The Human Security Approach: Translating Principles into Practice

Human security: Maximizing synergies to leave *no one behind*

" Human security is an approach to assist Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of their people."
The UN General Assembly resolution 66/290

- **Four core principles of human security**
  people-centered, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented
- Focus on **managing and minimizing risks, prevention-oriented** from escalating into larger crises that can undo years of development.
- Human security aims to greater impact through **dual policy framework** that rests on the mutually reinforcing pillars of **protection** and **empowerment**.

The 3 dimensions of human security

- The protection of people's *lives, livelihoods, and dignity* against various threats people and communities face.
  - **"Life"** is about living a healthy, safe, and fulfilling life.
  - **"Livelihood"** is about the ability to enjoy a secure and prosperous life.
  - **"Dignity"** is about having pride, helping each other, and creating a society where vulnerable people, including women and children, can also live comfortably.

- It is important **not only to protect** those at risk of being left behind, but also to **enable these people to take charge of their own lives.**

The principle and approach of human security

Principle	Approach
• Human beings have the right to live with **dignity, free from poverty and despair.** • **Governments have the primary responsibility** to ensure the lives, livelihoods, and dignity of their citizens. • **The international community** has a responsibility to provide assistance to governments in addressing current and emerging threats.	(1) **People-centered perspective:** focus on the most vulnerable people and communities. (2) **Comprehensive:** implement measures that integrate activities in multiple sectors. (3) **Context-specific measures:** identify root causes of insecurity and threats. (4) **Focus on prevention of insecurity and threats:** emphasize empowerment alongside protection. (5) **Partnership:** promote collaboration between local governments, businesses, civil society, etc.

Human security as an operational tool

Considers the broad range of conditions that **threaten the survival, livelihood and dignity** of people and their communities, **particularly those most vulnerable.**

Recognizes **the complexity and interconnected nature** of the challenges that confront people, eliminating duplication and advancing integrated solutions.
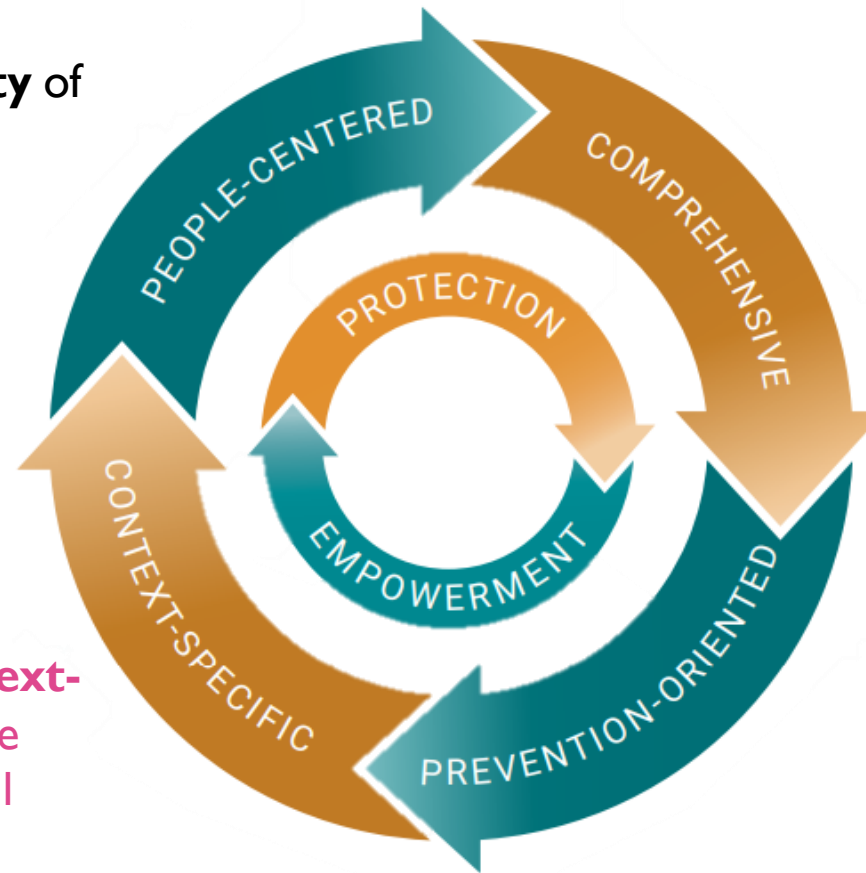
Recognizes that risks vary considerably and identifies **context-specific variances**, including the differing capacities of people, civil society and Governments.

