



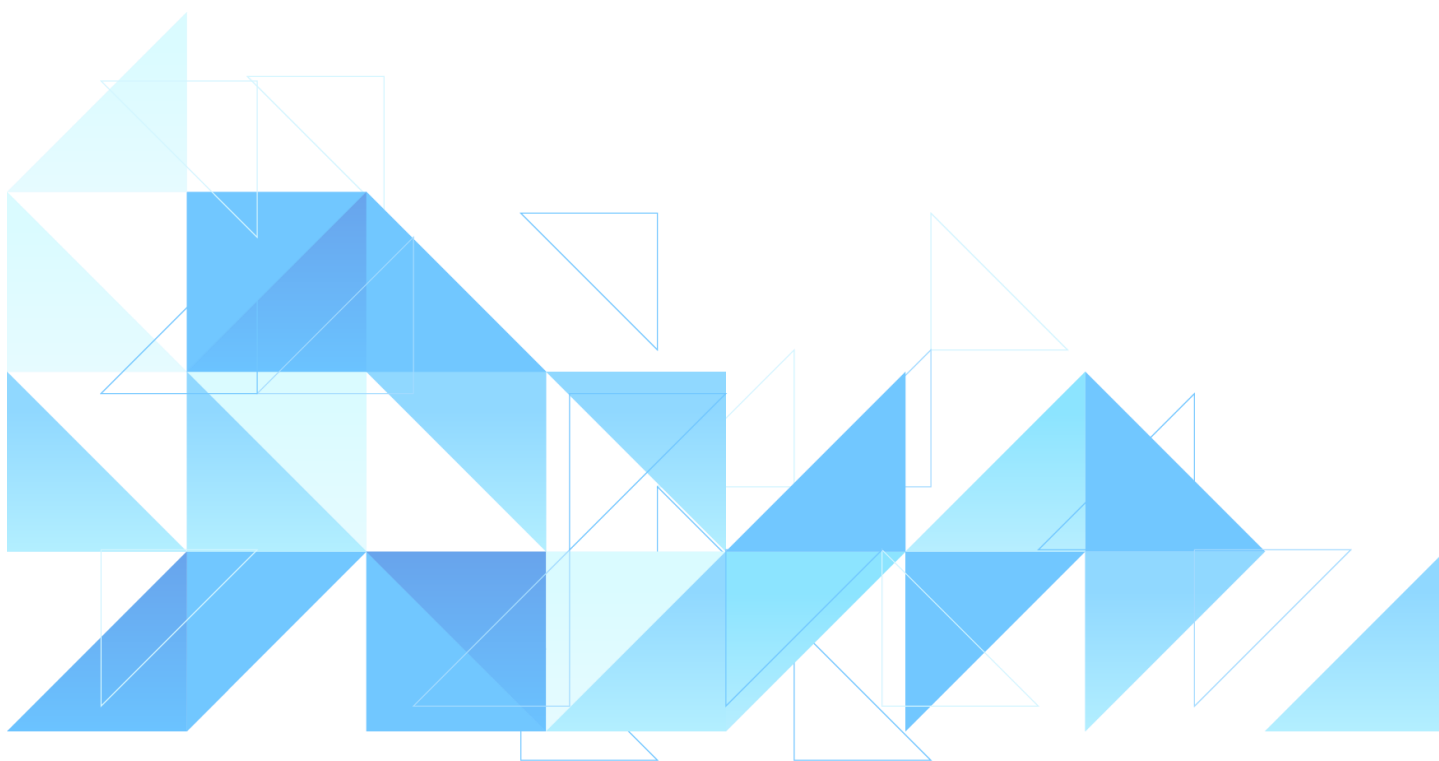
Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



UNDP, UNFPA and FAO Joint Programme “Unleashing young people’s and vulnerable citizens’ creativity and innovation by strengthening their adaptive capacity to address the economic and food insecurities in the exposed communities of the Aral Sea region”.

ANNUAL PROGRAMME NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT

Reporting period: 1 January – 31 December 2021



UN Multi-Partner Human
Security Trust Fund
for the Aral Sea Region
in Uzbekistan



This Joint Programme is funded by the UN Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea region in Uzbekistan, which is generously supported by the Government of Uzbekistan, Norway, Finland, the Republic of Korea, the European Union, and Alwaleed Philanthropies.

<p>Programme Title & Project Number</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Title: UNDP, UNFPA and FAO Joint Programme “Unleashing young people’s and vulnerable citizens’ creativity and innovation by strengthening their adaptive capacity to address the economic and food insecurities in the exposed communities of the Aral Sea region” • Programme Number: 00128324 • MPTF Office Project Reference Number: 00125229
<p>Participating Organization(s)</p> <p>Organizations that have received direct funding from the MPTF Office under this programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDP • UNFPA • FAO
<p>Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</p> <p>Total approved budget as per project document: USD \$2,100,000</p> <p>MPTF /JP Contribution</p> <p>by Agency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDP - \$1,740,000 • UNFPA - \$180,000 • FAO- \$180,000 <p>Agency Contribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by Agency (if applicable) <p>Government Contribution (if applicable)</p> <p>Other Contributions (donors) (if applicable)</p> <p>TOTAL: \$2,100,000</p>
<p>Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.</p> <p>Assessment/Review - if applicable please attach</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date: dd.mm.yyyy</p> <p>Mid-Term Evaluation Report – if applicable please attach</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date: dd.mm.yyyy</p>

