

Yemen Humanitarian  
Communications  
Network



# Stories of Inspiration

2023 HUMANITARIAN  
PROGRAMMING  
IN YEMEN



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# FOREWORD

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While traveling across Yemen – from Sa'ada to Hodeidah, Mokha to Taiz, Ma'rib to Aden – I have witnessed the continued resilience, strength, and hopes of the people of Yemen. I have also seen the impact that humanitarian programming can have for those that need it the most - access to life-saving healthcare, clean water, sufficient shelter, and livelihood support.

My first mission with OCHA Yemen brought me to two internal displacement sites. Amidst an outbreak of suspected acute watery diarrhea (AWD) and cholera cases, an international NGO (INGO) was providing critical support in a local health centre. During the visit, families shared their stories of resilience. That day a national partner delivered emergency shelter kits for the families. The assistance they received, however, lacked many of the items that families said were needed, especially after years of displacement.

There is no doubt that more is needed. The humanitarian community is working to address these issues and are already seeing results. This year in many displacement sites, emergency tents have been replaced with transitional shelters. They provide intermediate solutions for displaced families in need - using a sturdier material that lasts much longer - while households await more durable, long-term solutions.

On that same first visit, I was also introduced to a new sustainable water project, supported by an INGO, where a water network was funded collectively by the community living in the area, highlighting their localised approach to addressing needs. Water from this project was also provided free of charge to an internal displacement site located in the same area.

Across Yemen, stories of both dire humanitarian needs and of community resilience inspire us to deliver.

These are the stories highlighted in this booklet by the Humanitarian Communications Network—a joint effort of national and international NGO partners and the UN. It aims to highlight just a few of the numerous stories of impact from across the humanitarian response in Yemen.

I hope that, through this booklet, you see a glimpse of the strength of Yemeni people, the powerful work that humanitarian actors are doing, and the direction we are collectively moving: providing life-saving programming that also builds resilience.

I appeal to donors to provide the sustained funding necessary to ensure our response is sustained, effective and timely – that we make a difference for the people in Yemen.

Thank you,

**Markus Werne**  
**Head of OCHA Yemen**

# INTRODUCTION

Yemen is still reeling from nearly a decade of conflict.

Protracted displacement, severe deterioration of economic conditions, extensive damaged civilian infrastructure and the collapse of basic services characterize Yemen's ongoing crisis.

There is no doubt that the Yemeni people continue to face the brunt of the country's overwhelming and multi-faceted challenges. In 2024, a staggering 18.2 million people require humanitarian assistance.

Amidst these countrywide needs, however, there are stories of hope—and change.

This booklet is a collective work by the Yemen Humanitarian Communications Network to highlight success stories across the country as a result of 2023 response efforts. They showcase the hope, resilience and humanity that exists in the midst of conflict, climate-related emergencies, and economic deterioration.