Promotes **proactive responses** to mitigate the impact of current threats and, where possible, **prevent the occurrence of future challenges.**

PEOPLE-CENTERED

COMPREHENSIVE

PROTECTION

EMPOWERMENT

CONTEXT-SPECIFIC

PREVENTION-ORIENTED

Human security as an operational tool

1. **Leave no one behind**
   - Identifies how challenges and their root causes vary considerably across countries and communities.
   - Promotes highly localized and disaggregated analyses of the needs, risks and vulnerabilities of different communities and groups.
   - Emphasizes those most vulnerable and ensures that no one is left behind.

2. **From coordination to integration**
   - Ensures policy coherence and coordination across traditionally separate fields and doctrines, and enables comprehensive, integrated and prioritized solutions.

Human security as an operational tool

3. **Multi-stakeholder partnerships**
   - Promotes synergies that capitalize on the comparative advantages of each implementing partner and helps empower individuals, communities, and Governments to build their resilience to current and emerging challenges.

4. **Emphasis on early prevention**
   - Addresses the root causes of crises and emphasizes proactive early prevention as opposed to reactive late interventions.
   - An emphasis on addressing the root causes, building resilience, and preventing risks is key to transforming the world from delivering aid to ending need.

Tools and operational methods for human security

1.Analysis and joint information collection

This analysis consists of the following three steps:

a) Joint analysis of risks and threats at different levels
b) Joint analysis of impacts on people and institutions
c) Mapping of needs, vulnerabilities, and capacities

1-a. Joint analysis of risks, threats and root causes

What is the goal?
To understand the breadth of risks and threats that lead to insecurity and the causes, factors and deficits that exacerbate their impact on the survival, livelihood and dignity of people.

How do we achieve this?
1. Identify the risks and threats at different levels (global, regional, national and local)
2. Outline the causes, factors and deficits that make these risks and threats a challenge to human security.

1-a. Joint analysis of risks, threats and root causes

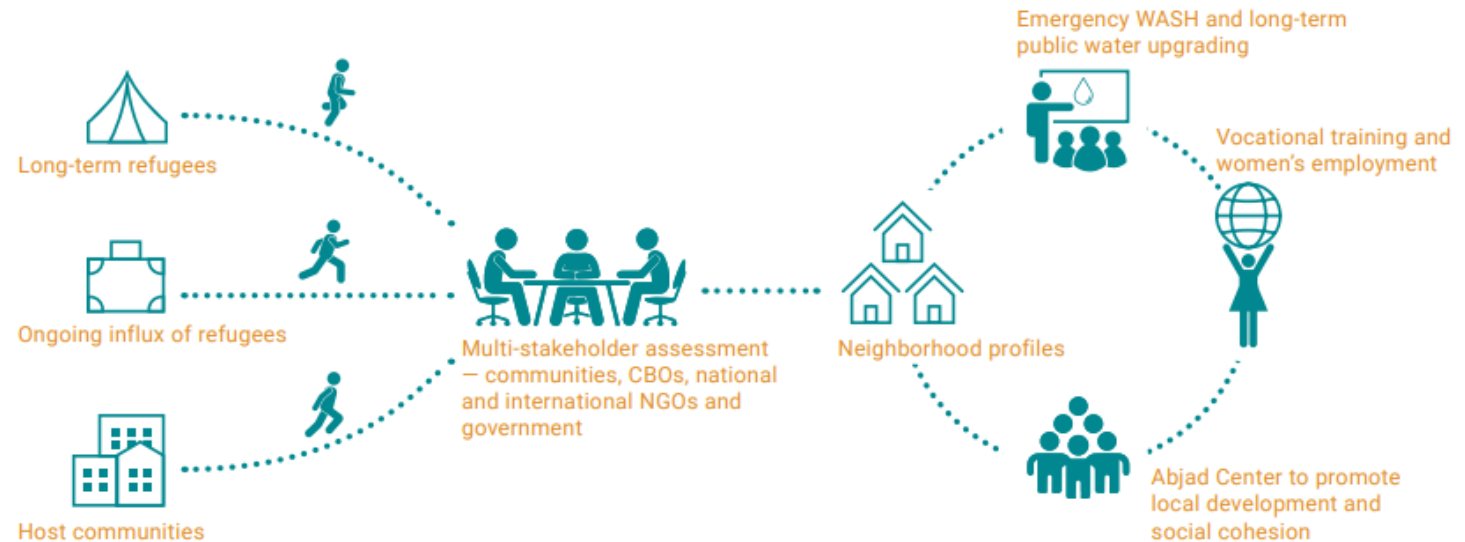**What does an analysis of risks, threats, and root causes achieve?**

