

**THIRD ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT
UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SECURITY TRUST FUND**

**“Enhancing Human Security and Building Resilient Societies
in Disadvantaged Communities of Armenia”**

**IMPLEMENTING UN AGENCIES IN ARMENIA
UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, UNIDO, IOM, FAO**

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Executive summary

The reporting period has shown dramatic impacts on human security vulnerabilities of target communities due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the military hostilities in and around Nagorno-Karabakh (NK). The human capital gains achieved thus far saw a decline, while poverty rates were on the rise, accompanied by a negative GDP growth. Both crises deepened existing vulnerabilities of communities and households, led to emergence of new types of vulnerable groups (e.g., those in the informal sector, displaced and hosting families) with severe socio-economic consequences.

Although the pandemic-related restrictions and changes made by government agencies continued to apply additional constraints to Project activities, the six implementing UN agencies were able to adapt to these constraints and deliver gender balanced and inclusive outputs for achieving the SDGs while leaving no one behind. This was made possible thanks to the compounding achievements the Project has realized since 2018 in terms of building local capacities for community resilience and establishing partnerships with local administrations, social services, NGOs, farmers, migrants, among others.

The notion of strengthening the resilience and disaster risk management (DRM) capacities of target communities gained further importance in the pandemic era and following the impacts of the conflict. Critical educational facilities such as schools and kindergartens were equipped with sources of renewable electric power, which will also ensure sustainable savings for many years to invest in other safety and security related needs. Additional early warning systems were installed in most vulnerable bordering villages, increasing community preparedness against disasters and shocks. PPPs were supported for investing in agricultural DRR, increasing quality and quantity of local agricultural production for many years. The PSS center established in the Berd community will provide services that improve psychological health and human security, while also transferring knowledge and skills for overcoming crisis situations and building resilience. Strengthening of comprehensive school safety continued in 52 schools, with active engagement of adolescents and community representatives, further built resilience and preparedness for DRR.

Social protection and education priorities saw a shift from long-term social transformation to immediate social relief activities, including provision of life-saving and basic support to the displaced population. Review and validation of needs was necessary to advance on planned outputs and activities on local social planning. The needs of 2,191 persons (611 men, 814 women, 406 boys and 360 girls) affected by effects of COVID-19, conflict and poverty were assessed in collaboration with the National Institute of Labour and Social Research, informing future programmes for these groups by the Government. Six local social projects were developed in a participatory manner by target communities, subject to confirmation by MoTAI and implementation in the project extension period.

5 income-generation opportunities were created with well formulated approaches to ensure the viability of sustainable, mutually connected and modern agricultural and non-agricultural local business entrepreneurs, including dry fruit and cheese manufacturing, vegetable and berry processing, etc. The Project significantly strengthened the community level waste management and plastic processing, thus not only contributing to service provision, and recycling culture, but also creating additional jobs, advancing responsibility, and improving environmental security.

The 20 established micro-businesses by the returning and potential migrants in the target communities helped to alleviate the socio-economic pressures on households. Moreover, a social media campaign on behavioral changes was initiated aimed at improving the overall understanding and behavior of the local and displaced populations in regards to preventing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and other health issues, also providing stress management and psycho-social support to the affected population.

The local capacities on integrated soil and nutrition management and soil conservation in the Amasia community were profoundly enhanced through 3 piloted conservation agriculture projects, on-job training and workshops. IPM demonstration pilots were established for 3 pilot grapevines and demonstration farms on advanced irrigation techniques were introduced for 5 demonstration farms in Berd community. The local capacities of farmers, public and private extension service in Berd community, as well as of the professors and students of the ANAU were enhanced through series of workshops and hands-on trainings. The piloted projects were highly appreciated by the Ministry of Economy of Armenia, further adopting their good practices in Government Programme 2021-2026 for further scale-up and replication.

Efforts concluded in 2020 to strengthen food security in target communities have generated tangible results during the reporting period. Participating farmers have seen an increase in profit and purchasing power through their increased capacity to produce healthy marketable food. The local communities have seen an increased diversification of income-generating opportunities, and an enhancement of the ability of members to access healthy food. Finally, the impact at national level has been that green, clean, profitable, and gender sensitive food value chains contribute vitally to availability of affordable healthy food for all.

List of acronyms

ANAU	Armenian State Agrarian University
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CSS	Comprehensive School Safety
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EWS	Early Warning Systems
GE	Gender Equality
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
HS	Human Security
LLRM	Local Level Risk Management
MTAI	Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure
MLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MESCS	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport
MOE	Ministry of Economy
MES	Ministry of Emergency Situations
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NK	Nagorno Karabakh
PSS	Psycho-Social Support
PPP	Private-Public Partnership
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Project
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Agency
UNTFHS	United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme

1. Results

The completed **Results Monitoring Report** is attached as **Annex 1**, covering all the activities and results under this project funded by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) along with funding sources from the implementing agencies, and the Government of Armenia. Key results and detailed descriptions of the main activities conducted throughout the reporting period are highlighted in this report.

Objective 1: To ensure early prevention and sustainability of interventions through identification of root causes of threats to human security and enhancing community resilience.

