

GRASSROOTS



PROGRESSIO Evaluation

Citizens' Participation in Local Governance Project – Aden

May 2012



Meeting with members of the community, Al Khaisa village ©Thabet Bagash

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- CAP:** Capacity Assessment of Partners
- CPLGP:** Citizens' Participation in Local Governance Project
- CSO:** Civil Society Organisation
- DW:** Development Worker
- EU:** European Union
- KSA:** Knowledge Skills and Attitudes
- LNGO:** Local Non Governmental Organisation
- NGO:** Non Governmental Organisation
- OD:** Organisational Development
- PAR:** Participatory Action Research
- PATT:** Participation and Transparency Tool
- PIC:** Project Implementation Committee
- PRA:** Participatory Rural Appraisal
- RICA:** Regular Impact and Capacity Assessment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The present twofold evaluation is assessing two projects implemented by Progressio, the Civil Society Organisations' Capacity Building project in Aden and Hodeidah governorates (2006 -2011) and the Citizens' Participation in Local Governance project in Aden governorate (2009 – 2011). This part is focusing on the latter, whereas recommendations on merging them under “Effective Governance and Participation” theme are common to both projects. The methodology used includes review of available documents (project proposals, logical frameworks, and reports), participatory workshops, focus group discussions, self-administered questionnaires and key informants interviews.

Conclusions

The Citizens' Participation in Local Governance Project objectives were relevant, although the broader political situation and its related risks were not taken sufficiently into consideration. Community members are now much more aware of their right as citizens to take part in the district planning and of the role and responsibilities of the local council, and it seems that at least some local authorities better understand how collaborative work with CSOs and communities can be beneficial for the communities. However, the proposed Al Khaisa village development plan, although approved by the local authorities, has not been implemented until now, due to lack of resources, government reluctance and competing private interests. Although the project objectives and approaches were generally relevant to the context, risks related to the political tensions and economic private interests in the area were underestimated.

Experiences that may be replicated

This project proved that enhancing community participation through participatory methods (such as PRA and PAR) and the establishment of a People's committee is instrumental in raising civic education awareness and enhancing citizenship.

Other lessons learned

A **very deep and thorough analysis of the local situation** is needed whenever designing a project on touchy issues such as local governance or land issues to make sure that the planned results and activities will be feasible and will result in reaching the objectives. Action at the central level in order to strongly **advocate for community projects over private ones and for improving the decentralisation process** should be part of future similar projects.

Supporting the launch of a **Local Council website requires a strong sense of ownership** by the Local Council. Such website is supposedly developed in order to share strategic information with the public, so it should be assessed **to what extent the local council is ready for such transparency**. Besides, whenever **CSOs** advocate for

transparency towards local authorities, they should themselves **be exemplary in terms of transparency and accountability**, making their own activities and financial reports public.

Posting the DW within the community itself would allow for a deeper understanding of the local context and for a better communication between the DW and the community as well as the local authorities, facilitated by the DW day-to-day presence in the same area.

Recommendations

Finally, recommendations for future projects emphasise the need to build on what has been achieved during these two projects while widening partnership mechanisms to include local authorities and youth, who should be full-fledged participants rather than mere beneficiaries. The projects should be a model of internal democracy and transparency, encouraging participants to be responsible and accountable for the development of their districts, as a way for all stakeholders to experience concretely the meaning of “good governance”.

INTRODUCTION

The present twofold evaluation is assessing two projects implemented by Progressio, the Civil Society Organisations' Capacity Building project in Aden and Hodeidah governorates (2006 -2011) and the Citizens' Participation in Local Governance project in Aden governorate (2009 – 2011). This part is focusing on the latter. It aims at evaluating the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the project, assessing the partnerships, documenting lessons learned and suggesting recommendations for future planning within the theme “Effective Governance and Participation” under which the former projects will be merged into one. A few case studies are also documented in order to illustrate the main findings.

The methodology used includes review of available documents (project proposals, logical frameworks, reports), participatory workshops, focus group discussions, self-administered questionnaires and key informants interviews. The list of people met and interviewed for this task is in annex 1.

We would like to thank all participants who gave us their time and provided us with valuable input on the way the projects were implemented and the related challenges, but who also suggested a number of ideas for future projects that were included in the “Recommendations” section. We also want to thank Progressio staff, both in Sanaa and on the field, for sharing their experience with us and providing us with much needed documents. Finally, Dr Abdullah Al-Syari, former Progressio Country Representative, kindly accepted to meet with us, presenting us the background and main ideas of the projects design, and we would like to thank him as well.

DESCRIPTION

It has to be underlined that this project was still being implemented when the political crisis erupted in Yemen, and therefore was affected by it, as it will be detailed below.

Partner associations

At-Tadhamon has been involved in the project since the very beginning, in Al Khaisa village (Al Buraïqa district), while Wedyan association, in Dar Saad district, joined it after the first year of experimentation.

Development Worker:

One DW stayed for the whole duration of the project until February 2011 when she had to leave for security reasons due to the political crisis.