1. **Examines the causes, factors and deficits** (such as a lack of social protection systems or early warning systems) that turn risks and threats into human crises.
2. **Ensures a more realistic view of the complexity of risk assessment and management** by considering the multiple, concurrent and emerging threats that interact in a given context.
3. Identifies the most pressing and pervasive risks **in a specific context** by exploring a comprehensive set of threats at the global, regional, national and local levels.
4. **Indicates short, medium, and long-term actions** that may be necessary and introduces a reflection on how humanitarian or development decisions can contribute to creating risk.

1-a. Joint analysis in Tripoli, Lebanon

Refugee and host communities in the northern city of Tripoli in Lebanon face a diverse set of risks and vulnerabilities, including **a continued influx of refugees** from neighboring Syria as well as ongoing political uncertainty.

Using a "3 Ws approach" — who, what, where — they identified the critical human insecurities and their root causes, creating risk-informed neighborhood profiles

Joint analysis in Tripoli, Lebanon

Long-term refugees

Ongoing influx of refugees

Host communities

Multi-stakeholder assessment — communities, CBOs, national and international NGOs and government

Neighborhood profiles

Emergency WASH and long-term public water upgrading

Vocational training and women's employment

Abjad Center to promote local development and social cohesion

RESULTS

Establishment of the Abjad Center, a socio-cultural hub and training & service center serving 200,000+ people

More than 500 women trained and working in new industries

45 local businesses participated in job placement for trainees

1-b. Joint analysis of impacts

In addition to outlining risks and threats, it is essential to understand **the multidimensional impacts** *on people and institutions. This analysis helps map the relationship of consequences across the dimensions of human security, pinpointing areas where stress or insecurities are highest for people and can impede the state's capacity to respond.*

What is the goal?
To understand the compounding impacts of threats on people, communities, the State and institutions.

How do we achieve this?
1. Assess the manifestations of these threats across human security dimensions and their related impacts.
2. Outline the multidimensional impacts to identify areas where the stress or insecurity is highest for people and institutions.

1-b. Joint analysis of impacts

What does a joint analysis of impacts achieve?

- Differentiates the impact that risks and threats have on people, communities, States and institutions.

- Visualizes the domino effect of threats across different components of human security, uncovering how various risks and their impacts are interconnected.

- Assesses the level of stress on various components of human security, identifying entry points to ensure the greatest multiplier effect as well as areas where State-society relations could deteriorate or be enhanced.

- Identifies areas of lesser stress that nonetheless should be addressed to prevent a worsening situation in the medium or longer term.

Threat Impact Analysis: Indigenous families moving between Panama and Costa Rica for work

Context: Each year, nearly half of the indigenous Ngäbe-Buglé peoples leave the reservation in western Panama in search of farm work, often traveling in family groups **across the border into Costa Rica under highly vulnerable conditions.** Fragile border communities in the southeastern part of the country where refugees from Cote d'Ivoire exerted **pressure on limited resources.**

Threats/challenges

Political insecurity

- Lack of coordination between Costa Rican and Panamanian institutions responsible for safe, orderly and regular migration Policies and procedures that limit access to public services for migrant workers

Economic insecurity

- Overemphasis on mega-projects where violations of labour rights for indigenous and migrants are common.
- Limited economic opportunities outside of large mega-projects such as coffee and banana plantations

Threat Impact Analysis: Indigenous families moving between Panama and Costa Rica for work

Threats/challenges

Personal insecurity Widespread discrimination vis-à-vis indigenous people and undocumented migrants Lack of cross-cultural understanding — indigenous people seen as against development with poverty due to their culture.	**Health insecurity** Lack of access to medical coverage Unsafe working conditions with extended working hours (sometimes more than 14 hours)
Environmental insecurity Climate change Environmental destruction due to mega-projects and negative coping mechanisms.	**Food insecurity** Increased occurrence of floods and droughts Loss of traditional practices .