Thanks to its presence and achievements registered since 2018 in terms of building local capacities for community resilience and established partnerships, the Project was able to capitalize on its successes, further supporting the local community risk-informed development, leveraging it with the Human Security (HS) approach.

Based on the multiple DRR trainings, developed and officially adopted community DRM Plans, and formulated Community Resilience Action Plans during the 2018-2020 period, the Project team continued its monitoring and advisory meetings at the Amasia, Alaverdi, Berd and Tumanyan consolidated communities, including with the Mayors, Local administration staff and Community resilience teams, to ensure that above mentioned new regulations are actually being utilized and the established institutions have the necessary impetus and advisory support for realization of their tasks and responsibilities.

In this regard, it is important to highlight the political and administrative support received from the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure (as the Project senior beneficiary) and from the Mayors of the target communities. Based on this enhanced partnerships and previously conducted needs assessments, several Project interventions were generated, combined with sustainable solutions and boosted with local participation, contributing to community resilience and DRR.

The secondary schools of Amasia and Tumanyan communities were equipped with solar energy panels and a provision that they will continue receiving the funds previously spent on electricity, generating sustainable savings for investing in other DRR initiatives that improve resilience.

The partnership modality within this pilot proved to be very effective, and, based on written requests from respective mayors, similar modalities were utilized to equip the Alaverdi #6 Kindergarten and the Berd Multifunctional College, where in partnership with UNDP Small Grant Programme a laboratory will be established on solar technologies for further developing the local human capital in Berd community.

Based on identified needs by the BERD CRT and official municipal request, the Project supported the procurement and installation of early warning systems (EWS) in Varagavan, Itsakar and Verin Tsaghkavan settlements of the Berd consolidated community and integrated with the nationwide early warning network of the Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES).

At the request of the Alaverdi City Resilience Team and in close cooperation with the MES Lori regional department, the Project supported the demolition of highly steep and dangerous rock slop hanging over a main Sarahart-Sanahin road in targeted Alaverdi community, identified during Local Level Risk Management (LLRM) assessment, following which the mountain slope surface was profoundly stabilized with high-tensile steel wire mesh and nailing.

The Project continued building partnerships with agricultural entities while supporting private investments in agricultural disaster risk reduction (DRR). To this end, anti-hail protection systems were installed for a total of 3 ha of apple orchards, with 85% private investments, while UNDP supported with the 15% of the expenses. The support will ensure increase of quality and quantity of local agricultural production for many years, while instantly showcasing another effective incentive for further replication through other Projects and future scale-up.

Comprehensive school safety (CSS) activities continued by UNICEF in the target communities in close collaboration with the National DRR Platform, including activation of children and adolescents in engaging in community DRR,

which was previously constrained due to disruptions in the education system and further epidemiological situation because of COVID-19.

Child sensitive local hazard profiles and scenarios, as well as maps were developed in all four consolidated communities. The developed materials will help schools to identify the dangers and risks in their communities, as well as can be used in training courses and learning activities.

Two-day interactive teaching and learning seminars (8) on DRM (including LLRM methodology and electronic maps) were organized for 123 teachers (62 male, 61 female) and 18 school administrators (7 male, 11 female) belonging to 49 schools in four consolidated communities. Special attention was paid to the data collection process on vulnerabilities and hazards, data analysis and selection of DRR actions as well as inclusion of adolescents in community-related problem-solving activities. Later, a three-day online training series were organized for all 52 schools on the involvement of students in DRM activities. Special attention was paid to the methodology for teachers working with DRR teams with emphasis on modern practices. Members of 36 school clubs with 234 students (92 boys, 142 girls) from target schools participated in learning-by-doing exercises on DRM and school safety. DRM teams formed in schools, together with experts, selected a problem in the community, developed a project and came up with suggestions on possible solutions. The results will be showcased by school teams as part of a competition in the four target communities.

Finally, the behavior change communication (BCC) strategy/roadmap (including needs assessment, development, piloting, presentation and finalization of BCC strategy/ roadmap) was developed for the MES and for the field in general. 115 people (58 school children, 47 teachers, 10 representatives and experts of state agencies, international organizations) participated in the needs assessment and the results of the evaluation and the solutions proposed by the expert were presented to students of Alaverdi and Tumanyan. 39 persons took part in the discussions, of which 22 were students (16 girls and 6 boys) and 13 were teachers (all female). The Strategy/Roadmap was presented to MoE and different partners and stakeholders and will be reviewed and finalized in November 2021.