Brief History of the project

- In Al Bureïqa district

This project was designed based on a participatory rural appraisal (PRA) conducted in Al Khaisa village, in Al Bureïqa district in 2006. It was implemented from January 2009 to December 2011, with At-Tadhamon as the main partner. Various training courses were organised to raise community awareness on the role and responsibilities of local authorities and citizens, and to show local authorities the importance of involving citizens in designing the district plan. Participatory planning workshops were held as well, resulting in the community coming up with its own development plan for Al Khaisa, which was approved by the local council. Political issues however hampered the implementation of this plan, as part of it was blocked by the central government, while the auction bazaar construction stopped due to an on-going conflict related to its location. Finally, a participatory planning manual was written by the DW after consultation with the main stakeholders. It was presented to them in 2012 and is still in the process of being finalised.

- In Dar Saad district

After the first year focusing on this village, it was decided to extend this project to Dar Saad district with Wedyan association as partner. However, the recruited DW was refused entry into Yemen by the Yemeni government, therefore no DW launched the project in Dar Saad in 2010. In 2011, the DW started working in Dar Saad in addition to Al Bureïqa district, until she had to leave in February for security reasons. Political unrest prevented Wedyan association from working with the local authorities between March and December 2011. However, they launched the project working with youth and

peoples' committees. Because activities with the local authorities started in 2012 only in Dar Saad, there are beyond the scope of this evaluation. This is why this report will focus more on the Al Buraïqa component.

Objectives of the project

This evaluation is based on the logical framework attached in annex 3. Its objectives and expected results are quoted below:

Overall objective is:

To assist partner CSOs, communities and local administrative authorities in building their capacities to respond in a unified and informed way to decentralized local governance within the legal framework and laws governing Local Administration Authorities.

Specific objectives are:

To improve understanding by partner CSOs, communities and Local Administrative Authorities of participatory and transparent district based planning

To improve understanding on the part of local Administration Authorities of the complimentary of collaborative work with CSOs and communities in Al Bureïqa district and Dar Saad district

Expected results are:

1. By the end of the project at least 2 communities representing 40000 people who are poor and marginalized in Al-Boraiqa District are better equipped to voice their needs to local decision-makers by addressing their needs in the district development plan through participatory planning process and will have adopted concrete strategies to address youth unemployment, environmental issues and increase income through improved livelihoods
2. Clear understanding on the part of Local Authority Administration of the complimentary of collaborative work with CSOs and communities in Al-Boraiqa District
3. Through participatory planning process the poor and marginalized people's voice and need addressed and more benefitted than at present.

FINDINGS

1. Relevance

Are the projects objectives relevant to the problems these projects were supposed to address?

As participatory planning is not a well-known practice among CSOs, communities and local authorities, improving their understanding of such a concept is a relevant objective in order to improve local governance. An increased citizens' participation in local governance is indeed needed in Yemen in order to ensure more transparency and accountability. Within the current political context in which Yemenis are standing up for their rights and for democracy, such a project is even more relevant.

However, it has to be highlighted that this project is taking place in a context of uncompleted decentralisation, which makes it particularly challenging.

Are project design and strategic orientations relevant to the context?

Basing the project on a PRA study is relevant and helped the plan to correctly reflect the population's genuine needs, although there was a gap between the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) conducted in 2006 and the beginning of the project, in 2009. The whole process of building the community knowledge on their role and on the district council role and responsibilities, organising participatory planning workshops, submitting a plan to the local council and advocating for it was entirely relevant and very well designed. Progressio's ways of working were clearly explained to the community, who understood the interest of the capacity-building process and had no false expectations about Progressio's paying for projects or providing for in-kind support.

However, in the case of Al Khaisa village it seems that external factors have not been sufficiently taken into consideration. Indeed, Al Khaisa location is considered by a number of influential businessmen as a potential place for investment, which implies a very strong pressure on the central government to favour such investment driven by private interests over any community projects. In the DW report, surprisingly, this is not mentioned as an issue, and words like "corruption" or "collusion" do not appear.

Still, if this key problem had been integrated into the analysis of the context, the project might have managed to find ways to address it in a better way.

Besides, as underlined before, the decentralisation process is not completed yet:

- The Local Authorities law ensures neither citizens' access to information nor their participation in local decisions

- Final decisions on budgets are taken at the central level
- The director of the district authority is nominated and not elected, therefore can be changed at any time
- Local authorities are usually reluctant to share information and engage in a participatory process that could make them feel they relinquish power.

In such a context, as the DW rightly puts it, "*strong advocacy work [is] required at national level to influence policies and strategies for local government especially for citizen participation in planning and budgeting process*"¹. Following this approach, a national seminar was organised on "local governance practices and future prospects in Yemen" in June 2010. Such endeavours to link the project with advocacy on national policies could have been further developed since it appears as a crucial step towards improving local governance.

Questions may also be raised about the posting of the DW in At-Tadhamon's office in Khur Maksar, whereas the project takes place in Al Buraiqa district. The mission did not find a document explaining such placement. One reason may be that the project started from an initiative conducted by At-Tadhamon association. Another cause may be security concerns regarding a foreign DW posted in a village considered as a remote area. However, a local association in Al Khaisa village, Al Fardous, is said to be active.

Had the DW been posted in Al Khaisa in this association, Progressio's understanding of the local context might have been deeper and the communication between the DW and the community as well as the local authorities been made easier through her day-to-day presence in the same area.

In Dar Saad case, activities involving the local council started in 2012, which is beyond the scope of this evaluation. Activities implemented by Wedyan in 2011, however, have to be emphasised as revealing an excellent analysis of the political and social situation. Indeed, a lot has been done in mobilising and building up capacities of young men and women, in a political situation where it was particularly needed and relevant.

