



Fast Facts

Country: Tajikistan

Duration: July 2013 to December 2016

Implementing UN Agencies: UNDP; UNICEF; WFP; UN Women; UNFPA

Other Implementing Partners: National Ministries; district and sub-district governments; local civil society organizations

Budget: \$3,940,894 (**UNTFHS:** \$1,957,411.99 **Others:** \$1,983,482)

Key Words: Rural development; conflict-prevention; access to essential social services; community empowerment; poverty reduction

BACKGROUND

Once a thriving agricultural zone, the people of Tajikistan's Rasht Valley face a number of insecurities that together impact their daily survival, livelihood and dignity. Among these, deterioration of the agricultural infrastructure following the political transition and conflict in the 1990s has led to a dramatic reduction in the region's productivity and food security. In addition, prospects for economic revitalization and investment in infrastructure are often curtailed by persistent outbreaks of localized conflict and the impact of instability in neighbouring Afghanistan. At the same time, environmental hazards such as earthquakes, avalanches and mudslides pose

significant threat to people's physical safety and the security of their homes and productive assets. As a result, living conditions have steadily deteriorated for many especially in remote rural communities where families live with limited electricity and substandard water and sanitation facilities and face malnutrition and lack of access to essential health care. While the exodus of men in search of work abroad has brought some respite for those most affected, however, due to lack of proper registration documents, female-headed households often face difficulties in gaining access to economic resources and social services and are frequently exposed to sexual and physical abuse.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The programme contributes to the regeneration of the Rasht Valley by addressing economic, food, health, environmental and personal security needs across five of the region's most vulnerable districts. This is to be achieved by (i) improving food and economic security through restoring and rebuilding livelihoods and diversifying the region's agricultural and economic base; (ii) reducing the vulnerability of communities to

natural disasters through strengthened land management practices and improved access to water, irrigation, pasture and energy; (iii) improving access to health care and safeguarding personal security by empowering female-headed households through legal support and ensuring the registration of all births and marriages; and (iv) providing opportunities for children to attend school beyond primary classes.

BENEFICIARIES

The programme directly targets some 48,000 people, while 180,000 stand to indirectly benefit from the programme's activities. Beneficiaries include farmers, food insecure households, unemployed people,

pregnant women, people with disabilities, female-headed households and children at risk of being without parental care.



APPLYING THE HUMAN SECURITY APPROACH

The many interrelated threats to human security in the Rasht Valley required a comprehensive and integrated approach that no single sector or organization could address alone. The strength of the human security approach lay in its multi-sectoral framework, which brought together the expertise of relevant stakeholders from the international community, national and local governments, and civil society. In this context, partnerships were established between six United Nations agencies, government ministries, local municipalities known as *Jamoats*, and local civil society organizations to address critical gaps in the protection and empowerment framework for vulnerable communities in the Rasht Valley.

The programme sought to address the full spectrum of insecurities faced by the region's most vulnerable inhabitants in a more efficient, targeted, and coordinated manner. For example, by providing training on improved agricultural techniques and land management practices, the programme aimed to increase income generation opportunities and restore food security. At the same time, improvements to sustainable energy, drinking water, and irrigation systems, along with greater access to health care,

education, and conflict management, further supported the sustainable recovery of participating communities. Combined with enhanced legal, social, and psychological support for those most at risk, these interventions addressed the interconnected challenges of economic, food, health, environmental, and personal insecurities.

Through a people-centred and context-specific approach, the programme emphasized the importance of interventions grounded in the realities of the region. Extensive consultations with beneficiaries and local authorities enabled the programme to customize initiatives by the United Nations, government authorities, and civil society organizations based on a detailed analysis of the Rasht Valley's social and economic factors. By placing the target population at the centre of designing and implementing solutions to their challenges, the programme aimed to deliver a more effective and sustainable response. This approach leveraged local capacities, promoted greater ownership, and strengthened the foundation for long-term success.

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

(i) The programme significantly improved agricultural productivity, benefiting 400 vulnerable households. This was achieved through capacity-building initiatives for over 500 women, who formed 60 new self-help groups. These groups not only boosted income generation but also served as vital platforms for social networking, enabling women to share support and develop market-relevant skills. To further promote economic empowerment, the programme established 16 self-governance bodies, bringing

together 135 women. These groups were officially registered, formalizing their business activities and enabling access to services such as micro-loans.

(ii) The rehabilitation of critical community infrastructure—including drinking water systems, irrigation facilities, and land ownership mechanisms—positively impacted 12,800 people, significantly improving their quality of life. The programme also created a Child-Friendly Space, offering a safe and nurturing environment for children. Additionally, 178

girls in 8th and 9th grades pledged to continue their education, reflecting the success of teacher training, enhanced school environments, and ongoing monitoring efforts.

(iii) By strengthening legal and social protections, the programme empowered 1,823 individuals to address challenges related to property rights, economic security, and land disputes. Women Watch Groups played a pivotal role, facilitating the issuance of identification documents and ensuring pensions and social allowances for persons with disabilities. Recognized as an effective advocacy mechanism, these groups also provided medical assistance to 325 women. Furthermore, 912 civil registration documents, including passports and birth certificates, were issued to vulnerable individuals, improving access to essential services and opportunities.

(iv) The programme promoted inclusivity by increasing disaster preparedness awareness and delivering targeted humanitarian aid to persons with disabilities. Infrastructure improvements, including the installation of power substations and rehabilitation of

water supply lines, benefited over 1,600 people and improved the functionality of a local health center.

(v) To strengthen community resilience, the programme trained 400 volunteers, benefitting a population of 89,000 across five districts of the Rasht Valley. Awareness campaigns and updated emergency guidelines educated 7,500 households on disaster preparedness. Early warning systems were installed in 10 disaster-prone schools, directly reaching 20,000 students. Additionally, hygiene education campaigns were conducted in 70 schools, reaching over 1,000 students and contributing to better health and safety outcomes.

(vi) Lastly, the programme improved women's access to health services, with consultations at health centers increasing by 40%. Over 500 women received educational materials on family planning and pregnancy-related health risks. To strengthen advocacy for women's rights, the programme trained 10 women activists and NGO staff to monitor human rights violations and address women's insecurities, improving the protection and support of vulnerable women.