Objective 2: To strengthen social protection and social inclusion to improve human security in targeted communities

During the reporting period, progress was uneven on various aspects of social protection for vulnerable families and children, considering the dual crises of COVID-19 and conflict. The COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect Armenian communities, deepening already existing inequalities, vulnerabilities and deprivations as well as making room for emerging vulnerabilities, also amongst formerly non-poor households. The conflict led to a largely humanitarian response to the displaced population within the UN Inter-agency Response Plan. At the same time, the crises created room for advancement of shock-responsive social protection solutions, ranging from immediate needs assessments to development of more sustainable and systemic changes. In this situation, the implementation of activities was largely constrained and had to adapt to changing realities.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA) has undertaken large scale reforms in the social protection field, which directly impact the delivery of social services at local level. The guidelines for social workers that were developed for early identification, prevention and response to human security social needs were adapted to the crisis context and tested in collaboration between UNICEF, MLSA and the National Institute of Labour and Social Research (NILSR) through a comprehensive needs assessment targeting 29,110 households affected by COVID-19, conflict and poverty across the country. Out of these, 2,191 persons (611 men, 814 women, 406 boys and 360 girls, as well as 691 displaced persons) were assessed from target communities, including 514 in Tumanyan, 399 in Alaverdi, 169 in Amasia and 1,109 in Berd. The needs assessment was conducted by 46 trained social workers (27 men, 19 women) in Tavush, Lori and Shirak regions. The results informed immediate support by MLSA for these groups and paved the way for changes in the social protection sector as part of ongoing reforms. As a result of testing and in consultation with MLSA, the guidelines served as a basis for a concept note for a new system of family social needs assessment,

including during shocks, for early identification of human security vulnerabilities, as part of overall integrated social services and social protection reforms. As part of this work, the questionnaires are being revised and business processes mapped, including at the local level (exp. in January 2022). Moreover, consultancy work was done, including recommendations for damage and loss determination from the social aspect during shocks and crises, thus linking needs assessment with DRM. These will be further elaborated as part of family social needs assessment and cross-linkages between different management information systems.

As part of the broader revision of the Law on Social Assistance, the clarification of roles and responsibilities between community social workers and case managers continued, capitalizing on the reform in Yerevan municipality supported by the project. Once these changes are embedded into the legal framework in early 2022, they will be presented as best practices also in the target communities.

At the same time, agreement was reached between UNICEF, MLSA and NILSR on supporting peer-to-peer workshops and capacity development of social workers at local level, including from target communities and regions, on a wide range of topics, including integrated social services reform and the role of social protection, overview of various benefit schemes, case management and social work, presentation and discussion on problematic cases, dealing with cases of children, women, violence, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration. These workshops are scheduled for November 2021-January 2022 with UNTFHS and UNICEF complementary funding.

A workshop was organized for nine representatives (3 female, 6 male) of community administrations and NGOs from target communities to discuss local social planning as part of the territorial needs assessments conducted in the previous phase of the project, including changed social needs. As a result, six local social projects were developed in a participatory manner by target communities:

- Berd: increasing access to preschool services and capacity development of job-seeking skills of women; making Berd community more inclusive, including environmental adaptation,
- Amasia: increasing awareness on social services and access to preschool services; increasing capacities of existing services for support to the elderly,
- Alaverdi: development of a women's support center; support to employment of vulnerable groups through establishment of a fruit drying facility,
- Tumanyan: establishment of a youth engagement corner in Lorut village; support to entrepreneurship through carpet-making.

These ideas were further developed into local social projects, including in consultation with community councils and administrations, and are pending prioritization and confirmation by MoTAI and subsequent implementation in the project extension period with appropriate visibility.

Moreover, the team of experts continued the work on creating more sustainable mechanisms for financing of local social projects, building on the regulation developed for Yerevan municipality and suggesting concrete legislative changes in this regard. The draft package will be ready by end 2021.

Objective 3: To address the economic and food insecurity in the target communities through strengthened livelihoods, creation of sustainable economic opportunities and capacity building.

The project made a significant progress towards enhancing human security and local economic development through continuous support for establishment of micro-businesses and creating income generation opportunities in the target communities. It helped to mitigate the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 crisis and consequences of the hostilities in and around NK, as well as to reduce risks associated with irregular emigration, including risk of trafficking and labour exploitation. To this end, 20 microbusinesses have been established and 21 income generation opportunities

were created, supporting returning and potential migrants in Tumanyan, Alaverdi and Berd communities. In particular, 17 sheep breeding businesses have been created in the Amasia community. To ensure the sustainability of the supported businesses, one value chain-based business model was established in close cooperation and partnership between the IOM and UNIDO. The named model was selected through a competitive open call application process, based on an open call communication strategy and producer groups selection criteria, which was developed at the beginning of the Project's implementation. On the other end of the value chain is the Amasia wool factory, supported by the UNIDO component, buying sheep wool from the above-mentioned supported beneficiaries. Elsewhere in Aygedzor village of Berd community, a family of returned migrants from Russian Federation has been supported in the creation of a business in production of poultry.

The Project implementing agencies, within their capacities and mandates, established strategies to mitigate the emerging substantial socio-economic challenges for the NK crisis-affected populations that were displaced into the target communities. In this regard, several families of missing and severely wounded soldiers were supported in the establishment of small businesses, mainly in the field of beekeeping and pig breeding.

The created additional job places and sustainable income generating opportunities in target communities aim to address the current socio-economic challenges, due to both COVID-19 pandemic and war, and to mitigate the economic vulnerabilities of both local and displaced populations and returned migrants.

The resilience of local communities was strengthened and the awareness of local population was enhanced through professionally designed social media campaigns to promote on behavioral change named "[Frankly speaking](#)", which aimed to improve the understanding and overall behavior of population relating to the prevention of the COVID-19 pandemic and on the measures to undertake to overcome it. Stress management and mental health and PSS were targeted by the campaign for the local and displaced populations.