Finally, indicators of the logical framework such as "the number of NGOs involved in networks" do not seem to be an appropriate tool to measure better understanding of the participatory planning. Furthermore, measuring a 30% increase of participation compared to the baseline is not possible, due to the lack of figures in the baseline. Therefore, the evaluation will rather reflect the views expressed by a few representatives of the community, whose list is in annex 1.

¹ DW, *RICA Baseline report on Mapping of Effective Participation*, May 2010

2. Efficiency

Similarly to the CSOs' Capacity-Building project, costs were minimum compared to the results. For instance, a consultative workshop was organised for a total cost of 470 USD and was an opportunity for Progressio to discuss and prepare a plan for PAR visit, identifying and clarifying objectives, procedures and expected outputs of the participatory planning and monitoring processes with the participants². The project therefore was very cost-effective.

3. Effectiveness

Specific Objectives and their indicators

Specific objectives:

- To improve understanding by partner CSOs, communities and Local Administrative Authorities of participatory and transparent district based planning
- To improve understanding on the part of local Administration Authorities of the complimentary of collaborative work with CSOs and communities in Al Buraïqa district and Dar Saad district

Indicators

- No. of NGO leaders who have received training and are managing their organisations more effectively

As explained above, this indicator is not a measure of the extent to which participatory planning and development are now understood among the community and local authorities. The two associations involved in this project, Wedyan and At-Tadhamon, are also part of the CSOs' Capacity-Building project so their cases are discussed in the above section.

- No. of NGOs participating in networks

The two partner CSOs, At Tadhamon and Wedyan, are both involved in the network established in the CSOs Capacity-Building project, as explained above. Similarly to the previous indicator, this indicator cannot be used to measure whether the specific objectives of this project were reached.

² Work Plan, CPLGP, April-June 2009.

Expected result 1

Expected result 1

1. By the end of the project at least 3 communities representing 40,000 people who are poor and marginalized in Al-Boraiqa District are better equipped to voice their needs to local decision-makers by addressing their needs in the district development plan through participatory planning process and will have adopted concrete strategies to address youth unemployment, environmental issues and increase income through improved livelihoods

Indicator:

- By the end of the project partner civil society organization (Attadhamon Association for Development) working with selected communities in Al-Boraiqa District with a total estimated population of 40,000 will have increased by 30% their participation in local development planning processes at the community (sub-district) and district level

It seems that this first expected result was over-ambitious and was downsized later on in order to target at least one community representing 16,000 people, Al Khaisa village. It is not possible to estimate the increased rate of participation, as the indicator is not clear enough. Was it expected to achieve an increase of 30% of the number of community members getting involved in the local development planning processes? In this case, the increase is probably much higher, as there used to be no participatory planning at all. Only the village representative to the local authorities would take part in the district planning through his attendance to the local council meetings. Was this increase of participation supposed to be calculated based on the number of projects submitted by the community and approved by the local council? In this case, the objective was reached, as the village plan got fully approved by the local authorities. It is the central government that blocked its implementation.

Moreover, community members who were interviewed felt they are now better equipped to participate in local planning. They emphasised their better understanding of citizens' participation and local governance: "we discovered that we can get involved in many things", "we discovered that it's not only the government who decides but that we also can intervene and tell what are the needs that should be addressed". They also expressed a strong sense of ownership over the plan that was submitted to the authorities, described as "the plan we came with", and they felt it was really reflecting the needs of the community: "we came with different projects to help youth and people to get a better income, like wave breaker". This shift is a major achievement.

However, the projects were not approved by the central government, except the auction bazaar that got funding by the Ministry of Fish Wealth. Its construction started but its location is not considered as suitable by the community because it is polluted and

because the place belongs to the oil company that owns the refinery. Therefore community members fear that at one point or another they may be asked by the company to leave the place. When a new land appeared in the village out of nowhere, and due to Hail Saeed investment that had put it out of the sea, community members felt it belongs to them and should be the location of the auction bazaar. Such feeling has to be linked with the broader political situation in Yemen, in which people from what used to be the “South Yemen” consider themselves “occupied” by “Northern” businessmen and companies that are buying land with the approval of the central government also coined as “Northern”. “Southern” people feel there is collusion between central government dominated by “Northern” people and “Northern” companies to make use of “Southern” resources and land. This is why a conflict arose and the construction had to be stopped.

Besides, their plan was proposing concrete strategies to help fishermen get more income and improve their livelihoods thanks to the auction bazaar and the wave breaker.

In Dar Saad, Wedyan association supported small initiatives; encouraged youth volunteerism and participation in community work, and contributed in building up youth capacities. Such activities allowed the youth to better understand the roles and responsibilities of the local authorities, thereby equipping them to better advocate for their needs. The relative failure of the central state in controlling this district was used by Wedyan as an avenue to get people organise themselves and take responsibility for managing their affairs locally. As local authorities are still respected enough and not considered as part of the government, this paved the way for working on local governance with both youth and local authorities.

Expected result 2

Expected result 2

2. Clear understanding on the part of Local Authority Administration of the complimentary of collaborative work with CSOs and communities in Al-Boraiqa Districts

Indicator:

- Selected community members from the district Al-Boraiqa will demonstrate higher knowledge regarding their rights to take part in, and details of, participatory planning processes at the end of the project compared to baseline.

This indicator does not help measure the local authorities’ understanding of collaborative work with CSOs and communities. As shown above, Al Khaisa villagers

demonstrate better knowledge about their rights to take part in participatory planning, and have now experience in doing so.