<p>Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results</p> <p>Country/Region: Uzbekistan, the Republic of Karakalpakstan, Bozatau, Kungrad, Muynak districts</p> <p>Priority area/strategic results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNDAF Outcome 1: equitable and sustainable economic growth through productive employment, improvement of environment for business, entrepreneurship and innovations expanded for all; - UNDAF Outcome 2: By 2020 vulnerable groups benefit more from inclusive, financially sustainable and efficient social protection system; - UNDAF Outcome 6: rural population benefit from sustainable management of natural resources and resilience to disasters and climate change. 								
<p>Implementing Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction of the Republic of Uzbekistan - The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan - Ministry for Support of Mahalla and Family of the Republic of Uzbekistan - The International Innovation Centre for the Aral Sea Basin under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan - The Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan - The Ministry of Agriculture in Karakalpakstan - The Ministry of Housing and Communal Services in Karakalpakstan - The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan - Business Women’s Association - Youth Agency 								
<p>Programme Duration</p> <table> <tr> <td>Overall Duration (months)</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Start Date (dd.mm.yyyy)</td> <td>23/12/2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Original End Date (dd.mm.yyyy)</td> <td>30/06/2023</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Current End Date (dd.mm.yyyy)</td> <td>30/06/2023</td> </tr> </table>	Overall Duration (months)	30	Start Date (dd.mm.yyyy)	23/12/2020	Original End Date (dd.mm.yyyy)	30/06/2023	Current End Date (dd.mm.yyyy)	30/06/2023
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<p>Report Submitted By</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Name: Ms. Matilda Dimovska o Title: UNDP Resident Representative in Uzbekistan o Participating Organization (Lead): UNDP o Email address: matilda.dimovska@undp.org 								

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LIST OF KEY ACRONYMS

IICAS	The International Innovation Centre for the Aral Sea Basin under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan
CDP	Community Development Plan
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
MoEDPR	Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MPHSTF	UN Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea region in Uzbekistan
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UNDP, UNFPA and FAO Joint Programme (JP) “Unleashing young people’s and vulnerable citizens’ creativity and innovation by strengthening their adaptive capacity to address the economic and food insecurities in the exposed communities of the Aral Sea region” addresses the needs of the youth and rural vulnerable groups considering the new realities, reflected in closure of normal life and businesses, through promoting digitalization, focusing on skill building and the jobs of the future, where possible as well as promoting innovative agriculture practices. During the reported period of its implementation (1 January – 31 December/2021), the JP accomplished the following results.



- Establishment of 3 vocational training centers were initiated: and some of necessary equipment/items were (sewing machine, PCs, beauty salon, air conditioners) delivered in Bozatau, Kungrad and Muynak districts. Other equipment (cooking, plumbing items) is expected to be delivered by March 2022. These will allow to train youth on “Cooking”, “Plumbing” “Beauty Salon” “Sewing” and “Information technology”.;
- **30** rural youth trained on “Cooking” and 30 “Plumber -PP” in three target districts, received diplomas, certificates and currently provide services in labor market potentially having opportunity for self-employment;
- Establishment of the workshop “Muynak baraka Impex” for processing wool and production of wool/felt products in Muynak district initiated, necessary equipment was delivered. Currently 10 rural women are engaged in producing wool/felt products;
- Conduction of researches on innovative solutions to rehabilitate and upgrade the existing irrigation system and agricultural land restoration being discussed with national partners;
- **72** young people are to increase capacities and skills on Start up project development through organization of start up training and mentorship, winners of start up contest will receive financial support for realization of their projects;
- **110** rural women obtained knowledge/skills on business development through training to trainers (ToT) of 18 women leaders from 3 districts;
- **11** women led business projects selected and being further supported from the programme through purchase of the necessary equipment;



- **75** young people became engaged in agricultural activities through provided technical support to 3 cooperatives in three targets districts;
- Demonstration plot on introduction/testing of innovative water saving technology “Buried diffuser” has been launched further to be transformed as a Training Center within the International Innovation Center of the Aral Sea Basin under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan (IICAS). Relevant technical support provided including two hotbeds, seedlings of fruit trees, set of buried diffuser equipment, drip irrigation system;
- **6** vulnerable households from the ‘iron book’ supported to increase their income upon receiving necessary technical support from Joint Programme;
- **155** women and youth improved skills in resource-saving agriculture, horticulture through 6 trainings conducted. These will allow to increase income generation opportunities to beneficiaries;



- **279** rural residents from 9 communities of Bozatau, Kungrad and Muynak districts participated in needs assessment and community development plans (CDP);
- As a result, 9 CDPs on addressing priority needs developed using UNDP methodology on Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) by mobilizing the community members including the youth and women, where needs and priorities of the local population are reflected;
- 8,922 rural people (4503 women) in 17 communities of three pilot districts have improved access to stable electricity with support of JP;
- 1021 school children improved access to internet and digitalization in three districts through provided ICT and furniture by JP;
- 510 pupils and teachers have access to clean drinking water and hot water in schools No. 2 and 8 in Bozatau district where a solar water heater is installed;
- 6,698 beneficiaries received access to clean drinking water in Central District hospital and Polyclinic No. 22.

Overall, during the reported period, the project successfully implemented planned activities and managed to achieve most of the targets set for 2021. This Joint Programme is funded by the MPHSTF for the Aral Sea region, which is generously supported by the Governments of Uzbekistan, Norway, Finland, the Republic of Korea, the European Union and Alwaleed Philanthropies.

I. Purpose

The ultimate goal of the UNDP, UNFPA and FAO Joint Programme is to address social, health, economic and food insecurities in the most vulnerable communities of the Aral Sea region, by increasing the efficiency and innovations in agriculture, promoting smart and digitalized communities, with favourable infrastructures and facilitating active labour market initiatives. The Programme enhances community development, empowerment of youth aged between 14 and 30, women, and vulnerable groups of people such as disabled, women-headed families, labor migrants, unemployed youth, etc. Around 183,200 people have benefitted from the programme activities and results in target districts of the Programme.