Thus, at the end of the reporting process one producer group, and 20 micro-businesses have been supported and 21 income generation opportunities created. The created additional job places and sustainable income generation opportunities in target communities aim to address current socio-economic challenges, anticipated consequences of both the COVID-19 pandemic and war, and to mitigate the economic vulnerabilities of both local and displaced populations and returned migrants.

Voghji (Shirak) and Alaverdi (Lori) producer group received cheese processing equipment according to the needs and market demand identified during the due-diligence stage and validated by the technical expert hired by the project. Both producer groups are at the stage of equipment installation and launch of production. Voghji will operate with 1 ton of raw milk processing capacity, employ three workers and supply milk from more than 100 families for surrounding settlements. In case of Alaverdi, 3 tons capacity per shift is envisaged and procurement from more than five neighborhood settlements is planned. The producer group will hire up to 20 people. Procurement and delivery of fruit and vegetable processing equipment completed in September and the group (Choratan, Tavush) will complete installation at the end of December. After launch, the group is planning to produce berry jams and during the agricultural season the production range will be expanded, fruit compotes and various processed vegetables cultivated in the community and province.

Delivery of 150 garbage containers and plastic press/bailer was provided to Alaverdi municipality for separate plastic collection. Currently, the municipality is finishing construction of a dedicated area for plastic waste consolidation, press and bailing for further supply to a processing plant that will be established in Vanadzor, Lori province center.

Identification of additional producer groups to support, including application of renewable energy in agricultural practices is ongoing. Due to the suggested budget revision UNIDO will be able to support more groups than planned. The main focus will be vulnerable families and groups in the targeted regions involved in agro processing.

Two pilot grapevine IPM demonstration plots were established in Tavush village (1,2 ha and 0,5 ha respectively) and one demonstration grapevine IPM plot in Chinari village (0,5 ha) of Berd community in 2020. The established vineyards are regularly monitored for their effectiveness in terms of IPM application scheme, identification of harmful organisms, etc. On job training for the host farmers as well as other beneficiary farmers were also organized, with provision of recommendations on IPM and harvesting, as well as on usage of pheromone delta trap.

Three training/workshops on IPM of vineyards were organized in Tavush, Paravakar and Choratan villages with more than 100 participants (85 men and 15 women) from different villages of Tavush community as well as the representatives of Agriculture Extension Service and Armenian Brandy Factory, which works with most of the grape producing farmers in the region. The following topics were introduced during the events: “The main principles of the IPM” and “Grapevine pests and diseases and their integrated management”. The relevant press releases and news were published on the website of the Armenian National Agrarian University: anau.am 1; anau.am 2.

As a result of training/workshops, field days and on job training the participants’ capacities were enhanced on understanding the importance of cooperation between farmers in organization of joint pest management, understanding the main principles of IPM for grapevine cultivation, increasing skills on the safe and effective use of pesticides and rotation of the pesticide active ingredients and understanding of the preharvest interval (PHI) for pesticides, and the importance of the use of personal protective equipment, using different methods for IPM and using fertilization for increasing plant immunity system.

“Main grapevine pests and diseases and integrated pest management” booklet was published (1000 copies) and introduced to farmers and other interested parties during the organized meetings, workshops, on-job training and other events.

During two years of implementation of the grapevine integrated pest management (IPM) program in Tavush marz, the project has promoted agriculture - biodiversity relationships and the agroecosystem approach. Beneficiary farmers now have skills to evaluate the current situation, to use IPM tools and tactics to control pests. One of the main objectives of the project is the long-term implementation of grape IPM, as well as to provide sustainability of this component, and consolidate the results of the demonstrations and accumulated achievements and experience of the farmers. Thus, it is agreed to provide some agricultural inputs for 2022, so that farmers will have more sustainable results for introducing other grape growing farmers.

The technical assistance will be provided till the end of the project and in case needed the local representative of the Department of Agricultural Extension, Innovation and Monitoring department of the Ministry Economy will continue supporting beneficiary farmers.

The demonstration farms on advanced irrigation systems were installed and commissioned in five orchards and vineyards in the end of 2020: 1 kaki (persimmon) (0.7 ha in Choratan village of Berd community), hazelnut (0,8 ha in Berd of Berd community) and 1walnut (0,8 ha in Berd of Berd community) orchards and 2 vineyards (0.5 ha and 0.15 ha both of them are in Verin Karmiraghbyur village of the Berd community). The farmers are successfully operating them.

Two of the host farmers continued the installation of irrigation systems in the same plot on different crops such as figs in Choratan village (about 1.5 hectares) and pear in Berd community (about 1 hectare) based on the techniques introduced on the demonstration fields and using already installed systems and head unites for each irrigation system by the project.

During the irrigation season, on-job training on management and maintenance of irrigation systems, recommendations and advice on irrigation scheduling and irrigation operation and maintenance were provided and lessons learned were

shared with other farmers that are interested in the installation of drip irrigation as well as other advanced irrigation technologies.