The local authorities do not seem to be fully cooperative however. The first director of the local council had fully understood the importance of working in collaboration with communities and CSOs, but that was much less the case for the two following directors. In her report for the period from September 2010 to February 2011, the DW emphasises the importance of information sharing to ensure accountability and transparency of the local authorities. The project supported the launch of a website for Al Buraiqa district (www.alburaiqa.org) and provided the local council with two computers and a computer training course. The DW states that the local authority “agreed to post district strategic and annual plan in the site which can show the transparent and accountable of local government”³. Unfortunately, the mission was not able to visit this website. It seems that the domain name expired and the local council did not renew it. This may reveal a lack of ownership of this website by the local council, as well as its reluctance to make strategic information public.

Progressio regrets that the local authorities are not fully supportive. Actually, the above-mentioned first director of the Local Council was very helpful and supportive. He accepted to share the local district plan and strongly advocated for their plan. The community seems to think that he was removed due to such action. This may partly explain why the two following directors have been reluctant to get involved in the project. In addition, it is alleged that the projects had been blocked by the central government because of private interests in Al Khaisa land, which probably discouraged the local authorities from working on this any further. The poor attendance at workshops emphasised by Progressio may be explained by the feeling that such activities are not relevant any more in a context where the final decisions are taken at the national level and are not driven by community interests, but by a few businessmen’s. Still, the fact that the plan submitted by the village was approved by the local district is indicating that local authorities have a good understanding of the importance of collaborative work with communities and CSOs.

In Dar Saad, the political situation did not allow Wedyan association to involve local authorities in their activities. However, the local council members and the government executive staff in the district seem favourable to work with local CSOs and have experience in participatory planning.

³ DW, *Report September 2010 – February 2011*.

Expected result 3

Expected result 3

3. Through participatory planning process the poor and marginalized people's voice and need addressed and more benefitted than at present.

Indicator:

- By the end of the project at least one local/district level development plan will show increased benefits for poor and marginalized community members as compared to baseline

This indicator is unfortunately unmet. The plan developed through participatory assessment of the community needs was approved by the local authorities but was blocked at the central government. It included a wave breaker, an auction bazaar and a sewage system. Due to the inexistent urban planning, houses are very close to each other and it seems extremely difficult and costly to build a sewage system in such conditions. The auction bazaar was approved and its construction started, but as explained above its location is considered as inappropriate by the community, as the water is polluted due to the neighbouring refinery. This is why the building works stopped. The community would like to locate the project in a place where Hail Saeed company invested a huge amount of money to erect a piece of land out of the sea, thus creating a "new land". Obviously Hail Saeed company is planning to use that land for further investment and will put pressure on the government to refuse any community project in that place.

Activities

As evidenced in the list of planned and implemented activities in annex 4, all planned activities were implemented, except the workshop for sharing the participatory planning manual, which was implemented in 2012 instead of 2011, due to the political unrest.

4. Partnership assessment

Interviewed community members showed respect for Progressio work and appreciation of the partnership. They consider that capacity-building done by Progressio was useful for them.

However they feel that they now need an international organisation that could fund or help them get funding for their projects while putting pressure on the government to get the appropriate land for these projects, despite business interests in investing there.

They also expressed the idea that the fishermen's association/cooperative should be a partner of the project, as most of the men are fishermen in Al Buraïqa.

CONCLUSIONS

The planned activities were well implemented and most of the indicators and results were reached. Indeed, community members are now much more aware of their rights as citizens to take part in the district planning and of the roles and responsibilities of the local council. The People's Council that was established has acquired experience in conducting PRA and participatory planning workshops and is fully convinced that such community-based and participatory approaches result in better-designed plans that genuinely reflect the priority needs of the community. Similarly, it seems that at least part of the local authorities better understand how collaborative work with CSOs and communities can be beneficial for the communities.

However, the third result ("Through participatory planning process the poor and marginalized people's voice and need addressed and more benefited than at present") could not be reached due to the broader environment. Although the project objectives and approaches were generally relevant to the context, risks related to the political tensions and economic private interests in the area were underestimated.

LESSONS LEARNED

What could be replicated

1) Enhancing citizenship through community participation

This project has been very successful in involving the population, make people understand their rights as citizens and motivate them to participate in local governance. The participatory methods were instrumental in making people actors of their development rather than mere receivers of training courses. The team that conducted the PRA included people from the village, which made them feel part of the project as implementers, and not only as beneficiaries. Besides, the establishment of a People's Committee resonated with the socialist past of this place and was an adequate tool to activate people's participation.

What could be done differently

1) Detailed analysis of the broader environment and related risks

The challenges relative to the context of the CPGP were underestimated, thus the logical framework was not totally adequate as it did not include action at the central level in order to strongly advocate for community projects over private ones and for improving the decentralisation process. Similarly, the limitations of the decentralisation process were not taken into consideration enough. Risk mitigation measures on these issues should have been designed at an early stage of the process. This shows that a very deep and thorough analysis of the local situation is needed whenever designing a project on touchy issues such as local governance or land issues to make sure that the planned results and activities will be feasible and will result in reaching the objectives.