1-c. Mapping of needs, vulnerabilities and capacities

Assessing needs indicates current status and helps identify those groups and subgroups that are furthest behind. **Including vulnerability** helps anticipate people's potential needs over time and in response to certain shocks, which can help **prevent a future humanitarian emergency,** if addressed proactively. It also helps identify areas where **resilience-building** should be prioritized.

What is the goal?

Understand **the needs, vulnerabilities, and capacities** of the affected communities across the human security dimensions and to **identify those who are most vulnerable or at risk** of being "left behind".

How do we achieve this?

1. **Disaggregate the subgroups** in the target area.
2. **Determine the needs** per subgroup.
3. Identify **existing and emerging vulnerabilities** (proactive and preventive).
4. Inventory existing capacities, resources and assets as well as gaps (for communities, groups and institutions)

1-c. What does the mapping achieve?

- Highlights the most vulnerable subgroups per priority area or human security dimension to identify those furthest behind or at risk of being left behind.

- **Enables the elaboration of targeted responses** to ensure that actions towards peace and sustainable development reduce inequalities.

- Enable proactive and sustainable solutions, identification of **potential future needs and support more coherent sequencing.**

- **Refines and provides an in-depth understanding** of the situation to **better prioritize** and identify areas for collaborative response, providing the rationale for the elaboration of collective outcome.

1-c. Example of Beni region in the north of Bolivia

Situation: humanitarian crisis due to Frequent droughts, storms and floods make life difficult for the indigenous peoples and farmers in Beni region.

- **Mapping by identifying needs and vulnerabilities, focusing in on five types of insecurity**: food (loss and failure of productive agriculture and lack of access to food); economic (severe income declines due to drop in sales of products); health insecurity (malnutrition, water-borne and vector-borne diseases); environmental insecurity (flooding and drought); and community insecurity (destruction of crops and forced migration).

- **Disaggregated analysis** identified indigenous women and older adults who shouldered not just caregiving and household responsibilities, but the isolation and exclusion faced by indigenous people.

- This led them to **mainstream gender, generational and intercultural approaches.** Identified existing capacities that had been overlooked by incorporating traditional techniques for constructing embankments to provide a safe haven for cattle during floods and water storage during droughts.

2. Planning and programming

The human security approach has developed three steps for planning and implementing:

a) Articulate collective outcomes
b) Build protection and empowerment strategies
c) Implement in a participatory manner

2-a. Articulate collective outcomes

What is the goal?

To bring together all of the information derived from the analysis and to develop a range of collective outcomes that require simultaneous action from diverse stakeholders.

How do we achieve this?

1. **Consider the priority areas, the most pressing needs** and vulnerabilities by subgroup, as well as the most critical and pervasive risks and their root causes.
2. **Define a common vision** on what you are trying to achieve in the long term.
3. Identify outcomes towards the common vision that require **the combined efforts of diverse stakeholders** and that can be achieved in three to five years.
4. Frame them as **collective outcomes** and assure that they are **SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time bound).**

2-a. Example of developing collective outcomes in Cameroon

The programme starting in 2021 in the Far North region of Cameroon brought together an extensive range of national, local, NGO and bilateral partners to address the multidimensional crisis. it addressed the displacement and violence inflicted by Boko Haram, food shortages during the dry season, and the immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2-b. Building protection and empowerment strategies

*A **hybrid protection and empowerment approach** promoted by human security directly links policy reform with community resilience building so that future shocks are less likely to result in large-scale and protracted crises.*

What is the goal?

To design strategies that combine mutually reinforcing actions to protect and empower communities and in particular those members who are most vulnerable.

How do we achieve this?

1. **Outline the protection infrastructure** at various levels that plays a role in the insecurity or priority you intend to address. What protective mechanisms exist to address it? What is lacking in terms of protection?