2-day on-job training/workshops were organized during which the demonstration sites of advanced irrigation techniques hosted students and professors of the Agrarian Engineering Faculty of the Armenian National Agrarian University as well as farmers and other beneficiaries, and the benefits of the installed advanced irrigation systems were presented by the trainers as well as the host farmers. Tools and devices for irrigation scheduling were introduced. The training participants studied the structure of the drip irrigation, water sources, and the quality indicators of irrigation water. During the event the impact of drip irrigation on the quantity and quality of crops' yield, pest and diseases, weeds, the mechanization of agricultural work and other features were also presented, and the capacities of the participants were enhanced. In total, more than 20 people participated in the training (15 men and 5 women). A press release was prepared by and published on the website of the Agrarian University: anau.am

Another 2 workshops on “Necessity and possibilities of introducing advanced irrigation techniques in the Tavush region - methods, installation, management and maintenance of the systems” were organized in Paravakar and Choratan villages (more details on IPM are provided above). A booklet on “Advanced irrigation techniques and possibilities of their application” was developed.

Introduction of drip irrigation is a priority for the Government of Armenia, and it is mentioned in the recently adopted Government programme 2021-2025: “The Government will be promoting the roll out of sparing mode of water use through new technologies, including through drip and sprinkler irrigation, as well as use of mechanisms for compensation of the irrigation water fees”. Traditionally the amount of precipitation in Berd region is quite high, but in recent years, it has sharply decreased; even some of the water sources have dried up and farmers have not been able to irrigate their fields and orchards properly.

Taking into account the above-mentioned and in order to efficiently use the remaining budget it was discussed and agreed with the project management team to establish additional 3-5 demonstration fields on advanced irrigation techniques in other villages of Berd community including also other crops. The new demonstration farms on advanced irrigation techniques as well as the farms which have already been established in the framework of the project will have a catalytic effect on other farmers and project beneficiaries to replicate those technologies.

During field visits, workshops/training and considering the suggestions and recommendations provided by the local representative of the Department of Agricultural Extension, Innovation and Monitoring of the Ministry Economy and the Armenian Brandy Factory, some beneficiary farmers and fields, orchards, vineyards were identified and preliminary evaluation was done. Based on the final selection the detailed technical specifications will be developed and relevant detailed budget for establishment of new demonstration farms will be calculated.

For continuing showcasing to farmers and other stakeholders the benefits and challenges of adopting conservation agriculture and conventional farmers' practices, the project continued its activities with the same farmers and three demonstration/trials fields on Conservation Agriculture with the average size of 2.0 hectares for lentil and spring barley production were established in the Amasia community. Demonstration fields of lentil production were established in Voghji and Amasia and spring barley in Byurakn villages of Amasia communities. Ongoing consultations and recommendations were provided to host beneficiary farmers related to fertilizer applications, weed control, and general field and crop management during the vegetation period.

On a negative side, considerably below-average precipitation amounts and warmer-than-average temperatures since May 2021 resulted in drought conditions in most parts of the country especially in non-irrigated areas, negatively affecting vegetation conditions, including in Shirak region. The Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of the country announced that the water in the rivers were about 20 percent of average quantities. These

unfavorable weather conditions had a negative impact on cereals, legumes and fodder crops including on the yields of demonstration fields.

Nutrition-sensitive food value chains have an important role to play in decreasing poverty and malnutrition rates, and at the same time have significant potential to enhance food security and resilience to shocks. In this regard, the Project support for the local communities served to enhance their access to food security, provide employment opportunities in rural areas, and access to education related to food value chains. By establishment of a farmers cooperative group, and investment in mechanized processes, the size of harvested land in Berd has increased by 422 percent compared to the outset of the project in 2019. The selected Berd community farmers were also equipped with best agricultural practices and access to agricultural machinery that increased the amount of land cultivated, allowing the small-scale producers to increase their yields by more than 300 percent while decreasing labour requirements in this sparsely populated area. Overall, WFP has strengthened the livelihoods of 77 farmers (31 men, 46 women) through training and the provision of necessary agricultural inputs to increase productivity, enhance efficiency and expand land coverage.

The trainings included agricultural techniques on the harvesting of specific nutritional crops (pulses and beans) that are underproduced in Armenia but have strong market potential due to high demand and strong return on investment. Innovative agricultural technologies were introduced to the farmers to increase efficiency of the processing of the harvested crops and to decrease post-harvest losses. By the close of the project these post-harvest losses are estimated to have reduced by 20 percent. The farmers' cooperative was registered as a retailer with WFP given their ability to supply quality produce. A formal marketing strategy was introduced, including packaging that meets national standards in terms of food safety guarantees and nutritional information. The cooperative now has the opportunity to participate in competitive procurement processes and increase sales through their cultivation of high value crops.

Through capacity strengthening, the Project, together with its partner the Armenian National Agrarian University, provided the Berd farmers' cooperative with trainings on cultivation, crop protection, harvesting, new processing technologies, strategies to reduce post-harvest loss, marketing and sales. Following the trainings, a collective farmers cooperative was established from 15 active members, with an objective to increase the amount of locally produced healthy crops and increase the farmers' capacity to make sales to the local market.