2) Sustainability of the Local District website

Wedyan association is about to support the launch of a website by Dar Saad Local Council and should benefit from lessons learned in Al Buraiqa district. Its current approach includes training courses as well as identifying two people responsible for updating the website, to ensure it will be kept up to date. The previous experience in Al Buraiqa shows that such initiative requires a strong sense of ownership by the Local

Council. This requires extensive computer course, introduction to the Internet, visits to various websites, participatory design of the website, and an excellent training course in updating the website. The Local Council should fully understand what is at stake with a website in terms of public relations and image. Internal control mechanisms may be thought of in order to make sure that what is made public is accurate and in line with the Local Council policy. Local Council should also be aware of the website costs. Updating a website is time-consuming and therefore represents a human resources cost while renewing the domain name annually is costly too; such expenses should be calculated and included in the annual budget to ensure the website sustainability. Finally, this website is developed in order to share strategic information with the public, and Wedyan should try and assess to what extent the local council is ready for such transparency. A step-by-step approach may be a way to overcome such reluctance to sharing information. If financial information is considered as too strategic, the local council may be convinced to publish only plans in the first year, before hopefully shifting to full disclosure.

Finally, advocacy for transparency on the local council implies that Wedyan association should itself be a model in terms of transparency and accountability, making its own activities and financial reports public. This will be detailed in the “Recommendations” section.

3) Posting the DW within the community

Posting the DW within the community itself would allow for a deeper understanding of the local context and for a better communication between the DW and the community as well as the local authorities, facilitated by the DW day-to-day presence in the same area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Capacity-building and local governance merging under “Effective Governance and Participation” theme

From now on, Progressio is planning to tie and combine both components, capacity-building and local governance, under a single overarching programme theme, “Effective Governance and Participation”. Apart from the first one, recommendations listed here are broad in scope and can be used for the whole programme. A number of them might not be relevant for the upcoming project but might be applied within a later project, depending on the priorities and strategic orientations of Progressio.

A. Recommended approaches, actions, themes

1. Adopting a clear position in Al Buraiqa district

The **Al Buraiqa case** has to be given extra care and special attention, due to its very specific and complex context. It seems that very strong pressure should be applied at central government level to get guarantees on the land use, and financial support for at least part of the proposed projects. Progressio should take this responsibility, either by working on it in Sanaa directly with the government, or by trying to gather support from other international organisations to get more weight in the negotiations, while involving members of the community and People’s Committee in this action. If Progressio feels that this responsibility is beyond its mandate, it may decide to withdraw although this would probably result in strongly disappointing the community of Al Khaisa village, leaving them with feelings of abandonment. In any case, the mission recommends not to continue organising participatory planning workshops if no pressure and lobbying work is exercised at central government level whenever necessary, as community members might be losing their motivation when being confronted with disappointment after raising their expectations. Finally, before the construction of the auction bazaar resumes, a written agreement on its appropriate location should be found with the community members and local authorities. As expressed in the focus group discussion in Al Khaisa village, involving the fishermen’s cooperative may help in such negotiations. If the facility is built on a place that is considered as disputed, polluted and/or not adequate, people may not use it and neglect it, and that would be a considerable waste of money, time and energy.

2. Thematic clusters within the networks

Because the networks are now including very different associations with very different topics, it seems difficult to gather all of them around one case they would all want to be advocating for. Hodeidah network initiated **thematic clusters** that may be a hint to get these associations working on various topics and advocating for issues related to their own centre of interest. Some topics are present both in Aden and Hodeidah, and could form a link between the two governorates, as a first step towards establishing joint

initiatives. Associations working with disabled children and adults are included in both networks and might be willing to work together to advocate for better integration of disabled children in schools, better access of handicapped people to governmental buildings, etc.

3. Sharing experience and learning from other initiatives

Documenting similar projects and meeting organisations working in the same fields would be an opportunity to benefit from lessons learned by other stakeholders. Such organisations include Oxfam, Civic Democratic Initiatives Support Foundation, Civic Development Foundation among others.

4. Orientations and themes

4.1 Advocacy

The networks action should be focused on advocacy. People's and Youth committees should take part in advocacy work.

As organisational capacities of partner organisations were enhanced through the previous project, the next project should focus on the capacities that still need to be further developed, such as advocacy skills. Use of **media** as an advocacy tool should be included in this capacity-building process.

Each network will probably suggest issues that should be advocated for, and youth committees will probably come up with other recommendations. However, a few topics are suggested here, that should be discussed with the partners.

- **Advocacy on the decentralisation process**

A large part of the partnership between communities, local authorities and local associations should be devoted to **advocacy work on the decentralisation process**. The decentralisation law has limitations and is not currently fully applied, mostly due to lack of political will. The central government and local authorities are reluctant to relinquish power, either to the local district for the former, or to citizens for the latter. The decentralisation law might be revised under the new constitution, meaning that the decentralisation process is still limited, as explained before. There is a need for changing policies, and this should be carefully considered while designing the next phase.

- **Advocating for the civil society rights**

In addition to social issues, the mission recommends that the networks also start advocating for issues specific to the civil society regulations and access to funds. The law provides for associations paying lower rates for electricity and water, which could help them significantly as it is often difficult to raise money for this kind of costs, however this is generally not implemented. If many associations advocate all together on such a specific point rather than negotiate separately, they may increase their chances of success.

- **Advocacy on civic education**

Including civic education, information and awareness in the school curriculum could be advocated for by the networks.