The Programme's goal is in line with the government policy that highlights addressing the negative consequences of the Aral Sea environmental disaster as a priority issue. The project seeks to improve the wellbeing of communities affected by the Aral Sea crisis through the following objectives, which fully align with the Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund (MPHSTF) Programmatic Framework and Results Matrix as they contribute to addressing the multiple insecurities of people living in one of the most vulnerable districts of Karakalpakstan. The JP has three outcomes:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Outcome 1. | Reduce the vulnerabilities of unemployed, unskilled youth and women and returning migrants through the empowerment and promotion of essential entrepreneurial skills, and youth-led innovations in the region. |
| Outcome 2. | Create an enabling environment for income generation for rural communities (with focus to youth and women) through promoting innovative agriculture practices and piloting new agriculture initiatives. |
| Outcome 3. | Enable the development of smart communities through digitalization, better access to social infrastructure and community engagement with focus on youth, adolescent and women. |

The JP results contribute to the attainment of UNDAF Outcome 1 (equitable and sustainable economic growth), Outcome 2 (vulnerable groups benefit more from inclusive, financially sustainable and efficient social

protection system) and Outcome 6 (rural population from sustainable management of natural resources and resilience to disasters and climate change), while they also mirror the MPHSTF Results Matrix Outcomes.

The first objective has a direct contribution to outcome 2 of the MPHSTF Results Matrix Outcome (the employment and income generation opportunities for local communities increased). The second objective contributes to the MPHSTF results matrix Outcome 1 (The stress on local communities due to the deteriorating environmental situation reduced) and Outcome 3 (Local community access to affordable and healthy food and clean drinking water secured). The third objective addresses to the MPHSTF Results Matrix Outcome 2 (the employment and income generation opportunities for local communities increased) and Outcome 3 (Local community access to affordable and healthy food and clean drinking water secured), Outcome 5 (The living conditions of local populations improved, with particular focus on vulnerable groups such as women, children and youth).

The project's goal and objectives are fully aligned with the following policies and strategies of the Government of Uzbekistan for addressing the Aral Sea crisis:

- The State Programme on Development of the Aral Sea Region for 2017-2021¹, which focuses on improving the environmental and socio-economic situation, the living conditions of the population, and the effective implementation of investment projects to mitigate the environmental disaster in the Aral Sea region;
- The Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan² on 'Measures for integrated socio-economic development of the Republic of Karakalpakstan in 2020-2023'. This resolution focuses on the holistic development of the region through strategies including the improvement of water supply, education, health infrastructure, sport facilities, attraction of investments into the region, creation of industrial production entities, and support of youth and entrepreneurship.

II. Results

i) Narrative reporting on results

JP results achieved for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2021, are presented in this report. The JP geographically focuses on three pilot districts such as Bozatau, Kungrad, Muynak of Karakalpakstan, the most affected areas by ecological crisis districts in the Aral Sea region. The Joint Programme addresses the needs of the youth and rural vulnerable groups considering the new realities through promoting digitalization, focusing on skill building and the jobs of the future, where possible as well as promoting innovative agriculture practices.

During this period, the key activities undertaken contributed to the following outcomes of the project:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Outcome 1. | Reduce the vulnerabilities of unemployed, unskilled youth and women and returning migrants through the empowerment and promotion of essential entrepreneurial skills, and youth-led innovations in the region (UNDP/UNFPA). |
| Outcome 2. | Create an enabling environment for income generation for rural communities (with focus to youth and women) through promoting innovative agriculture practices and piloting new agriculture initiatives (UNDP/FAO). |
| Outcome 3. | Enable the development of smart communities through digitalization, better access to social infrastructure and community engagement with focus on youth, adolescent and women (UNDP). |

¹ The State Programme on the Development of the Aral Sea Region for 2017-2021, Presidential Decree # 2731, dated 18 January 2017

² Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, # 4889, dated 11 November 2020

Under **Outcome 1**, the following results have been achieved by the Joint Programme:

- Establishment of 3 vocational training centers were initiated: premises were identified and some of necessary equipment/items (sewing machine, PCs, beauty salon, air conditioners) delivered in Bozatau, Kungrad and Muynak districts. Other equipment (cooking and plumbing items) expected to be delivered by March 2022. These will allow to train youth on “Cooking”, “Plumbing” “Beauty Salon” “Sewing” and “Information technology”;
- 30 rural young women trained on “Cooking” and 30 young men trained on “Plumber -PP” in three target districts. Trainees obtained necessary skills, received diplomas, certificates and currently provide services in labor market having potential for being self-employed;
- Workshop “Muynak baraka Impex” for processing wool and production of wool/felt products in Muynak district established where 10 rural women are engaged in producing wool/felt products;
- Assessment on start-up projects among youth conducted and and priority areas have been identified. Youth defined their start-up interests on environment, ICT, social sphere, tourism, agriculture/climate change. To increase youth capacity in start-up development, 72 young people of the region participated in the trainings on start-up project development with specific mentorship provided. Start-up best project contest will be organized in March 2022, contest winners will receive financial support for realization of their projects;
- 18 selected female leaders on competitive basis from Muynak, Bozatau and Kungrad districts from among vulnerable groups of the population were trained to become the facilitators to promote gender equality in their communities, strengthening skills in teamwork, social skills, family planning, family budgeting, entrepreneurial skills and business plan development. As a follow up, 18 community leaders further trained 110 women in their communities (45 in Kungrad district, 34 in Muynak and 31 in Bozatau districts) and transferred the skills and knowledge they have acquired to help them create new entrepreneurship and income-generating family or individual business opportunities. Rural women from vulnerable groups obtained knowledge/skills on business development to lead home-based, family and self-employment initiatives and have additional income opportunities in 3 districts;
- 11 women led business projects selected by the Programme in the sphere of cooking, beauty salon, sewing etc and being financed by the programme, which tend to create 26 jobs among women and youth.

