

*“Resilience is the ability of a system, community, individual or a collective society exposed to natural or man-made hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to, and recover from the effects of the hazard in a timely and efficient manner.”*



IOM is promoting the new concept of Pockets of Stability (PoS) among the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT). IOM is looking for partners from UN agencies, international and national Non-Governmental Organizations, towards a more targeted response in regions where returns are occurring, that focuses on stimulating economic recovery and help creating a stable environment to advance the peace and reconstruction.

## Rationale

- Displacement in Yemen has led to dispersed IDP populations, primarily in urban but as well rural areas who are often difficult to identify or assess for vulnerability or specific needs.
- Displaced persons and affected communities include but are not limited to the lack of safety, insecurity, separated families, limited freedom of movement, harassment, limited access to services (shelter, food, water, health, and education), physical disability, mental distress, child recruitment, high cost of living, gender-based violence, lack of livelihood opportunities and lost documentation.
- The ongoing conflict, compounded by natural disasters and pre-existing economic hardship and fragility, has led IOM to address simultaneously prevention and preparedness, emergency response, early recovery, and stabilization through a multi-sectorial response.
- The dynamics of displacement in Yemen continue to shift, with new displacement continuing to occur in areas of prolonged and escalating hostilities, while simultaneously the emergence of return pockets have been observed. Families are currently returning where the security situation has improved and accessibility in different governorates.
- The TFPM in the 14th Report identifies that 84% of the returnee population have returned to just 33 districts. The report suggests that clear pockets of return in areas of relative stability may be materializing, which have been identified within seven consolidated areas where large populations have returned to their location of origin.
- These areas of relative security, essentially “pockets of stability”, are dispersed throughout the country and represent opportunities to promote and build upon the achievements made in stabilization to minimize the negative economic impacts of the crisis on the crisis, build resilience and help prevent future (re-)displacement.

- There is thus a mutual priority to help these returning populations regain lost livelihoods, to minimize the crisis' negative economic impacts on the community, promote social cohesion and stabilization activities, and to counter violent extremism, particularly by addressing the conditions that extremist groups exploit to fuel recruitment and radicalization such as youth unemployment.

## Concept

- As a key member of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) for Yemen, IOM closely collaborates with the UN family, various Yemeni authorities, international and national Non-Governmental Organizations, to provide assistance to the Yemeni population and third country nationals affected by conflict, displacement and marginalization.
- The concept of Pockets of Stability (PoS) is aimed at mobilizing national and international partners towards more targeted assistance in regions where returns are occurring, that focuses on stimulating economic recovery and help creating a stable environment.
- In addition to remaining engaged on crisis-response throughout Yemen, IOM will work within these geographically focused Pockets of Stability to build and develop synergies and encourage the start-up of recovery in areas that show progress in stability.
- The concept is based on increasing household income, building group cohesiveness, and enhancing coping capacities to shocks. With access to capital, groups will be able to more easily access livelihood inputs, and diversify their economic activities. With improved economic well-being, other quality of life areas can be enhanced (access to health care, education and other basic needs). It aims to fuel the peace process and to help the resulting political transition to continue apace.
- Activities focus on building individual, community and local authority resilience to promote autonomy, self-reliance, reconstruction and to generate sustainable development.
- Specifically, the community centered activities aim to mitigate social tensions, promote economic recovery, engage the Yemeni diaspora and embrace reconciliation in regions that have been in protracted conflict, promote collective positive attitudes towards reconstruction and to mitigate the risk of youth joining extremist activities. A more skilled workforce increases production and significantly contributes to stimulating local economic growth. Adopting a peer-focused process, which promotes linkages between individuals, households and groups to further reconciliation among community members.
- The concept is innovative and unique as it strives to engage the Yemeni diaspora and establish a new network of alliances and collaborations which will not be bound by national borders. It presents a platform through which Yemeni diaspora can easily access investment opportunities in their native land and at the same time support their families to invest as a means to fostering the peace process. Engagement of the diaspora in economic development initiatives will significantly contribute to stimulating critical economic growth.
- Further, the Pockets of Stability concept contains a strong peer element that creates business linkages to investors outside the country; that encourage self-selecting and self-replicating groups to reach out to other groups such as vulnerable youth, persons with disabilities and women to either join their group or consider starting their own; and that call for self-enterprises to create a minimum of one additional job for either returnees or their community members, multiplying the overall socio-economic benefit for the community.
- Efforts also aim to exploit contemporary technologies through the design of mobile applications and a webpage that would generate exposure of newly created Yemeni enterprises; increase their purchasing capacity and give direct access to goods that they produce; share information on investment opportunities; and potentially motivate crowdfunding from the Yemeni population, including the diaspora and other persons abroad.



## Approach

- The goal is to complement the immediate assistance to address the vulnerabilities and needs of IDPs, returnees and host communities to alleviate the pressures of the ongoing displacement and returns, with early recovery efforts that help returnees and conflict-affected populations increase self-reliance and economic development for themselves and for the well-being of their communities.