- **Lobbying towards donors**

Lobbying towards donors may be done as well. The fact that a number of donors continue demanding project proposals written in English in a country whose language is Arabic should be questioned. Calls for proposals that put international and local NGOs in a situation of competition, whereas both have very different level of resources and available capacities, are not helping the local civil society develop itself. Donors could discuss more with local associations, accompany them towards designing and writing better project proposals, but also listen to them and learn from their field experience about the actual needs, the kind of innovative approaches that would seem to work better and should be promoted, etc. Such information and feedback from the field may help donors when designing their objectives, selecting their priorities and preparing their guidelines.

4.2 Capacity-Building

Progressio should continue to make use of **a variety of capacity-building methods**. Training courses are not sufficient to ensure that new ways of working are adopted. DWs' posting and common work with local counterparts enable **on-the-job training** that have more long lasting effects. Partners should be able to take part in **international exposure** visits and participate in international conferences in order to be more familiar with current debates in the international development field and share experience with other similar organisations. Innovative methods such as **the use of media** should be explored as well.

- **Capacity-Building for local associations**

Further capacity-building activities for CSOs should focus on **technical and specific skills**, since managerial and organisational capacities have been already enhanced in the former project. Training programmes should be adapted to each organisation fields of work and will therefore include a very wide range of subjects such as micro-credit, water, sanitation, environment, or education for mentally and/or physically handicapped children and youth.

- **Capacity-Building for networks**

Capacity-building for the two networks should focus on **advocacy skills**. Understanding of what networking means and what it could be used for should be improved.

- **Capacity-Building for Youth**

Youth should be able to access **civic education** courses and material to get a more thorough understanding of terms that were constantly repeated during the last months, such as "democracy", "civil state", "accountability"...

Introductory courses to economics might be thought of as well for the youth in order to better understand the economic situation of their country, the unemployment rates, the effects of corruption on the overall situation, and so on. Unemployed young men and women who are struggling to get a job should have a better knowledge on economics, such as how the government is managing the economy, what it could be

doing or not in terms of jobs creation, or what kind of mechanisms exist in other countries to help people get jobs.

Hints about what young men and women can do to develop their communities should be given as well, through **encouragement to volunteerism, capacity-building of their committees or organisations, involvement in strategic planning of the districts, or involvement in advocacy campaigns of the networks.**

- **Capacity-Building for local authorities**

During the mission, various stakeholders mentioned that there is **very little coordination between governmental offices, public works projects, Social Fund for Development action, donors, and the local authorities.** Capacity-building for local authorities should be directed towards empowering them enough to be able to **coordinate other institutions' local programmes** and eventually to **manage basket funds** through which the government, other organisations and donors would be working on local development. Such an ambitious and long-term aim will obviously require a **very high level of transparency and accountability and excellent financial and technical skills**, but may also be a source of motivation for the local authorities.

- **Capacity-Building on cross-cutting issues: transparency / accountability and participatory development**

The capacity-building activities should include topics on quality issues in development, such as **transparency, accountability, participation, sustainability...** Associations and local authorities should get a clear and deep understanding of what is expected from them in terms of **internal democracy, transparency and accountability.** Improving local governance requires more transparency from all stakeholders. When local associations request the local authorities to make their plans and budgets public, they should be ready to do the same. Such transparent practices would contribute to building trust among the various actors of local governance and development. The Aden Association for Families Development publishes budget details on its website, but it is an uncommon practice among associations that should be more widely spread.

Participatory methods should continue being used and promoted, not only towards the local CSOs, but also towards local authorities, youth and Community-based Organisations. These new partners should also be trained in using participatory methods. Local council members should continue being involved in participatory needs assessments and participatory planning processes.

5. Facilitating fundraising opportunities

In terms of fundraising, **diversity of sources and donors** should continue being strongly encouraged, for instance through **introductory workshops** involving donors, associations and local authorities. Various donors should be encouraged to explain their objectives, priorities and guidelines to both associations and local authorities with a view to helping them understand better what is expected in a project proposal for each donor. At the same time, a few associations could present one of their projects or their overall strategy in order to appeal to the donors but also to provide them with more information on the field experience of local associations. Finally, such workshops could be an opportunity for the associations to advocate towards donors and raise issues related to

the language of project proposals, competition with international NGOs, adapting project management and monitoring procedures to associations' capacities, etc.

Local council members sometimes tend to feel that associations are getting funds easily, while they have no access to such sources of income. **Involving local authorities in such workshops** would help them better understand how difficult fundraising is and what level of transparency and accountability is required. It will also contribute to making them feel they have access to the same level of information about donors and to getting them acquainted with available funding opportunities for local authorities' projects. These workshops could be organised by theme, or by type of donors and support: private sector, Islamic foundations, small-scale grants, large-scale grants, embassies... **Visits to donors** could also be organised to complement these workshops.

Local authorities should be able to go on **exposure visits** to districts that are managing a donor-funded project in order to get a deeper understanding of the challenges faced and possible solutions to overcome these.

Linkages and contacts should be developed in advance with potential funding partners (local or international) whenever projects are aiming at implementing participatory planning approaches. This would significantly reduce the risk of unmet expectations and could also help address the obstacles raised by conflicting interest groups.

B. Recommended mechanisms and nature of partnerships

1. Partners

1.1 Involving partners from the very first stage

All partners, associations, fishermen's cooperatives, other community-based organisations, youth committees and local authorities, should be involved in the project from the very beginning, participating in its design and in writing its logical framework as part of the capacity-building process. They also should take part in **joint activities** in order to **build trust** among them as part of both the advocacy work and of the component on governance. **Common training courses** including local associations, members of the people's and youth committees, representatives of the governmental executive offices in the district, and local authorities can be useful opportunities to deepen the linkages between these various stakeholders, **improve communication and understanding** among them, and **encourage experience sharing**.