Under **Outcome 2**, the following results have been achieved:

- 155 rural youth improved knowledge and skills in adopting efficient agricultural practices including horticulture [55], aquaculture [50] and conservation agriculture practices [50] through organization of 6 thematic trainings. Obtained innovative knowledge will ensure food security of rural population in three districts;
- 75 rural youth in three target districts have been engaged in agricultural activities, thanks to technical assistance being provided to three cooperatives in Muynak, Bozatau & Kungrad districts. Specifically, the JP delivered equipment such as solar incubators 2 pcs, field sprayers 1 pc in 2021. Delivery of other equipment is expected for a laser planner 2 pcs, a ridge former 1 pc, and zero seeders 2 pcs. Youth [50] in two cooperatives in Muynak and Bozatau engaged in cultivation of sesame, wheat, corn and poultry. A cooperative in Kungrad engages youth [25] in planting and growing fruit trees in 2 hectares of land. Apple and pear fruit trees have been fully planted on 2 hectares of land, a borehole has been drilled for watering the garden. Drip irrigation system powered by solar energy, 1 walk-behind tractor and 1 fan sprayer expected to be provided by March 2022;
- 6 vulnerable households (unemployed youth and women) became self-employed in crop production, horticulture after receiving assistance from JP in farming: 4 - vegetable growing in hotbed, 1 - creation of an orchard on 0.36 hectares; 1- poultry.

Under **Outcome 3**, the following results been achieved:

- The assessment of priority needs of 9 communities of Muynak, Kungrad & Bozatau districts with the participation of [279] residents was carried out. Community Development Plans were developed, initiative groups were created;
- 8922 rural people (4503 women) in 17 communities of three pilot districts received access to sustainable electricity after installation of new electric transformers;
- Within the measures on creation of smart communities through digitalization, [1021] school children from 3 schools in 3 pilot districts improved access to the internet and digitalization through delivered by JP modern ICT and appropriate furniture;
- 510 pupils & teachers received access to clean drinking water and hot water in schools No. 2 & No. 8 of Bozatau district, where a solar water heater is also installed;
- Water supply system of the Central District Hospital and Polyclinic No. 22 of Kungrad district was reconstructed– 6,698 beneficiaries (3,394 women) received access to drinking water as to hot water in Policlinic No 22 where solar water heater was installed;
- Water desalination equipment with a capacity of 10 m3/h at the stage of delivery and expected to be installed by March 2022. Access to clean drinking water will be ensured for 1726 residents (934 women) in the communities of Bozatau and Muynak districts.

Outputs:

Output 1.1. Mono-vocational training centers are capacitated and have tools to provide professional trainings to unemployed youth, women and migrants on the jobs demanded in the local market. (UNDP).

Output 1.2. Enabling environment for youth entrepreneurship development created through establishing new businesses and start-up initiatives using innovative and impact-based technologies and solutions. (UNDP).

Output 1.3. Home based, family and individual entrepreneurship initiatives supported to provide additional income opportunities to the most vulnerable. (UNDP and UNFPA).

Outputs 1.1 Mono-vocational training centers are capacitated and have tools to provide professional trainings to unemployed youth, women and migrants on the jobs demanded in the local market. (UNDP).

After meetings and consultations organized with Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations of Karakalpakstan, district Khokimiyats an assessment of youth employment situation in the Aral Sea region conducted and priority jobs required at the local market identified. Available data and information from the MoELR and Ministry of Mahalla and Family Affairs has been obtained. Socio-economic impact of COVID-19 to youth identified and recommendations developed on better employment opportunities for youth in terms of organizing professional trainings and establishing Mono-vocational training center in three target districts. Five professional spheres were identified as the mostly demanded and which can create an employment opportunity for youth in rural areas such as «Cooking», «Plumbing», «Beauty Salon», «Sewing» & «Information Technology». Joint Programme, while initiating delivery of necessary equipment for mono-centers and renovation work of premises, organized professional trainings on Cooking for [30] women (10 trainees from each pilot district) and Plumber-PP for [30] young men (10 trainees from each pilot district) from three target districts.



Photos 1, 2: Process of conducting practical training on Cooking in Kungrad district in October 2022.

Photo 3: Diploma received by graduates of the training



Photo 4: Practical training on Plumber-PP in Bozatau district in October 2021.

Photo 5, 6: Diploma received by graduates of the training on Plumber-PP

[16] of trained rural women became employed in various sectors of rural economy by the end of 2021. 30 men, in addition to professional skills, received set of plumber tools from Joint Programme, which enabled them to provide Plumber services. [21] trained young Plumbers became employed by the end of 2021. These initiatives have secured employment, and also contribute to the professional development of young people, attracting them to the entrepreneurial fields and increasing their family income.

A workshop for wool processing and production of woollen/felt products been established in Muynak district of the remote village "Ali-auyl". 10 rural women and girls are employed in the workshop and improved income security. Current workshop serves as a good platform for use of abundant raw wool in the village and produce various products (carpet, slippers, traditional decoration bandages for yurt etc) as well as for improvement of practical knowledge of this craft, help beneficiaries to increase income and employment, promote the revival of traditional crafts and support development of tourism in the region.



Photos 7,8,9 illustrate wool processing work in the workshop "Muynak baraka Impex" in "Ali auyl" of Muynak district

Output 1.2. Enabling environment for youth entrepreneurship development created through establishing new businesses and start-up initiatives using innovative and impact-based technologies and solutions. (UNDP).

In cooperation with partners such as Youth Agency, Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations and Ministry of Innovation of Karakalpakstan the Programme initiated establishment of Innovation Start-up Center/platform in Nukus to nurture next generation of start-uppers thorough mentorship and guidance, ICT application development, project development etc. Youth Agency of Karakalpakstan allocated 2 rooms for Start-up platform within Youth Agency premises in Nukus. Delivery of necessary equipment and items for Start-up platform initiated. Design of interior and exterior of Start-up platform initiated and will be available in March 2022. The start-up platform expected to be fully operational by mid of 2022. Preliminary designed image of Start-up platform shown below.



