision of shelter to IDPs or returnees, etc.<sup>11</sup>

At the same time there is an urgent need for the development of programs to holistically and systematically address the challenge of building community resilience and break the vicious downward cycle of conflict, vulnerability and poverty. This would require interventions at all levels: household, community, district, governorate and national. It would also require improvement of both formal and informal governance. Strategic partnerships including government, UN agencies, local and international NGO's, donors, the private sector and community groups will be needed. Mobilisation of new and possible realignment of existing resources will be critical.

**A way forward might be organised as follows:**

1. Convene key stakeholders in a design and planning workshop and discuss the following:
  - Selection of key areas in each of the four assessed governorates, representative of the main livelihood zones, in which to begin area based approaches to resilience building.
  - Identification or formation of local self-help groups, community representation bodies for local leadership of the process.
  - Application of the sustainable livelihoods program approach, which is founded on local assets and positive strategies, on which a local vision of resilience and sustainable livelihoods can be established. Focusing on those activities that communities will carry out on their own, and which may be further supported by contributions from external partners including government, the UN (humanitarian and development), NGOs and international partners. In addition to local livelihoods actions conflict reduction/resolution, policy, governance, investment and technology issues would need to be addressed. The UNDP 'Guide on Livelihoods and Economic Recovery in Crisis Situations' and all other available resources should be drawn upon. Initial meetings with "external partner" groups to discuss potential contributions, how to build on on-going initiatives and what additional action might be required would be undertaken. For example all of UNDP program streams could focus their individual projects into selected geographical areas.
  - Develop project document, budgets, work plans (long and short-term), monitoring and evaluation protocols using developmental evaluation, establish management arrangements etc.
2. Undertake baseline studies in other governorates affected by conflict to establish an evidence base for subsequent resilience building initiatives. This is especially important in neighboring governorates in order to prevent the reoccurrence and intrusion of conflict spreading from them back into areas where resilience building has begun.

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11 A list of recommended policies are included in the qualitative report.

MULTIDIMENSIONAL LIVELIHOODS ASSESSMENT IN CONFLICT AREAS IN YEMEN:  
INTEGRATED SUMMARY REPORT



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