1.2 Involving local authorities

Local authorities should be involved **in all stages of the project**, from its design to its evaluation, in order to increase their ownership.

Part of the advocacy work will be targeting them so they should normally not be taking part in it, however they may participate in **a few advocacy activities towards central government**.

They also should be included **in the whole capacity-building process**. Indeed, building the capacities of the related government departments in subjects such as monitoring capacities of Social Affairs, or monitoring transparency with local councils and the private sector, would facilitate common work on these topics.

1.3 Involving youth

Effective participation and governance requires the participation of the young citizens who are willing to build a new Yemen. The **active involvement of youth in the project** should be prepared at an early stage in order to make them not mere passive recipients of the activities, but **partly responsible** for their implementation. Wedyan association is already mobilising the youth in its activities, such practices may be extended. Wedyan's previous experience should be used and built upon, and this association could become a resource in terms of involving youth in the project.

Youth willing to get mobilised, to organise themselves into committees, and to get involved in their communities' development should be encouraged to do so and involved in the project activities, not only as beneficiaries, but also **as participants and stakeholders**.

1.4 Involving new local CSOs and Community-based Organisations

Other CSOs could get involved in the project, as well as Community-based Organisations. For instance, in Al Khaisa village, the local association Al Fardous is active and could be a resource when working with Al Buraiqa local council and with the villagers. Similarly, the fishermen's cooperative could be a crucial partner for mobilising fishermen in solving problems that are directly related to them, such as the location of

the auction bazaar. In Hodeidah, rural organisations such as Al Mustakbal, al Amal and Al-Salif associations could get involved as well to ensure the rural outreach of the project.

2. Two Project Implementation Committees to foster partnerships

The “**Project Implementation Committee**” mechanism should be deeply changed in order to **include new partners** and to distinguish between the two main components of the project, **advocacy and capacity-building**.

Establishing a steering committee that will represent Progressio’s partners/beneficiaries and form a link between Progressio and them is of course needed. But this committee should include not only local associations’ members, but also representatives of the local authorities and of the youth in order to make sure that these stakeholders also feel part of the project and responsible for its success. However, advocacy work will partly target the local authorities themselves. If their representatives are in a position where they can influence the advocacy activities towards themselves, they may try to downsize or hamper such activities. This is why it would seem more adequate to set up **two separate Project Implementation Committees** with two separate budgets and working plans, one for the **capacity-building process**, the other for the **advocacy component**.

People who sit in these steering committees should be selected in a **transparent and democratic way**. A mechanism should be created to get one youth representative elected by all the youth organisations and committees of a district, and enabling each involved district council to elect its representative. Similarly, representatives of the partner associations should be elected. New elections should be held every year to ensure **renewal of the representatives** and to avoid the perception that only few of the partner associations are involved in the decision-making process.

As Progressio is accountable towards its donors on the way the money is spent, it should retain its position as the final decision maker. However, financial plans should be prepared, discussed and agreed on by the steering committees in order to ensure a **bottom-up approach**.

Such Project Implementation Committees would also be an opportunity for the various stakeholders to put theoretical concepts such as internal democracy, transparency and accountability into practice and experience what it means concretely in terms of debate, negotiations, compromises.

C. Recommended management reforms

The **current political context** and its related risks and challenges should be seriously taken into consideration not only in the project design, but also in terms of managerial orientations. For instance, Yemeni DWs may be less constrained by security issues than foreigners, and therefore may be favoured in the future.

1. DW posting

A **DW** could be posted within each network (one in Hodeidah and one in Aden) in order to build up the advocacy capacities of the network as such and of its member organisations. This DW would focus his or her work on the network but could also provide advice and guidelines to the member associations willing to advocate for a specific case.

Partner associations are working on topics that require specific knowledge and skills, like education for mentally and/or physically handicapped children and youth, environmental issues, water and sanitation programmes, management of income-generating activities, so the selected DWs, either Arabic-speaking foreigners or Yemenis, should be as far as possible experts in the field of their host organisation. Although this implies posting as many DWs as there are specific fields, which may be costly, it seems an adequate way to deepen the capacity-building of the partner organisations.

Posting DWs within youth committees may also be considered.

2. Local Counterparts

If hired DWs were fluent in Arabic, local counterparts would not need to be fluent in English any more and would be relieved from the translation workload. In this case, rather than being considered as Progressio staff, they may be members of the partner organisations who benefit from the DW skills as volunteer “focal points”. This would allow having more local counterparts, not only within current partner associations, but also within youth committees and possibly local councils.

3. Consolidating core management

Having various DWs working on the same project will require a **consolidated core management** that can ensure the consistency of the action, be responsible for consolidating reports, monitoring and evaluation, and propose common work plans, methodologies and approaches for joint agreement.