Due to risks associated with COVID-19, the school feeding programme was suspended. However, when this resumes there is potential to also sell to the 75 schools in Tavush associated with the school feeding programme, promoting access to healthy and high-quality food by children who benefit from the school feeding programme.

To further increase yield volumes, the project supported the development of a processing and collection center, that is now equipped with innovative technologies to reduce post-harvest losses by 20 percent. The project also supported the construction of a 400 sqm hydroponic greenhouse to increase year-round productivity. As a result, the annual yield has increased more than 315 percent as of October 2021 and the farmers are well positioned to begin sales to schools as soon as the programme restarts.

Of the 2020 harvest from the mentioned collective, 90 percent of 123 mt were sold without packaging, generating a net profit of US\$ 42,500. The 2021 harvest will be sold in the fourth quarter of 2021, with packaging and profit margins projected to be even higher. Should the schools be open at this time, 75 local schools will be targeted with sales. Going forward it is anticipated that the participating farmers will be competitive to make direct sales to schools for their school feeding programmes, both strengthening the farmers livelihoods and the availability of nutritious foods in schools.

To encourage schools to purchase this locally produced, high quality and nutritious foods, 75 headmasters of schools in the target area (33 men, 42 women) received training in nutrition to realize the health and cognitive benefits of

healthy diets and encourage the incorporation of nutritious foods when formulating school meal menus. The training moreover focused on the procurement process of food and how to meet sanitary standards in school meal preparation.

a) [Progress on advancement of the integration and mainstreaming of the human security approach.](#)

The HS approach was further mainstreamed in UN activities through the implementing 6 agencies in their respective fields of involvement, as well as through agency specific project development processes and collaboration with Government agencies. This was particularly demonstrated by the appreciation of HS approach and its methodologies in responding to complexity and interrelatedness of compounding issues and threats, including the pandemic, addressing pre-existing poverty, shortcomings of effective public administration, climate and disaster risks, etc.

As revealed in above-described Project activities, the HS approach has helped to promote and strengthen the cooperation and build additional partnerships with the local Administrations, NGOs, grassroots entities, private sector and informal groups as well as between UN agencies for adequate responses towards the local realities, risks, and capacities at community and individual levels. Importantly, these partnerships yielded significant political, administrative and organizational support for the Project implementation, including from all mentioned entities at the target communities.

The HS approach was also mainstreamed throughout the Project Board, during which, inter alia, the added value of the human security approach was thoroughly emphasized, advocating for more enhanced protection and empowerment strategies for regional and local levels, with integrated human security approach, including locally explained and approximated human-centric and preventive measures aimed at reducing risks and vulnerabilities, developing early warning systems, building preparedness, response and recovery capacities, while also enhancing the capacities of the individuals and communities to develop their resilience to mitigate, respond to, and prevent current and future crises and to take responsibility for their prosperity and health.

b) [Progress on facilitating the scaling up and replication of the programme and its human security approach.](#)

Notwithstanding the difficulties generated because of the COVID-19 and applied movement restrictions, the Project has registered many successes, paired with unprecedented inter-agency cooperation within the UN in Armenia, that collectively ensure the sustainability of the Project strategy. From the design phase to the implementation, monitoring, mid-term evaluation and multiple Board verifications, the Project has been in close alignment with Armenia's national priorities, reform programmes and directions, despite the multiple parliamentary elections and deep political crisis following the hostilities in and around NK.

The project remains of strategic importance to targeted communities, helping to address the vulnerabilities stemming from community consolidation and decentralization and enhancing the performance of the local self-government bodies, improving the quality of local public services, and encouraging public participation and accountability of local authorities in the long run.

The introduced Community Resilience Modalities, the officially adopted DRM plans and enhanced inter-agency collaboration and cooperation both within UN family, Government counterparts and local self-governments, have built necessary environments for further scale-up and replication of the Project in other vulnerable communities of Armenia. Such possibilities were further strengthened by the introduced successful methodologies, tools and support mechanisms throughout the Project implementation.

The Annual Board Meeting validated the progress made by February 2021, also approving the directions for necessary Management Response to Evaluation findings and requesting formulation of strategic arrangements for future scale-up and replication of the best practices in other vulnerable consolidated communities of Armenia.

The initial guidelines on assessment of social needs for early identification of human security vulnerabilities from the social protection perspective set the basis for the development of the system of family social needs assessment and case management, which will be applied by MLSA, once it is finalized and embedded into the Law on Social Assistance. Moreover, the review of the Law on Social Assistance and Law on Local Self-Government will allow for nationwide use and scale-up of approaches tested in Yerevan municipality as part of the project, including clarification of roles and responsibilities between community social workers and case managers, determination and increase of number of community social workers, local social planning and financing, furtherance of integrated social services reform.

The model of alternative preschool provision in rural and remote settlements, first tested in Tumanyan and then in Amasia and Alaverdi communities, was included in the Law on Preschool Education. The support of the European Union was leveraged by UNICEF to scale-up and replicate the model of alternative preschool provision in rural and remote settlements (initially tested in Tumanyan, then in Amasia and Alaverdi) in additional settlements with greater ties to women empowerment and economic participation, as recommended by the evaluation of the model of alternative preschool service provision in Tumanyan community.