Photos 10, 11: Preliminary designed images of Start-up platform in Nukus



Photo 12: Youth Agency in Nukus

An assessment of start-up projects among youth was held. Based on results of assessment [72] young beneficiaries (aged 18-30) from pilot districts & Nukus city being trained and mentored on start-up project development, managing innovative businesses on environment, ICT, social sphere, tourism, agriculture & climate change. Contest for the best Start-up projects to be organized and the winners of the envisioned start-up competition will receive financial support (seed funding) from Joint Programme in April 2022.

Output 1.3. Home based, family and individual entrepreneurship initiatives supported to provide additional income opportunities to the most vulnerable. (UNDP and UNFPA)

UNFPA in cooperation with Ministry of Makhalla and Family Support of Karakalpakstan developed training tool such as special motivational planner for beginner-entrepreneurs in local language and jointly with local khokimiyats organized series of trainings for [18] local facilitators/leaders to promote and expand economic rights of women in pilot districts. [110] women from Bozatau (31), Kungrad (45) and Muynak (34) improved social skills, increased capacities on family planning, reproductive health, gender equality, business development, family budgeting, business idea evaluation and implementation scheme, marketing and time management methods. Special telegram groups were created between three team members to discuss ideas, progress, problems and prepare for the Business Ideas Fair (TG "Seminarshylar gruppasi" (Kungrad), "Bozatau. Isbilarmen khayal" and "MOINAK GOZZALLARI").

The first fair-competition was organized in Nukus, where among 20 innovative business plans were developed by trained women and presented for Review Committee's attention. On the results of the evaluation of the selection committee, 11 projects (Bozatau - 6; Kungrad – 1; Muynak – 4) were proposed for further financing. Delivery of equipment and items initiated and expected to be completed in April 2022.

All these measures being instrumental in empowering women in rural communities and generating additional income.



Photos 13, 14: Women of Bozatau, Kungrad and Muynak in training

Photo 15: Business plan is being presented in fair-competition

Output 2.1 Produce evidence-based research on environmental protection of Aral Sea region fostering innovative solutions to rehabilitate and upgrade the existing irrigation system and agricultural land restoration.

UNDP has conducted a joint meeting with EIB and AFD in December and also in regular contact with MIFT. UNDP has been informed that there is slight change in the scope of the work of the Loan programme. Specifically, it is planned that the Loan will be splitted for two phases. Meantime, EIB and AFD are finalizing internally the scope of the works. Once this is done, with the support of Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the joint meeting is planned for defining and agreeing the scope of the researches to be organized by UNDP.

Output 2.2 Ensure food security for youth and rural population by transforming innovative knowledge and skills in adopting efficient agriculture practices (FAO)

Study and monitoring for mapping the target audience institutional and individual capacity gaps in horticulture, crop diversification, fishery and livestock development were conducted in target districts.

In cooperation with local Khokmiyats of pilot districts, ICBA, Research Institute of Fisheries, Association of Women in Agricultural Sector innovative knowledge and skills being transformed to rural youth and local farmers in adopting efficient agriculture practices namely [55] rural people improved knowledge and skills in innovative methods of horticulture, [50] people on conservation of agriculture practices and [50] rural inhabitants improved skills and knowledge on aquaculture. Current measures contribute to improving income and food securities of rural population.



Photo 16, 17, 18: Beneficiaries of pilot districts are obtaining knowledge and skills in efficient agriculture practices

Output 2.3 Better job opportunities for rural youth by engaging them in agriculture sector (UNDP).

Assessment of the agriculture opportunities for the youth conducted and possibilities to involve youth into youth cooperatives, small farm enterprises as an employment scheme for rural youth were studied. As result, Joint Programme decided to provide technical support to 3 youth cooperatives: [1] youth cooperative in

Kungrad engages 25 young people in planting, growing fruit trees in 2 hectares of land where apple and pear fruit trees (1,600 trees in total) have been fully planted, a borehole has been drilled for watering the garden. Drip irrigation system powered by solar energy, 1 walk-behind tractor and 1 fan sprayer to be provided by March 2022.

[1] youth cooperative in Bozatau engages 25 youth and [1] in Muynak engages 25 youth of the district in cultivation of sesame, wheat, corn and poultry development. Necessary equipment and items such as solar incubators 2 pcs, field sprayers 1 pcs delivered and other equipment is expected for a laser planner 2 pcs, a ridge former 1 pc, and zero seeders 2 pcs in 2022. All these measures support 75 rural youth in three target districts to be engaged in agricultural activities and improve food security, gain valuable experience from experienced farmers.

Technical support to the International Innovation Center for Aral Sea Basin under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan in establishing a training facility on conservation agriculture practices has been initiated. Relevant technical support provided including two hotbeds, seedlings of fruit trees, set of buried diffuser equipment, drip irrigation system. In current demo plot water-saving technology of “Buried Diffuser” to be introduced through demonstration and practical training by Tunisian expert. Testing and experiment of “Buried Diffuser” technology will continue until end of 2022, findings and results will be published as a brochure and disseminated to beneficiaries.



Photos 19, 20: Young people engaged in agriculture in youth cooperatives in Kungrad and Muynak

Photos 21, 22: preparation of demo plot for testing “Buried Diffuser” water saving technology in IICAS

Output 2.4 Support vulnerable groups (with focus to youth and women) in self-employment through promoting innovative technologies in crop production, horticulture and aquaculture (UNDP).

In cooperation with local Khokimiyats of pilot districts, [6] vulnerable households identified from “Iron book” who were eager to engage in agricultural activities household plots. All 6 vulnerable households received assistance in farming: 4-vegetable cultivation in hotbed, 1-creation of an orchard in 0.36 hectares; 1- poultry farming. Programme support contributes to promote food security among family members of selected households All 6 beneficiaries obtained valuable skills and knowledge on efficient horticulture and agro-practices through trainings organized by FAO.



Photos 23, 24, 25: Beneficiaries engaged in agro-practices at household plots in target districts

Output 3.1 Empowered vulnerable remote communities through use of advanced digital technology.