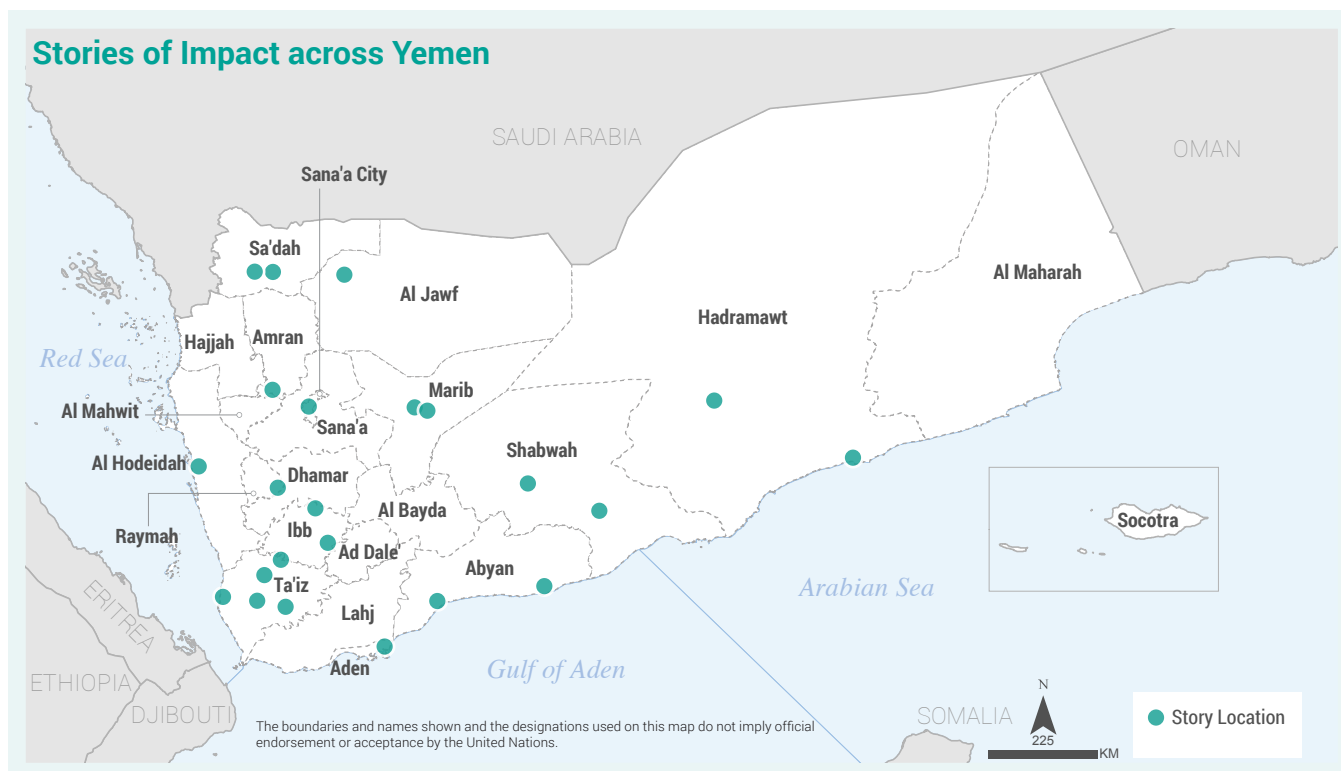
In 2023, 229 humanitarian actors supported an average of 8.4 million people per month with life-saving humanitarian assistance and services. The stories below showcase just a few examples of the powerful impacts of such assistance on an individual's life. Like

Ahmed's, the sole provider for his family and landmine victim, who received specialized medical interventions with the support of an international NGO. Or Hana'a, who was previously studying under the trees until a local organization rehabilitated her school.

Many of these stories highlight the aid community's work in supporting sustainable solutions through resilience-building programming. These efforts include improving water and sanitation systems, agricultural support, and local capacity-strengthening initiatives that promote livelihoods, combat food insecurity and uplift communities while reducing their vulnerabilities.

These stories are a testimony to the impact of the humanitarian response and its partnerships with the people of Yemen. These stories are the reason we are here to deliver.

**About the HCN:** The Humanitarian Communications Network (HCN) is a community of communications-focused staff from local and international organizations and UN agencies engaged in humanitarian efforts in Yemen. The HCN is currently co-chaired by OCHA and CARE.



This map indicates the locations of stories featured in this booklet, and is not representative of the humanitarian response overall in Yemen.

A photograph of three young girls sitting on a speckled floor, engaged in conversation. The girl in the center is wearing a light green hijab and a plaid shirt, looking towards the camera with a slight smile. To her left, a girl in a pink hijab and dark green dress is seen from the back. To her right, a girl in a yellow hijab and tan dress is also seen from the back. The background is a plain white wall with a blue vertical stripe. A teal graphic overlay with a dotted border frames the scene.

# Education

Photo: Abdulrahman Alhobishi/CARE

## SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

"Our school was destroyed and there were no bathrooms. No fans, no windows and no doors! We did not feel safe studying under the walls that might one day fall on us," Hana'a expressed her feelings.

Hana is a diligent student in the third grade at Abu Dugana school in Mawza' district. Hana loves studying, but her family's difficult conditions affected her life as a child.

She added sadly, "I love studying but our life conditions are hard. I help my mother at home and on the farm. My father is a daily wage worker". She sighs, "When our school was destroyed, the education stopped."