The CSS approach continues to be firmly embedded in the Government's Budget and Mid-term Expenditure Framework. Allocation grants for school disaster management programmes continued also in 2021, enabling schools, including from target communities, to implement actions to reduce non-structural risks within their DRM plans. Moreover, Alaverdi and Tumanyan communities were included in additional efforts by UNICEF and national and international partners (with funding from Austrian Development Cooperation) of adding climate risk assessment into general local level risk assessment, thus adding another lens of analysis.

At the same time, the demographic challenges and high emigration rates due to the above-mentioned emerging challenges are requiring the Government's close attention and support to increase the scale of return through the implementation of effective return and reintegration policies at local and national levels, an issue for which the Project has demonstrated tangible results, which can be replicated in the other regions of Armenia.

The project has improved the livelihoods and wellbeing of individual farmers and collective agricultural entities at the target communities with its innovative agricultural pilots, based on carefully designed selection criteria for support, matched with all around advisory support throughout the implementation from the Project's local and international experts with integrated human security approaches that can be also scaled-up and replicated in other vulnerable communities of Armenia.

2. Challenges faced and lessons learned

a. Challenges faced during the reporting period and mitigation measures

No	Challenges faced	Mitigation measures
1.	Continued and protracted COVID-19 pandemic posing difficulties in waves, creating limitation on travel, face-to-face training and meetings, resulting in overburdened Government institutions, regional and local authorities having immediate emergency relief priorities.	<p>A short-term mitigation plan was put in place by the Project team in consultation with the HSU for activities affected by COVID-19 with possible solutions, including either virtual implementation, postponement, repurposing or cancellation. More long-term mitigation measures were included into the UN COVID-19 Socio-economic response and recovery plan.</p> <p>A project extension was sought and approved to allow for proper finalization of remaining activities. Wherever possible, activities were implemented using video calls and online meeting formats, or otherwise gathering a smaller number of participants.</p>
2.	The escalation of violence in and around Nagorno Karabakh conflict zone and the impact on Armenia including an influx of displaced population to the local communities and increased pressure on host and bordering communities.	This was responded to by the United Nations through the launching of a Coordination Steering Group who worked to ensure a coordinated response of all actors through the framework of the Inter Agency Response Plan. This includes a focus on early recovery efforts, as well as reconfirmation of priorities at the Project Board. Moreover, a project extension was sought to allow for proper finalization of the remaining activities.
3.	Parliamentary and local elections affecting priorities at national and local level	The project priorities were reconfirmed with the Project Board, including after the parliamentary elections. Until mid-October, the target communities were not affected by local level elections; however, these will be affected by end 2021, thus, the project team will reconfirm engagement with the new community administrations once in place.
4.	A number of parallel ongoing reforms in the social protection sector, resulting in delays and limiting capacity development activities of social workers, which should be aligned to overall reform processes.	Close collaboration has been kept with MLSA throughout project implementation, in order to ensure that solutions developed in previous phases of the project, including identification of human security vulnerabilities and reforms in Yerevan municipality, inform broader changes for ISS and social protection.
5.	Low prioritization of school safety and preparedness activities, often linked to lack of capacities at local level (school, community administration etc.).	The School DRM plan is approved by the order of the Ministers of Education, Science, Culture and Sport and Emergency Situations. The commitment of regional education administration and rescue services to support school DRM are enhanced by designing and implementing advocacy and capacity development events. Moreover, ongoing dialogue is kept with the target communities and schools for continuous sensitization, including about funding opportunities for making schools safer. Moreover, adolescents and children are included in DRM, which turned out to be a best practice.
6	Lack of work force due to the restrictions. Delay in the planned activities, including procurement, construction and others related to the timely project implementation	<p>Optimization of business processes, development of alternative working modalities (online, remotely)</p> <p>Regular contacts with suppliers, accelerate activities that are not related to the supply of the equipment.</p>
7	Suspension of the school feeding programme	At the outset of the project, it was envisioned that 75 local schools would be a key point of sale as part of the school feeding programme. This would add value to the school feeding programme as the children would have access to safe, nutritious, and quality local food. With the school feeding programme having been suspended shortly before the first harvest in 2020 and remaining so in the second quarter of 2021, alternative points of sale have been sought by the cooperative.

b. Lessons learned during the reporting period

	Lessons learned	Recommendations
1.	The dual crisis has created both challenges and opportunities in advancing shock-responsive solutions at the local level.	Use regular programming work to embed shock-responsive solutions in the policy and legal framework, e.g. family social needs assessment during crises, damage and loss data and exchange of information etc.
2.	Complex, challenging and fast-changing environment may cause significant delays in planned activities	Periodic review of Risk management plan, making necessary adjustments to correspond rapidly changing situations; seeking of non-cost extension of the project to be able to deliver.
3.	Development of legal and policy framework at the national level first and then its replication in target communities has proven to be more sustainable and result in unified approaches across the country on community social work, family social needs assessment, case management and local social planning.	Finalize development of the legal and policy framework on social assistance, including family social needs assessment for early identification of vulnerabilities, community social work, case management, local social planning, including financing, and then involve community social workers in the identification of HS needs of the population through targeted capacity building.
4.	Inter-agency coordination and cooperation within the UN family and with other stakeholders brings synergies with positive and integrated results.	Cooperation and coordination between UN agencies and leveraging of other stakeholders should continue at the local level, regional and national level, considering also the increased role of communities in emergency response, for better, integrated and more effective results, thus avoiding duplication.
5.	Involvement of children and adolescents in DRM activities at school level increases their understanding and resilience.	Children and adolescents should continue to be involved in local level DRM activities, including climate risk assessment, and become agents of change in their communities on those topics, including greater collaboration with their community administrations.