2. Assess the institutional and community capacities, resources, strengths and assets that can be built upon. **What capacities exist and can be enhanced** through empowerment measures? What is lacking in terms of empowerment?

3. **Find ways to link protective strategies** to empowerment strategies when appropriate.

2-c. Implement in a participatory manner

Processes that enhance participation make it possible to harness the full range of experience, expertise and energies needed to tackle complex situations.

What is the goal?

To implement in a way that involves national and local partners and the affected communities and builds their capacities to drive change.

How can we achieve this?

1. Create an environment for **multi-stakeholder engagement and partnerships.**
2. Consider the various actors' **comparative advantage** in delivering results.
3. Sustain participants' commitment through meaningful participation.

Participatory processes are critical to operationalizing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. These processes energies forums to tackle complex situations. **Inclusivity is key:** they should involve **local and national partners and the affected communities** and empower those affected to drive change and transformation.

3. Leadership and coordination

Successful implementations require empowered and recognized leadership to bring together partners and establish processes that can change the mindset towards and mechanisms for collaboration.

This section provides experiences in three areas:

a) Facilitating joint work

b) Engaging national and local authorities, communities and stakeholders

c) Coordinating capacity building

3. Leadership and coordination
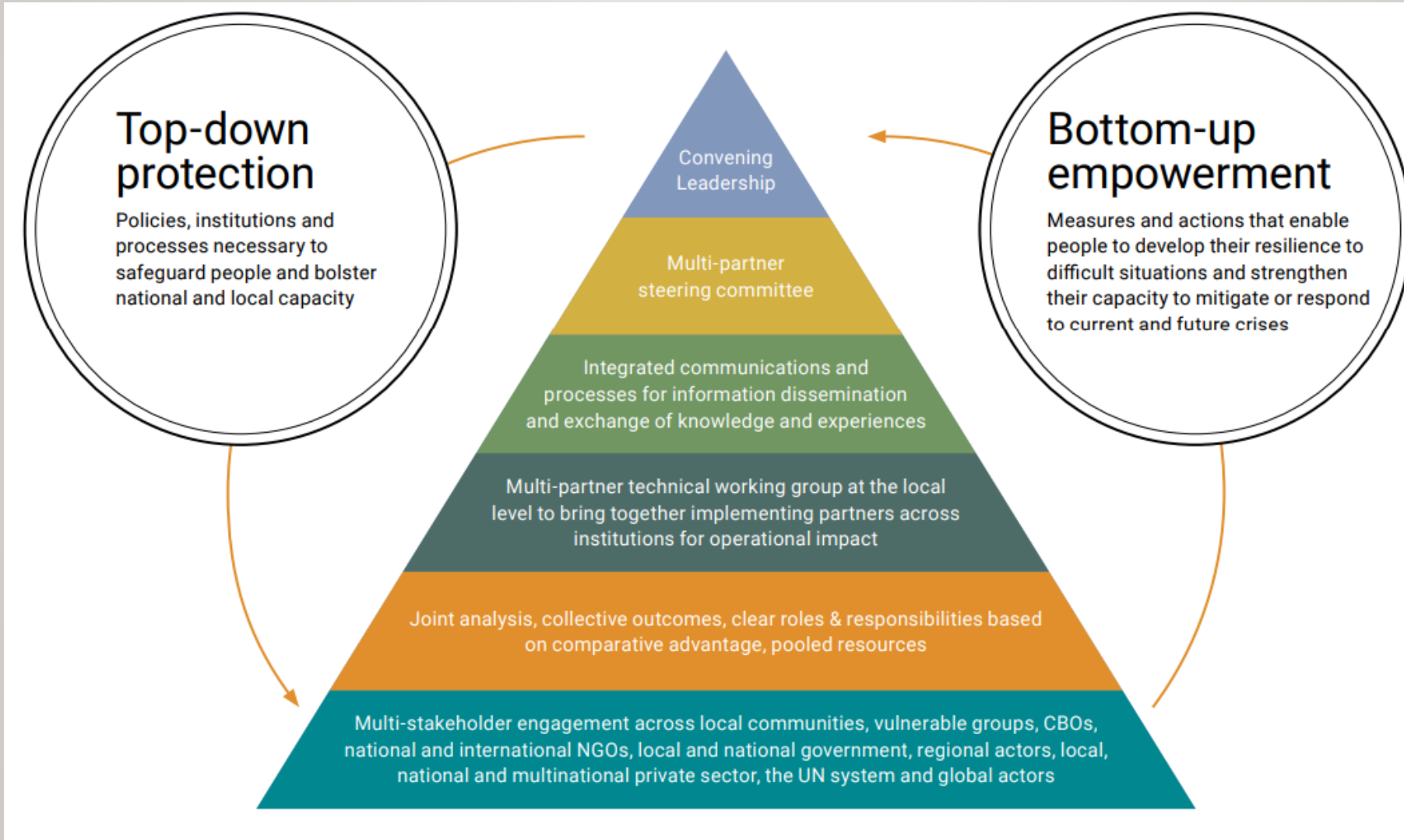
3-a. Facilitating joint work

Several factors as critical for advancing a genuinely integrated approach to implementation;

1. **The analytical processes outlined in earlier sections** lay the foundation for developing shared understanding and a collaborative process for identifying priorities and the role of each partner. Ensuring that the analytical processes are **participatory and inclusive** is therefore a prerequisite to engaged and active partnerships that can be sustained over time.

2. Programmes must establish **governance and operational structures** that enable coordination and **promote multi-stakeholder engagement.** Steering committees and multi-partner technical working groups are essential to bring together partners **at the local level on a regular basis** based on a joint workplan.

3. **Integrated communications,** both internal and external, is essential for the success of multi-stakeholder partnerships and should be incorporated into overall workplans and **not considered a separate part** of an intervention.

Example of joint work in Upper Egypt

In Upper Egypt, a programme addressed rising levels of poverty and insecurity from 2013 to 2017. It brought **together 5 different agencies** in an effort to address challenges and threats in a holistic way.

The difficulty of managing a multilevel implementation led to communication challenges, however, mitigation was made through **the creation of a unified database of beneficiaries, the re-organization and a unified budget management.**