"We studied under the trees in hot, sunny weather with no chairs or boards, and if I needed a bathroom, I had to stop studying and go home. We also did not have school bags," added Hana'a, who like other children has the right to enjoy a safe learning environment.

In partnership with Norwegian Refugee Council and Nahda Makers Organization (NMO), the school again opened its doors to hundreds of students, allowing them to return back to school and receive a quality education in a safe environment to achieve their dreams for a better future. The project provides access to education for displaced and host community children and is supported by Education Cannot Wait.

Through the education support, NMO rehabilitated the old classrooms and latrines in Abu Dughana school. All the students in the school received notebooks, pencils, pens, bags and colours. A solar power system was also installed.

A beautiful smile was painted on Hana's face when she expressed her feelings, "Now I do not need to stop the class and go home when I need to use the bathroom because our school has clean bathrooms. Thank you for fixing the school and building new classrooms, especially my class! We feel comfortable that there are chairs, fans and a whiteboard. We are studying much better than under the trees. Now my friends and I can write easily on the desks and read from the white board. Also, I am happy because NMO brought us the school bag with pencils, colours, and notebooks."

Education is an essential right for children, and their safe environment will open windows to their future. Hana'a and her friends can now easily access clean latrines which protect their dignity without skipping classes. The smiles which are drawn on their faces show that they feel safe and secure.



Hana'a returns to her school again after it was destroyed as a result of the conflict, Ta'iz Governorate.

## EMPOWERING YEMEN'S DISPLACED: SECURING BIRTH CERTIFICATES TO ACCESS EDUCATION

According to the latest data, 4.56 million people in Yemen are now internally displaced. Those are families who had to flee their homes due to the long-lasting conflict in the country.

Today, those people mainly live in internal displacement sites, located in remote areas scattered around Yemen.

One of the main challenges these people face is the lack of valid documents, especially children's birth certificates, making it extremely hard to keep track of those who need support, distribute supplies, and build functioning social systems when the country is already weakened tremendously by the conflict.

"My children don't have any birth certificates because our lives were ruined by war and displacement," says Nora Abdullah Mohsen Rabwan, a mother of four, who now lives in one of the displacement sites in Marib. "We lost the documents when we had to flee and couldn't get birth certificates for children because we now live far from the Department of Civil Status," she explains.

"It is true that many parents don't get birth certificates for their children because they live in remote areas and traveling to places where such documents can be issued is too expensive and even dangerous nowadays," says Abeer Naji Mohammed, supervisor of the accelerated education centres, which were established, among other facilities, to build temporary classrooms in displaced people's sites. "Many of them also cannot afford the fees for those documents, and that is why it is a great relief that UNICEF covers those fees and helps families get those important documents."

Above everything else, a birth certificate is an essential document that allows one to enrol a child in school. According to the 2023 Yemen Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, one out of every four children of basic school age is out of school today.

"In the displacement camps, we sometimes see children who have been out of school for over four years," says Mushhira Saleh Al-Hejazi, a supervisor in the Accelerated Learning Programme supported by UNICEF and funded by the European Union at Al-Nasr School. "Many of those children were deprived of the opportunity to attend school precisely because they had no birth certificates."

The accelerated education centres target the most vulnerable children, helping them return to classrooms even after several years of being out of school.

"In Al-Sumaia Camp and Al-Nasr School, the programme has targeted about 250 children. They all now have birth certificates," says Mushhira. "Before the programme, half of those children were out of school. Now we managed to involve 420 children in the camp in three learning phases. It is a great achievement."

"Our children, who had to leave school due to displacement, got remedial education and caught up with their studies," says Nora, who now lives with her family in one of the displacement sites. "With those birth certificates, we can now issue ID cards for our children, along with many other things," she adds.

A birth certificate is the first and probably one of the most important documents in a person's life. It gives access to fundamental rights such as education and qualified healthcare, makes a child officially "visible." This helps the authorities to provide support to children and parents and address challenges they face during the difficult time Yemen faces today.

Today UNICEF and partners help families from internally displaced camps in Yemen obtain birth certificates and return their children to schools. The accelerated education centres do not just help children catch up with their education, but also provide Mine Risk Education and Psychological Support training sessions.