- Multi-year approaches, with short, medium and longer-term perspectives, are necessary to establish a sustainable footing for the project's community-led methodologies.
- Activities focus on strengthening local administrative capacity and further targets the individual and collective level. Close engagement with traditional leaders, local elders and religious chefs to ensure the actions and approaches are in line with the community's priorities and needs. Whenever possible, items and services are procured locally to support community economies and economic well-being.
- Beneficiaries are selected through a participatory process involving local authorities. Once communities have been identified, local committees, consisting of traditional leaders, local elders, women and youth, discuss and formulate a "suitable selection criteria" to identify the most vulnerable youth, women and persons with disabilities to benefit from this project.
- Based on the central premise of building economic self-reliance and improving the overall socio-economic well-being of the community through sustainable and meaningful livelihoods,



The activity areas follow four streams:

**1 - Training and employment generation:** - Vocational training focuses on the construction trades such as masonry, carpentry, plumbing, solar power installations and welding, as well as trades traditionally carried out by Yemeni women, such as baking, sewing, cosmetology and basket weaving.



- Specific training modules for intensive small business start-up training courses exploring feasibility, development of a business plan and basic accounting practice required to run small businesses.
- Successful alumni of the training qualify for an in-kind business start-up kit for completion of the training curriculum, completion of a business plan and proof of a suitable location. IOM Livelihoods specialist accompany the beneficiaries or the first 6 months by with ad-hoc visits and refreshment trainings.

**2 - Diaspora mobilization and engagement:** - Strengthen the links between the Yemeni diaspora businesses and communities, particularly by opening communication channels that expose and promote investment opportunities in Yemen, including opening windows for crowdfunding. Opportunities that specifically foster reconstruction and stability would be especially encouraged.



- Facilitate the transfer of technical and financial support to vulnerable conflict affected individuals/groups.
- Support the transfer of knowledge (training and technical assistance) from skilled diaspora members in priority areas of recovery and long term development.

**3 - Financial services:** - Roll-out of Village Savings and Investments Organizations (VISIONs) to increase the income of targeted persons or households in return areas, particularly women, youth, and persons with disabilities. VISIONs help these beneficiaries access effective financial savings tool as well as to pooled funding to inject seed capital in support of income-generating start-ups.



- The financial services keep money in the community through small initial loans of \$5 to \$20; inject seed capital as grants to boost the lending capacity of the community savings and loans groups (groups consisting of a minimum of 10 members and maximum of 20).
- For beneficiaries, the assistance bolsters their production capacities towards, which not only restores their own livelihood but that also stimulates domestic economies.
- Training groups on how to manage savings and internal lending procedures using a memory and ledger-based simple book-keeping system. The groups will conduct all transactions at public meetings to ensure transparency and accountability.

**4 - Stabilization** - Quick impact projects that will foster the conditions on the ground to create peaceful coexistence through community stabilization approaches that will deter the likelihood of outbreak of future conflict.

- Community asset rehabilitation to meet urgent stabilization and reconstruction needs in the immediate post-conflict/separation phase;
- Provision of livelihood activities to promoting employment and boosting the local economy; and Analysis and identify community-level conflict to understand the driving factors, impact, dynamic, as well as the potential solutions, and resources to establish a resolution through community-led interventions to contribute to promoting social cohesion the resumption of normal life in post-conflict societies;
- Launch awareness sessions and the establishment of working groups and community committees to discuss and visibly demonstrating the benefits of stability and peace.

## ● IOM Support Structure:

- IOM Yemen Country Office is situated in Sana'a and houses technical and senior management team whose primary coordinating mechanism will provide general oversight, methodological guidance.



- The team includes specialists and lead managers in various thematic areas including recovery, protection, health, gender, finance, logistics, monitoring and evaluation who they will maintain daily contact with the actual implementers
- In Aden, IOM has a pre-stationed competent multi-disciplinary team, already experienced working on provision of direct assistance, livelihoods, WASH, health, protection and gender programming.
- In the specific locations, the team will take a lead role on operational/implementation level coordination including liaison with relevant local authorities, traditional and religious leaders.
- Following IOM business model: As Yemeni nationals, the Aden team is able to easily access returns locations and communities in targeted areas of return and report back to the head of office and Sana'a using standardize reporting tools that track performance indicators towards targets.

**The Pocket of Stability concept of IOM Yemen is developed to support the Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF) of IOM and to expand the focus of the national strategies to foster stability in areas which experience large returns.**

The “National Policy for Addressing Internal Displacement” presents a major step forward in addressing the situation of IDPs by acknowledging IDPs’ essential rights and putting them at the center of the crisis response. The UN HCT “Strategy for IDP response in Yemen” offers a rights-based, theoretical baseline to support the development of action plans to reduce IDPs’ vulnerability while IOM “Migration Crisis Operational Framework for Yemen (MCOF)” offers a comprehensive guideline for strategic planning and response, in order to ensure coherent and effective transitions between interventions in all phases of the crisis. The MCOF lays the ground work for programmatic development and strategic planning to address current and foreseen needs in the coming years in Yemen. IOM has made every effort to look inward to find the specific added value to thematic areas during a migration crisis so that it will functionally operate and be able to provide the best guidance to assist the State and its people and as a result, mitigate the negative effects of, respond to, and recover from a migration crises.

**The Pockets of Stability Concept is grounded by a rights-based approach, a proactive approach for the development of operational action plans and holistic consideration to ensure a coherent and effective transition between interventions in all phases of a migration crisis.**



IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society.