Needs assessment on digitalization conducted among schools in rural areas. Based on result of the needs assessment 3 schools in pilot districts selected and technically supported. Within the measures on creation of smart communities through digitalization, all 3 schools were provided appropriate furniture (PC desks, chairs) and modern ICT (15 PCs, projector with white screen) which enabled [1021] school children in Bozatau, Kungrad and Muynak have better access to internet and digitalization.



Photos 26, 27: Pupils of three schools in Bozatau, Kungrad and Muynak have better access to internet and digitalization

Output 3.2 Strengthened social cohesion through youth engagement in community planning, decision-making and rehabilitation process.

The assessment of priority needs of 9 communities of Muynak, Kungrad & Bozatau districts with the participation of [279] residents was carried out. Based on results of assessment [9] Community development plans were developed, initiative groups with youth participation were created. As a result [8,922] people (4,503 women) in 17 communities of 3 pilot districts received access to sustainable electricity after installation of new electric transformers. [510] pupils & teachers received access to clean drinking water in schools No. 2 & No. 8 of Bozatau district, where a solar water heater is also installed. The water supply system of the Central District Hospital and Polyclinic No. 22 of the Kungrad district was reconstructed, a solar water heater was installed – 6,698 beneficiaries (3,394 women) received access to drinking water. In total [16,130] rural people have improved access to social services (drinking water, renovated health care facilities and sustainable electrification) in three pilot districts



Photos 28, 29: Drinking water pipeline laying in Kungrad District Hospital



Photo 30:Drnking water pipeline laying in Polilinic #22 in Suenli VCC, Kungrad

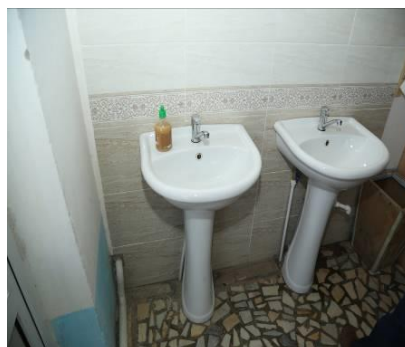


Photos 31, 32: Hot water supply in Policlinic #22 in Suenli, Kungrad

Photos 33, 34: Access to sustainable electricity in 17 communities in 3 pilot districts

Output 3.3 Strengthened community capacities and facilities to respond to the pandemic and ensure longer-term recovery in cooperation with UNICEF led Joint Programme.

Two schools (# 2 & 8) in Bozatau district connected to water supply network, [510] pupils & teachers received access to clean drinking water and hot water supplied by green technology as Solar Water Heater.



Photos 28, 29,30: School # 2 in Bozatau is connected to clean drinking water supply network and hot water supplied by Solar Water Heater

Delays in implementation

During the reported period, the project encountered challenges associated with the COVID-19 outbreak and partially lockdown both within the country and globally, which affected the project implementation pace and caused a delay in identification of project sites due to the limited communication with potential beneficiaries and partners were common, especially at the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak; delays occurred in the procurement of equipment and items from abroad as the majority of equipment imported from sources including China and Turkey were stuck at the border at customs control points.. However, the project has proposed alternative options and modes of operation by proposing solutions for using online modes of work, trainings and meetings were conducted in online mode via ZOOM platform.

Challenges:

- Negative impact of COVID-19 has rapidly spread to many countries, including Uzbekistan. As observed, this pandemic has disrupted manufacturing and the global supply chain. Thus, in terms of the procurement of equipment and consumables in support of the project, some delays in delivering the activities and results have occurred;

- Delays with identification of project sites due to the limited communication with potential beneficiaries and partners were common, especially at the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak;
- Delays occurred in the procurement of equipment and items from abroad as the majority of equipment imported from sources including China and Turkey were stuck at the border at customs control points;
- Prices of some of the equipment and items increased;
- Limited field trips and meeting in pilot district due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Mitigation and adaptation measures taken by the project through the COVID-19 outbreak situation

Facilitated some of project activities via an online remote mode:

- Conducted some of project trainings via Zoom and some were conducted in accordance with COVID measures: social distancing, masks and temperature measurement;
- Coached document signers (contracted vendors and partners) to use digital instruments like DocuSign to sign contracts and other documents;
- Ensured that all PPE measures against COVID-19 were observed among project staff, and followed both in the office and in the project vehicles;
- Relevant project staff regularly communicated with vendors, and were updated on the status of the delivery of goods and services;
- Ensured proper communication with vendors on delays of services;
- The Project Board Meeting was organized though Zoom;
- Received vaccination against COVID-19.

Lessons learned:

- Frequent staff rotation in Khokimiyats in target districts takes place. Newly appointed Khokimiyat staff usually unaware of Joint Programme and periodically needs to be informed and updated on Joint Programme objectives, results;
- There are many development plans/projects which are included in state programme and announced to be done by the Government in remote areas. However, in reality there are many pending projects. Such kind of situation creates some uncertainty for Joint Programme and make to reconsider site selection;
- The programme/project duration (2.5 years) is not long enough to ensure full ownership and sustainability of results;
- Reduction of interest and commitment of potential beneficiaries to complete obligations under the business project. For this, some formal document should be signed between UNDP and beneficiary to complete obligation against the business plan and targets set.

Best practices:

- The Joint Programme applies an integrated and holistic approach to supporting the youth, migrants, vulnerable women in socio-economic and environmental needs in three pilot districts;
- Joint Programme implements new approaches in supporting youth of the region through creation of vocational mono-centers, where youth can be trained on professional skills and receive certificates. This measure greatly helps youth to find a job and improve income security.
- Joint Programme engages community youth in establishing/creating community development plans and management, planning and implementation of projects that most appropriate from the views of the young generation. Current approach helps to identify specific needs of youth and address them accordingly.
- JP supports the community youth and vulnerable women in attaining knowledge and skills in integrating the best innovative technologies in agriculture sector, including the introduction of water saving technologies, crop diversification, horticulture and hotbeds development that are proven to be successful in agro sector in worldwide .