All these are ultimate lifesavers for the regions that suffer from the remnants of war and other brutal consequences of a long-lasting military conflict. Together they give the war-torn country hope for a bright, stable, and peaceful future, breathing life into once abandoned classrooms and desperate hearts.



Sahar, 13-year-old student, receives her newly issued birth certificate which is distributed as part of the accelerated learning programme at Al-Sumaia IDP Camp in Marib city. Photo: UNICEF/UNI465321/Alnahari



Abeer Naji, the supervisor of the accelerated education centres, distributes birth certificates to students at Al-Sumaia Camp in Marib city. Photo: UNICEF/UNI465332/Alnahari



A woman wearing a black niqab is shown from the chest up, focused on her work. She is surrounded by a large, tangled pile of white fishing nets. Her hands are visible as she manipulates the mesh. The background consists of a plain, light-colored wall and a dark wooden door or paneling. The entire image is framed by a teal border with a dotted line on the left and bottom sides.

“ Food Security,  
Agriculture and  
Livelihoods ”

Photo: Bassam Saleh/CARE

## INSPIRED BY THE SEA: FISHERMEN BATTLING HARDSHIP

Ammar Naji - a young man from Aden – who has devoted twenty-two years of his life to the sea, takes the boat as his home and the sky as the ceiling for his ambitions. He roams the shores of the city of Aden, braving the high temperature, the wind, the high cost of living, and the high cost of fuel, accompanied by his fellow fishermen, hoping that the sea will guide them to fishing spots and that they will not return disappointed.

Ammar recounts the struggles of waiting to catch fish. A day or two, or perhaps more, would sometimes pass. Sometimes they would return carrying the day's sustenance, and other times their nets would return carrying disappointment instead.

The situation quickly changed after Ammar was chosen as one of the trainees in the Fishermen Capacity Rebuilding Project, held by the Field Medical Foundation in partnership with the World Food Programme, which in turn helped 420 fishermen discover more secrets to

fishing through necessary training courses to learn the correct fishing techniques. They were provided with the necessary fishing equipment, such as nets that they set in the early morning and retrieve later in the day filled with fish. Additionally, they were given “fish finders” that help locate fish in the sea, saving time, effort, and fuel, and prevent bycatch, which affects marine ecosystems. They also received insulated coolers to preserve the fish, along with life jackets for safety.

With great joy, Ammar was able to catch the famous sailfish, known for its incredible speed, thanks to the proper use of the sonar device. He says life has changed for the better after gaining the necessary experience to analyse wave movements and select the best fishing spots.



Ammar's joyful first outing with his new fish finding device.



Distribution of fishery inputs on the Tawahi Coast.



During the fishermen's training on the use of fishing equipment.

## SOWING THE SEEDS OF HOPE

In the remote mountainous region of Qarn B'amhriz, Shabwah Governorate, the local population faces major challenges as a result of conflict, water scarcity, and desertification. The area is home to over 1,800 individuals, many of whom are farmers and depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. However, with over 70% of the available water from the source being consumed for agriculture, the area is prone to drought and hunger, exacerbating the already precarious living conditions of the people.

Abdulrahman Yaslm is a 45-year-old farmer who lives in Qarn B'amhriz. He is a father of six children and the sole breadwinner for his family. Abdulrahman has been struggling to make ends meet for years, as the lack of water resources and the harsh living conditions in the area have made it difficult for him to earn a decent income from agriculture.