Joint analysis
- Conduct baseline & mapping of key stakeholders
- Consult national and governorate level authorities, plus key stakeholders
- Use results of baseline to select locations and target beneficiaries

Joint implementation
- Engage and ensure community-led participation
- Establish community led participatory governance
- Select priority interventions according to community development plans

Joint monitoring, evaluation and handover
- Regularly monitor activities and update results and toolkits
- Communicate and disseminate lessons learned
- Conduct final evaluation and prepare exit strategy
- Handover to counterparts at national and governorate levels
- Discuss possibilities for replication and scale up

Joint planning
- Identify field office space (in-kind contribution)
- Hire project staff
- Select partners (NGOs, CBOs, private sector, etc.)
- Establish project steering committee
- Prepare detailed project workplan (including M&E framework)

Short, medium and long-term interventions
- Implement quick-win projects
- Enhance employability & support social entrepreneurship
- Introduce high-productivity agricultural techniques
- Implement selected business models based on private strategies
- Establish village savings and loan associations
- Train vulnerable mothers and other community members on health and nutrition
- Provide training to address personal and community security issues

3-b. Engaging national and local authorities, communities and stakeholders

Why is this important?

The engagement of national and local authorities, communities and stakeholders ensures that initiatives are rooted in the national and local context, create opportunities to build upon existing resources and assets, and reduce inequalities. They also build, or reinstitute, processes for dialogue between the government and communities that strengthen the social fabric, promote reconciliation and build trust.

For example, sustainability can be further ensured by youth engagement and by involving NGOs, whose work can continue after programmes end. Also, **governance model** that puts in place a multi-level and multi-sectoral management structure to coordinate and monitor all national and local activities can ensure that priorities are aligned with the government as well as the target communities and that projects complemented each other.

3-c. Coordinating capacity building

- **Capacity building** is essential to transforming the development prospects for community members' lives and livelihoods.

- **Jointly assess** a challenge that had many dimensions at the regional and community levels and **collectively create maps** reflecting the needs and vulnerabilities of communities such as in in health, food security and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME).

- Capacity building as a part of the programme management, including **multi-stakeholder project board meetings and joint monitoring visits** ensures coherence between new initiatives introduced by the project and ongoing initiatives.

- **Skills training in database management** enabled officials from the ministries of health, economy, agriculture and water resources.