Qualitative assessment:

Overall, the Programme initiated all planned activities for 2021. Some results were achieved on time in 2021, some activities implemented in advance or shifted to 2022. The project established sound partnerships with key stakeholders at regional, district and grassroot levels, and local communities have been fully engaged in implementing the activities. Through its interventions at every stage, the project has promoted gender mainstreaming principles. When organizing initiatives, committees or panels, the project has ensured that the voices of the most vulnerable groups of the population, including that of women, youth and the elderly, were all represented and heard. Through community mobilization and target audience identification for entrepreneurship support and skill-building initiatives, the project engaged women and youth in communities. Despite the One UN model is mandatory approach, it is important to note that was fully promoted through smooth coordination between UNDP and UNFPA and FAO (not all agencies can smoothly cooperate), in terms of joint planning and implementation of activities.

ii) Indicator-based performance assessment

	<u>Achieved Indicator Targets</u>	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Outcome 1. Reduce the vulnerabilities of unemployed, unskilled youth and women and returning migrants through the empowerment and promotion of essential entrepreneurial skills, and youth-led innovations in the region (UNDP, UNFPA)			Programme training reports/analytical report
Indicator: # of youth (disaggregated by sex) strengthened their skills through access to professional education centers/points and engaged in entrepreneurship activities Baseline: N/A Planned Target for 2021: 0	0		
Output 1.1 Mono-vocational training centers are capacitated and have tools to provide professional trainings to unemployed youth, women and migrants on the jobs demanded in the local market.			Programme/training/analytical reports
Indicator 1.1.1 # of youth equipped with necessary technical skills have prepared Baseline: 37 Planned Target for 2021: 18	60		
Indicator 1.1.2 # of youth employed (informal/formal) Baseline: 54 Planned Target for 2021: 10	37		National statistics/analytical reports
Indicator 1.1.3 # of skill building platforms enhanced their professional portfolio Baseline: 0 Planned Target for 2021: 1	1		Programme/MoELP/analytical reporting
Output 1.2 Enabling environment for youth entrepreneurship development created through establishing new businesses and start-up initiatives using innovative and impact-based technologies and solutions.			Programme MoELP/Youth Agency/training reporting/Quarterly/semiannual progress reports
Indicator 1.2.1 # of youth enhanced their skills through mentorship and start-up initiatives Baseline: 50 Planned Target for 2021: 10	72		
Indicator 1.2.2 # of youth led innovation club established Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 0	0		
Indicator 1.2.3 # of start-up projects developed Baseline: 0 Planned Target for 2021: 0	0		
Indicator 1.2.4 # of knowledge based jobs created Baseline: 0 Planned Target for 2021: 0	0		

Output 1.3 Home based, family and individual entrepreneurship initiatives supported to provide additional income opportunities to the most vulnerable.			
Indicator 1.3.1 # of women enhanced their knowledge on home-based entrepreneurship Baseline: 235 Planned Target for 2021: 120	110	Some of expected participants were affected by COVID-19 and could not participate in planned trainings.	Project reports, pre-post assessment reports of trainings, registration records of established business entities
Indicator 1.3.2 # of family based and individual entrepreneurship established Baseline: 27 Planned Target for 2021: 0	1		
Indicator 1.3.3 # of community leaders trained in business facilitation skills Baseline: 0 Planned Target for 2021: 6	18		
Outcome 2. Create an enabling environment for income generation for rural communities (with focus to youth and women) through promoting innovative agriculture practices and piloting new agriculture initiatives (FAO, UNDP)			
Indicator: # of households have increased their income generation opportunities through adaptation of innovative technologies agricultural practices Baseline: N/A Planned Target for 2021: 25	55		Programme training reports/analytical report
Output 2.1 Produce evidence-based research on environmental protection of Aral Sea region fostering innovative solutions to rehabilitate and upgrade the existing irrigation system and agricultural land restoration.			
Indicator 2.1.1 # of research work conducted Baseline: 1 Planned Target for 2021: 1	0	As per prodoc and WP, 3 studies were planned by the programme, in agreement with GoU including MIFT to support preparation of FS for potential Loan programme of EIB. As such, the GoU could not yet confirm the engagement of the programme to FS, and UNDP has prepared formal request to the MIFT confirming whether those studies are still relevant, otherwise the allocated funding will be reallocated to other activities subject for PB approval.	TOR and Research Plan
Indicator 2.1.2 # of round tables organized Baseline: 0 Planned Target for 2021: 1	0		Round Table Report
Indicator 2.1.3 # of research reports (summary and full reports) printed Baseline: 0 Planned Target for 2021: 50	0		Published Research Reports
Output 2.2 Ensure food security for youth and rural population by transforming innovative knowledge and skills in adopting efficient agriculture practices (FAO)			
Indicator 2.2.1 # of capacity building activities delivered Baseline: 55 Planned Target for 2021: 5	6		Training Reports Monitoring visits
Indicator 2.2.2 # of people improved knowledge and skills in horticulture Baseline: 0 Planned Target for 2021: 50	55		Extension Service