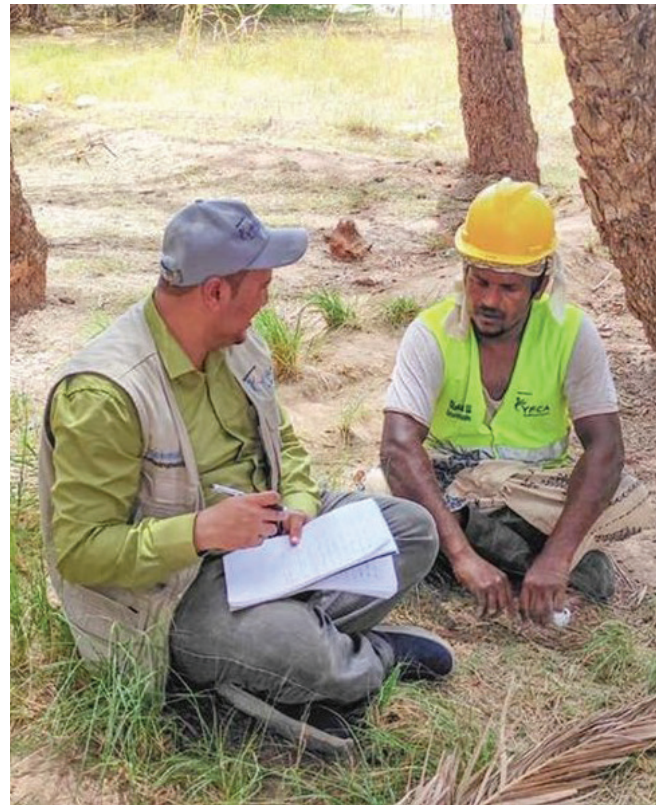
"Before the war, I used to make ends meet by working in my village or the neighbouring villages, but now, it is difficult as there are no jobs anymore," said Abdulrahman.

In response, YFCA implemented the "Hunger Crisis Response Project in Yemen," funded by DKH organization, by providing unconditional cash transfers and cash-for-work activities. Abdulrahman was among the beneficiaries who were targeted according to the project-designed criteria to participate in the cash-for-work activities. The project rehabilitated the irrigation canal, which was blocked by unwanted plants and trees, making it difficult for the rainwater to flow.

Abdulrahman was a very hard-working individual who showed determination during work. He didn't miss a day or was ever late to work. Through participating in the Cash for Work, he was able to improve his financial situation, become more confident, and secure his family's basic needs, including food and medicine.

Abdulrahman stated gratefully, "Thank you for showing up and helping us; you really helped us regain our self-confidence and save our lives from hunger."

The success of the "Hunger Crisis Response Project" highlights the importance of humanitarian aid in addressing crises such as the ongoing one in Yemen. This project had a significant impact on improving the food security situation for families in need like Abdulrahman's. The cash-for-work activities, including the interventions to protect the water well and rehabilitate the irrigation canal, helped to improve the agricultural sector and contribute to the overall well-being and food security of the people in the area.



Abdulrahman discusses the project's impact with a MEAL team member during the CFW activity in Qarn B'amhriz.



## LIVESTOCK VACCINATION IN YEMEN: A STITCH IN TIME

For consecutive seasons, Ali Al-Haddad, a livestock breeder from Nisab, Shabwah Governorate in Yemen, grappled with animal diseases which decimated his flock and herd. The frequency and severity of disease outbreaks increased after 2015 when the prolonged Yemeni conflict erupted, leading to the collapse of veterinary services. There were times when he would watch helplessly as animals fell sick and succumbed to diseases.

Ali lost seven goats in 2022. There are ripple effects of such losses, as farmers rely on these animals for their daily dietary requirements, for example, milk and meat.

“The animals we keep help to ensure that I have food for my family. Keeping livestock is my only source of income,” adds Ali. “The emergence of new diseases like diarrhoea and sheep-and-goat pox (SGP) in the past few years resulted in the death of animals and also weakened others’ overall health.”

There was a danger that the high mortality rates, poor animal health and low reproduction and productivity would spiral out of hand and cause further harm to Yemenis who were already balking under the burden of the protracted conflict, climate change, droughts, floods, and plant pest infestation.

The World Bank funded Yemen Food Security Response and Resilience Project (FSRRP), which is implemented by FAO together with UNDP and WFP, seeks to address some of the challenges faced by livestock owners such as Ali.

FAO implements the animal health component of the project through four activities: livestock vaccination and treatment; enhancing veterinary services; providing institutional support; and training community animal health workers.

In 2022, goats and sheep were vaccinated against Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) and sheep-and-Goats Pox (SGP) under FSRRP. These are the two most prevalent animal diseases of economic importance in Yemen. The campaign also treated against endo parasites, (parasites that live inside its host) and ectoparasites (those that live on the skin of a host).