4. Geographical scope

In Aden, working at the governorate level with all 8 districts can be a target to keep in mind, but it might be difficult to reach in a first phase. Objectives should be realistic. Extending the project to six new districts would imply very intensive capacity-building activities with new partners. It may be more achievable to set up the project in just the **few districts** in which partners organisations are already located, like Khur Maksar. In Hodeidah, **rural organisations** could be involved in order to widen the scope of the network.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: List of Participants in the Evaluation

ANNEX 2: List of Partner CSOs

ANNEX 3: Logical Framework

ANNEX 4: List of Planned and Implemented Activities

ANNEX 1: List of Participants in the Evaluation

Aden		
CSOs/Leaders	Al-Tadhamon (Solidarity) Development Society	Khadiga Al-Harsi, & Nema Ali
	Wedyan Association for Community Development	Tameem Abdulrakeeb Al-Namery
Local Authorities	Local Council- Al-Buraiqa District	Mohammed Danami-Finance
	Local Council and Executive Offices- Dar Sa'ad District	Abdulmunaem alabd-secretary general
		Mansor Amer- Social Affairs
		Salem Saeed-Member
		Nada Alakrabi- Executive secretary
	Omer Albaity-Planning committee	
MOPIC Office	Fahmi Saleh Salem Ahmed - Director	
Networks visited	Aden CSOs Network supported by Progressio	
Other networks explored	Al-Irada CSOs Poverty Eradication Network-supported by Oxfam	
Communities/ Committees	Al-Khaisa village (Monitoring Committee and Community representatives: Fuad Ahmed Awadh, Mohammed Salem Hadi, Mohammed Ali Mohammed, Mohammed Danami, Ali Mohammed Salim, Muneib Salim)	
CSOs visited by main evaluation team	Al-Tadhamon (Solidarity) Development Society Wedyan Association for Community Development	
DWs	Nisreen Ali Mohamed Sumar (Al Bureiqa District) Mohammed Fada'aq (Dar Sa'ad District)	

Others		
Progressio Core Team	Abeer Al-Absi (Country Representative/Director) -- Sania Al-Aswadi (program) --- Kaid Al- Sureihi (Finance)	
Oxfam - Sub-office in Hodeidah	Lydia	
IOM	Abdullah Al-Sayari (Progressio ex-director)	

ANNEX 2: List of Partner CSOs

In Aden

- Al-Tadhamon (Solidarity) Development Society
- Wedyan Association for Community Development

ANNEX 3: Logical Framework

	Intervention logic	Objectively verifiable indicators of achievement	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
Overall objective	To assist partner CSOs, communities and local administrative authorities in building their capacities to respond in a unified and informed way to decentralized local governance within the legal framework and laws governing Local Administration Authorities.		DW reports Reports to Irish Aid	
Specific objectives	<p>To improve understanding by partner CSOs, communities and Local Administrative Authorities of participatory and transparent district based planning</p> <p>To improve understanding on the part of local Administration Authorities of the complimentary of collaborative work with CSOs and communities in Al Buraia district and Dar Saad district</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of NGO leaders who have received training and are managing their organisations more effectively • No. of NGOs participating in networks • No of local council leaders who have received training in participatory planning 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a willingness from the NGOs to voice the grassroots needs. • The local authority is willing to involve citizen participation in their plans and budgets. • The local authority is committed to follow up and include the needs of the citizens in the target districts in their plans and budgets. • The political situation and security conditions allow the project to be run smoothly
Expected results	<p>1. By the end of the project at least 2 communities representing 40000 people who are poor and marginalized in Al-Boraia District and Dar Saad District are better equipped to voice their needs to local decision-makers by addressing their needs in the district development plan through participatory planning process and will have adopted concrete strategies to address youth unemployment, environmental issues and increase income through improved livelihoods</p> <p>2. Clear understanding on the part of Local Authority Administration of the complimentary of collaborative work with CSOs and communities in Al-Boraia and Dar Saad Districts</p> <p>3. Through participatory planning process the poor and marginalized people's voice and need addressed and more benefitted than at present.</p>	<p>By the end of the project partner civil society organization (Attadhamon Association for Development) working with selected communities in Al-Boraia District with a total estimated population of 40,000 will have increased by 30% their participation in local development planning processes at the community (sub-district) and district level.</p> <p>Selected community members from the district Al-Boraia will demonstrate higher knowledge regarding their rights to take part in, and details of, participatory planning processes at the end of the project compared to baseline.</p> <p>By the end of the project at least one local/district level development plan will show increased benefits for poor and marginalized community members as compared to baseline</p>		

ANNEX 4: List of Planned and implemented activities

<i>Planned Activites</i>	<i>Implementation</i>
Training program on Local Governance, Participatory Planning and Monitoring Processes	Implemented
Training course on Negotiation Skill and Advocacy skill in the context of Local Governance	Implemented
PRA refresher training	Implemented
Situational Analysis Report of Al Khaisa	Implemented
Participatory Planning Workshop	Implemented
Preparation of an annual development plan of Al Khaisa Village and submission to the local council of the district	Implemented
Training program in policy analysis and Advocacy Skills in regard with local governance and participatory planning (bottom up planning process)	Implemented
Workshop on Participatory Planning and Budgeting	Implemented
Training in Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Process	Implemented
Seminar on local governance practice and future perspectives in Yemen	Implemented
Workshop on Women's representation and participation in decision making process	Implemented
Preparation of Participatory Planning Manual	Implemented
Support the Partner CSO to write proposals for the support of Al Khaisa Village	Implemented
Workshop on writing project proposals	Implemented
Training in Local Administration skills	Implemented
Workshop on Transparency and Fight against Corruption	Implemented
Consultative workshop on the Participatory Planning Manual (for finalisation)	Postponed until 2012