Indicator 2.2.3 # of people improved knowledge and skills in aquaculture Baseline: 0 Planned Target for 2021: 50	50		Center registration documents
Indicator 2.2.4 # of people improved knowledge and skills in conservation agriculture practices Baseline: 0 Planned Target for 2021: 50	50		Progress Annual and Quarterly Progress Reports
Indicator 2.2.5 # of people adopted new practices on water saving technologies, hotbed production Baseline: 5904 Planned Target for 2021: 25	0		
Indicator 2.2.6 # of extension service centers representatives enhanced their capacity in providing extension services Baseline: 10 Planned Target for 2021: 6	0		
Indicator 2.2.7 # of fruit tree nursery established Baseline: 3 Planned Target for 2021: 0	0		
Indicator 2.2.8 # of fishery ponds established Baseline: 0 Planned Target for 2021: 0	0		
Output 2.3 Better job opportunities for rural youth by engaging them in agriculture sector			Cooperative registration documents Monitoring visits, Progress Annual and Quarterly Progress Reports MOUs and transfer acts with beneficiaries
Indicator 2.3.1 # of youth cooperatives established Baseline: 10 (pasture cooperatives) Planned Target for 2021: 0	0		
Indicator 2.3.2 # of youth engaged in agriculture through the employment scheme Baseline: 47,830 Planned Target for 2021: 0	75		
Indicator 2.3.3 # of households improved income generation opportunities Baseline: 0 Planned Target for 2021: 0	6		
Indicator 2.3.4 # of farm enterprises improved technical capacities Baseline: 0 Planned Target for 2021: 0	3		
Output 2.4 Support vulnerable groups (with focus to youth and women) in self-employment through promoting innovative technologies in crop production, horticulture and aquaculture			Training Reports
Indicator 2.4.1 # of women improved capacities in agriculture Baseline: 3182 Planned Target for 2021: 0	6		
Indicator 2.4.2 # of women engaged in homestead land production Baseline: 3	5		

Planned Target for 2021: 0			Monitoring visits MOUs and transfer acts with beneficiaries
Indicator 2.4.3 # households improved income generation opportunities Baseline: 3 Planned Target for 2021: 0	6		
Outcome 3. Enable the development of smart communities through digitalization, better access to social infrastructure and community engagement with focus on youth (UNDP)			
Indicator 3.1 # of rural internet users have access to digitalization tools Baseline: 0 Planned Target for 2021: 0	1021		Monitoring visits
Indicator 3.2 # of population has increased access social services (drinking water, renovation of health care facilities and electrification) in target communities Baseline: 0 Planned Target for 2021: 0	16130		
Output 3.1 Empowered vulnerable remote communities through use of advanced digital technology			Progress Annual and Quarterly Progress Reports Training Reports Visit reports
Indicator 3.1.1 # of public organizations Baseline: 0 Planned Target for 2021: 1	0	Assessment is conducted and the priority areas being the achievement of the goals is scheduled for 2022.	
Indicator 3.1.2 # of trained specialists Baseline: 0 Planned Target for 2021: 18	0		
Indicator 3.1.3 # of schools connected to Internet Baseline: 0 Planned Target for 2021: 3	3		
Output 3.2 Strengthened social cohesion through youth engagement in community planning, decision-making and rehabilitation process			Training Reports Training consultant report Number of CDP Transfer acts with beneficiaries
Indicator 3.2.1 # of trained young people Baseline: 860 Planned Target for 2021: 30	150		
Indicator 3.2.2 # of conducted workshops Baseline: 36 Planned Target for 2021: 3	9		
Indicator 3.2.3 # of CDPs Baseline: 36 Planned Target for 2021: 3	9		
Indicator 3.2.4# of social projects Baseline: 36 Planned Target for 2021: 2	19		
Output 3.3 Strengthened community capacities and facilities to respond to the pandemic and ensure longer-term recovery in cooperation with UNICEF led Joint Programme			Training report
Indicator 3.3.1 # of trained school children on WASH	0	All relevant training materials for	

Baseline: 0 Planned Target for 2021: 100		WASH/Health education on hygiene and sanitation standards have been developed, handouts have been prepared. Accordingly, trainings are planned to be conducted in the first half of 2022	Visit reports
Indicator 3.3.2 # of schools provided with drinking water Baseline: 8 Planned Target for 2021: 1	2		

iii) Specific stories

Story of Ms. Alima Rzamuratova on enhancing business, cooking skills and establishing own production pastry unit (UNDP, UNFPA).



Photo 31: Alima is in business training



Photo 32: Alima is in Cooking training



Photo 33: Alima established homebased Pastry production

Ms. Alima Rzamuratova lives in Kuskanatu community which is one the most remote areas of Bozatau district. She was unemployed for some years without any source of income. Alima has approached several organizations with request to accept for a job but her request was constantly declined due to lack of relevant education and skills. Alima acknowledged, it is vital to gain skills to find a job and earn income. Alima was very interested in running her own small business and has always been thinking about business ideas. She realized that in the community where she lives there was no pastry production unit, nor shops where pastry products could be purchased. Ms. Alima Rzamuratova realized that there is high demand in local community for pastry products because not every woman capable to produce such products at home. Besides, to purchase pastry products, local people had to go to Bozatau district center, which is far from the community and costly.

In 2021, within the framework of the Joint Programme, in the target districts of the programme, training was conducted on the “Basics and skills of women's entrepreneurship to increase the socio-economic activity of women in society”, where 110 young girls and women, including Alima improved skills to promote gender equality in their communities, work in teamwork, social skills, family planning, family budgeting, entrepreneurial skills and business plan development.

Based on the results of these trainings, as well as through online Telegram channel counseling, trained women developed innovative business plans. Alima was unemployed and she was one of inspired ladies, who actively presented her business idea “Pastry Production” at the contest. The selection committee decided to support the initiative of the beneficiary to develop family business, and provide further support from the programme through the purchase of necessary equipment to start a business. Thanks to the support provided, the beneficiary became self-employed and delivers pastry products (cakes, pastries, cupcakes, gingerbread) to neighboring houses and shops.

In October 2021, Alima participated in a professional cooking course organized by the Joint Programme, where she completed a 32-hour course of theoretical and practical training in mastering skills in this area. At the end of the course, Alima successfully passed the exam and received a Diploma with honors on completion of studies with an indication of the direction. The acquired skills and specialty allowed the girl

to find a job in Kindergarten No. 8 in Kuskanatau community in Bozatau district. Alima has improved food and income security of her own and family. In order to balance her family business with her official daycare work, Alima employed 2 more rural girls to help in her business.