Ali says they have started reaping the benefits of the vaccination campaign. Losses have significantly dropped. “I did not lose any livestock in 2023 because they were vaccinated, and I was also taught to look after them.”

Ali’s sentiments were echoed by Muhammad Ahmad Al-Bakri, a resident of Al-Haqqa area in Rada’a, Al Bayda Governorate. Muhammad says he was involved in livestock breeding since childhood. However, the recent surge in disease outbreaks was something he had not seen before, and he was despairing and on the verge of quitting.

“Keeping livestock is the primary source of income for my big family of almost 50 members, and it is our source of food and livelihood. But it was challenging to continue livestock breeding when faced with diseases which were affecting animals,” says Muhammad. Diseases also caused a reduction in milk production and loss of market value for livestock.

FSRRP salvaged the situation. “After vaccination, we saw an improvement,” adds Muhammad, who says he is so attached to his livestock that if one falls sick, he also gets ill. “There has been an increase in production, and we have seen a massive decrease in the number of deaths. My livestock’s health has remarkably improved,”

In addition to vaccination, Yemeni farmers participating in FSRRP receive essential medicines and training on animal husbandry. For pastoral communities, vaccination is a stitch in time as, for example, \$8 can vaccinate and deworm a family’s five sheep/goats and protect assets worth \$500. Such a nominal investment reaps a huge return when compared to the cost of replacing one animal.

Livestock plays a crucial role in Yemen, serving as a vital sector that ensures food security and acts as a primary source of income for rural families. Livestock vaccination campaigns prevent diseases, enhance animal health, improve household-level food security and nutrition status, and safeguard the livelihoods and resilience of rural communities.



A livestock breeder takes care of his breed in a farm where they sleep, eat, and grow. With FAO's support, livestock breeders can enhance their economic well-being by improving the productivity and sustainability of their livestock-related activities, contributing to poverty reduction.

## BUILDING SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

Mohammed Keddah, a 41-year-old farmer, faced a significant setback when Cyclone Tej destroyed his farm, leaving it in ruins, and unusable for farming.

Before Cyclone Tej struck, Mohammed was working on land that his family had cultivated for generations, and it was a source of sustenance and income for his family.

The destruction of his farm infrastructure and the loss of fertile land threatened his ability to provide for his family. Mohammed faced the daunting task of rebuilding his farm from scratch.

Fortunately, assistance arrived in the form of a project aimed at supporting farmers affected by the cyclone. Through the WFP Multi-Year Livelihoods Project (MYLP), Mohammed received essential resources to reclaim his farm.

He was provided with pesticides, fertilizer, and seeds to kickstart his farming activities. Additionally, he received financial support for his labour in reclaiming the land, clearing debris, reassembling irrigation systems, and building protection fences.

“My life is taking a good turn due to my income from this farm. If you don’t continue with the farming, you won’t have an income. The program gave me pesticides, gave me fertilizer, and gave me seeds. I also received cash for the work that I was doing,” he states.

The assistance provided enabled him to cultivate a variety of crops, including watercress, leeks, zucchini, onions, berseem, and sugar cane. Mohammed also diversified his farm by incorporating palm trees and cactus, catering to market demand.

“Now I grow watercress, leeks, zucchini, onions, berseem, and sugar cane. We have palm trees and cactus and, God willing, we will plant more things for which there is a demand in the market,” he expresses.

Selling vegetables and fruits in the market became a source of significant income, marking the success of his revitalized farm. Beyond financial gains, Mohammed experienced psychological benefits from the restoration of his livelihood. He acknowledges the importance of continuing farming despite adversities, recognizing it as a vital source of income.

“I gained when I sold the watercress to the market. I earned from this. You need to rely on yourself and succeed from here (the farm),” he emphasizes.

Mohammed hopes for a better future and to provide a good life for his family.

The multi-year livelihoods programme is bringing hope to the remote governorates of Hadramawt, Al Mahara, and Socotra in Yemen. Currently, the pilot is targeting 8,000 beneficiaries, transitioning them from general food assistance to building sustainable livelihoods.

The programme identifies and builds beneficiaries' existing skills and resources in agriculture and fisheries. This includes restoring water access, rehabilitating and expanding agricultural lands, providing the right seed and fertiliser inputs, building barriers to protect farmland, forming effective market linkages, and building relevant skills for long-term resilience.