3. Financial status

The Project activities have been conducted in line with the approved budget and respective agency specific revisions. Project's annual financial delivery stands at 86,51%. The certified cumulative financial reports of the participating UN agencies are attached next to the narrative report.

Table 1: Financial Status

IA	Approved budget year 1 (A)	Funds received year 1 (B)	Approved budget year 2 (C)	Funds received year 2 (D)	Approved budget year 3 (E)	Funds received year 3 (F)	Total funds received to date (G=B+D+F)	Expenditure to date (H)	Balance of received funds (G-H)	Utilization rate (H/G)
UNDP	217,844.51	217,844.51	267,415.02	267,415.02	180,804.32	180,804.32	666,063.85	592,538.15	73,525.70	88.96%
UNIDO	80,442.60	80,442.60	390,443	390,443	15,210.05	0	470,885.6	389,018.64	81,866.96	82.61%
UNICEF	122,405.86	122,405.86	89,328.95	89,328.95	29,895.80	0	211,734.81	149,842.48	61,892.33	70.77%
WFP	171,628	171,628	0	0	0	0	171,628	171,628	0	100%
IOM	186,303.05	186,303.05	62,522.24	62,522.24	34,454	34,454	283,279.29	254,495.08	28,784.21	89.84%
FAO	27,698.61	27,698.61	88,531.80	88,531.80	34,668.00	0	116,230.41	103,396.00	12,834.41	88.96%
Total	806,322.63	806,322.63	898,241.01	0	295,032.17	0	1,919,821.96	1,660,918.35	258,903.61	86.51%

4. Promotional activities and publications

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to apply different temporary movement and meeting restrictions at different times, thus also limiting Project's capacities for organization of major conferences and workshops with promotional and awareness raising potential regarding the Project progress, Human Security Approach and solving identified community problems. Subsequently, many meetings continued to be conducted in remote / online modality, during which the Project visibility for both project beneficiaries and partners was presented to the extent possible in these modalities, showcasing the progress and the value of the HS approach and its outcomes.

The Project was engaged extensively with the Berd Cooperative on the creation of the brand identity, idea of the logo, and brand philosophy and mission statement. A PR company was contracted to support the farmers' cooperative in Berd to develop the necessary skills for the branding and marketing of their products, including developing a logo and packaging in line with food standards legislation.

The implementing agencies managed to develop various communication and outreach components, promoting the project objectives and HS principles, including through local UN websites and social media channels. The visibility materials are communicated to HSU as per below links and photo gallery transferred electronically:

Video Materials:

1. [Comprehensive video coverage, reflecting all of its successes registered as of the beginning of 2021](#)
2. For broader promotional purposes on this pilot project design and impact, a short [video](#) and photographs of the farmers' activities have been produced.
3. [Opening of the Berd Community Psychological Rehabilitation Center](#)

Social Media Articles

4. [The coverage of the official opening of the established PSS center in Berd community](#)
5. [Workshop on community social projects](#)
6. [Frankly speaking](#)”, professionally designed social media campaign on behavioral changes

Mass Media Articles

7. [Psycho-social rehabilitation center in Berd community](#)
8. [Increasing the level of awareness and importance on DRR among teachers and students](#)
9. [Behavior change communication roadmap/strategy on DRR](#)
10. [Student clubs presented their DRR projects](#)
11. [36 schools are ready to present the assessments on DRR within project based learning](#)
12. [Adolescents will develop projects on the dangers that their communities face](#)
13. [Community-youth: new format of DRR collaboration](#)

Several promotional materials and human stories were developed and circulated on returning migrants and potential migrants and their support opportunities, including:

14. [Healing the hurt in Armenia](#) - on the health and psychosocial assistance provided to displaced populations;
15. Press releases and news on workshops and trainings were prepared and published on the website of the Armenian National Agrarian University: [anau.am](#); [anau.am 1](#); [anau.am 2](#).

Leaflets

16. 5000 informational leaflets have been printed and distributed among the displaced population. The campaign on Facebook engaged 15,100 followers and 2,300 followers on Instagram, reaching out to 1,080,082 users on Facebook and 390,969 users on Instagram social media pages. The main audience demographic on all platforms are 18-54 year-old men and women. On both platforms, women are the majority of the followers. Apart from the local population, 3.5% of the social media pages' followers are from Russian Federation.
17. Booklet on “Main grapevine pests and diseases and integrated pest management” was published (1000 copies) and distributed.
18. Booklet on “Advanced irrigation techniques and possibilities of their application” was developed.

Annex 3 – Cumulative Financial Report (Annex 3: Attached)