



IN BRIEF

END OF PROGRAM EVALUATION: LEAP III PROGRAMME ON STRENGTHENING PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS FROM THE DISPROPORTIONATE AND ADVERSE GENDERED IMPACTS OF DROUGHT AND FAMINE IN SOMALIA

Photo: UN Women Somalia

Programme description

The LEAP III project supported [drought and famine-affected women, girls, and youth](#) in four districts in Somalia to [strengthen resilience, livelihood opportunities, and protection interventions](#). Building on the successes of previous LEAP II project initiatives, the current projects enhanced the effectiveness and reach of interventions, ensuring that the specific needs of women and girls are addressed comprehensively by incorporating lessons learned and best practices from past efforts, these initiatives strive to create sustainable and impactful change in crisis-affected communities.

The project adapted gender-responsive strategies that foster the participation and empowerment of vulnerable women and girls, who were identified as having the lowest coping capacity for shocks and the greatest vulnerability to climate disasters, including drought.

Funded by the Government of Japan, the programme was implemented from March 2023- February 2024 in four locations of Somalia: Kismayo, Baidoa, Garowe, and Banadir with a budget of USD 600,000.

Evaluation Overview

The evaluation aimed to assess the progress and impact of UN Women's initiatives over the past year. The evaluation was undertaken to provide transparency to key stakeholders, including donors, community partners, and the affected population, on how resources were utilized and whether the project made meaningful progress towards the stated goals. Furthermore, it aimed to demonstrate accountability for the commitments of the project.

Furthermore, it sought to identify areas of strength and weakness in the project and operations, in order to inform future planning and continuous improvement.

Key achievements

- The project successfully reached 10,980 individuals (7,765 female ; 3,215 male). The project exceeded the overall target beneficiary count by about 18%, surpassing the initial goal of 9,200 beneficiaries.
- The findings indicate that the assistance, training, and activities had a positive impact on the well-being of participants, as perceived by the majority.
- The respondents also acknowledged the contribution of the projects or activities in enhancing society's capacity to address gender inequalities, although a significant portion remained neutral on this aspect.
- 64% of respondents strongly agreed that the project had effectively implemented SGBV prevention and response measures.
- 72% of respondents agreed that the project had raised awareness on SGBV-related rights and support services.

Conclusions

RELEVANCE

- The LEAP III Project proved to be an impeccably timed intervention, arriving precisely when it was most needed amidst the drought and electioneering period in target locations such as Puntland.

- However, the participants in Kismayo emphasized the need to expand the project's scope and provide support to more women and girls facing challenges in life. Feedback provided stated that the project's impact has been limited due to the growing population of internally displaced persons (IDPs) who require immediate tangible support such as food and shelter.

COHERENCE

- LEAP III project aligns well with UN Women Somalia's strategic focus on promoting gender equality, women's empowerment, and addressing the heightened vulnerabilities of women and girls in the context of the humanitarian crisis in Somalia. The project seeks to enhance the resilience and well-being of women and girls in IDP settlements and host communities, which directly supports UN Women's strategic priorities in the country.

EFFICIENCY

- The majority of activities within the project demonstrated a commendable level of budget utilization, effectively maximizing the resources allocated to them.
- However, the duration of the project may have been inadequate given the extensive range of activities that were planned.
- The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) project was conducted for a two-month period which was considerably short for a project aimed at equipping individuals with the skills necessary for employment and economic empowerment.

SUSTAINABILITY

- The project's focus on establishing sustainable structures and mechanisms, along with capacity-building initiatives, demonstrated a strategic and analytical approach to ensuring the enduring benefits of the project.

Lessons learned

The evaluation identified the following lessons with significance beyond the program:

- 1 **Conducting community conversations and dialogues led by community opinion leaders** is a powerful method to promote mindset shifts towards gender equality and women's empowerment as it creates a platform for open discussions and engagement among community members, fostering a sense of ownership and collective action

- 2 **Awareness-raising and environmental education campaigns on climate change action** demonstrates a proactive approach to empower women, girls, youth, and men to address climate change issues.

- 3 **By providing training and support to VSLAs,** women gain the necessary skills and resources to improve their standard of living, diversify their production, and gain financial accessibility.

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Expand the geographic reach of the project.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Revise the duration of the project by: 1) extending the TVET project duration to at least 6 months, 2) conducting a thorough assessment of resource requirements and providing adequate in-kind grants to support graduates, and 3) offering ongoing business support and mentorship

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Strengthen existing stakeholder partnerships to foster a coordinated and holistic approach, leveraging diverse expertise and resources.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Diversify income-generating activities and support sustainable livelihoods, including access to financial resources and markets.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Integrate climate change action and resilience-building components to address the increasing impact of climate change.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

Establish community-based support systems, such as women's organizations and community watch groups, to address and prevent SGBV.

RECOMMENDATION 7:

Improve access to justice and legal protection for survivors of SGBV, including strengthening legal frameworks and enhancing capacity in the legal and law enforcement sectors.