This empowers communities and avoids imposing solutions that may not fit local contexts. The programme goes beyond simply providing food. It equips beneficiaries with the tools and knowledge they need to become self-sufficient.



Mohammed Keddah is a farmer on land that his family has cultivated for generations. Photo: WFP/Mehedi Rahman



## STITCHING HOPE: ABDULLATIF'S JOURNEY FROM DESPAIR TO RESILIENCE

The conflict in Yemen has wreaked havoc on its people, causing widespread devastation and unimaginable hardships. However, amidst the despair, there is a glimmer of hope.

Oxfam, with financial support from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), has provided lifeline assistance to over 200 vulnerable families affected by conflict through small business cash grants, helping them achieve secure and sustainable livelihoods by gaining a new sense of self-reliance.

Abdullatif is a determined 57-year-old father of 5 from Al-Ma'afer, Ta'iz Governorate. He previously embarked on a quest for better opportunities in Saudi Arabia to send money to his family. Escalating conflicts in his homeland forced him return, to Sana'a, where he owned two shops. However, as the conflict intensified, debts piled up. He lost his shops and had to leave his businesses behind.

Abdullatif recalls, "Managing the shops was extremely difficult and our situation was even worse. I had to withdraw my two children from school because I couldn't afford tuition fees." With no income, Abdullatif found himself at a crossroads. "I had to give up my business when it started floundering. The stress from constantly worrying about our situation led to heart and lung complications."

Despite these health conditions, Abdullatif bravely returned to his village, taking on any work available, from shepherding to farming leased lands. However, his income was insufficient to meet his children's basic needs. Yet, he held onto hope, dreaming of reopening his shops and achieving financial stability.

Introduced to the program by village committee members, Abdullatif was given the choice of raising livestock, sewing, or starting a grocery business. "I decided to take up sewing and taught my son the trade. Due to my health issues, my role was limited to selling the items my son made."

With the program's help, each household receives a grant of YER 570,000 and is provided with a 10-day training session to build their capacity and equip them with the skills needed to restore their lives. Beneficiaries like Abdullatif receive comprehensive training on purchasing and sales strategies, gaining essential skills. This empowerment allows them to manage their projects effectively and create inspiring success stories of their own.

With the small business grant, Abdullatif could buy essential items like a sewing machine, a table and chair, as well as fabrics and sewing supplies. "This opportunity has been life-changing for me. Now I have customers from both within and outside the village, and my income has significantly improved. I can now settle my debts and lead a more fulfilling life."

Abdullatif's inspiring journey embodies the principles of scalability, repetition, and sustainability. Despite facing obstacles such as a shortage of materials, he remains dedicated to expanding his business. Through scalable practices, he plans to broaden his reach by acquiring more fabrics and establishing a big storefront in the city. The emphasis on repetition is evident in his commitment to training his son in the skills of sewing, ensuring consistent excellence in his products. Abdullatif is building a resilient and impactful business with the potential for long-term success.



Abdullatif in front of the shop, which receives customers from both within and outside the village.



Abdullatif and his son working together in their tailor shop.

## THE WHOLE VILLAGE BENEFITS

The newly rehabilitated irrigation ditches bring water to parched farmlands in Shabwah Governorate in southeastern Yemen. They increase the flow of income to producers battling the effects of climate change and conflict in the country, with an impact extending beyond the fields and farmers.

"The Ba-Yahya irrigation channel rehabilitation project offered me a job, which has improved my living conditions and livelihood," says Muhammad Saleh, a resident of Mayfa'a, Shabwah.

Muhammad, like many other workers who participated in this project, completed training on how to mix concrete, how to properly lay rocks and how to plaster walls before starting work onsite.

In a bid to improve lives – and livelihoods – for the long term, UNDP, with national partner the Public Works Project (PWP), is applying community contracting mechanisms to construction projects, from water harvesting to agricultural land reclamation and road paving. This is an approach that helps communities better support themselves through immediate crises and for the long term, improving food production and increasing access to critical services. Already these projects have benefited tens of thousands of Yemenis in disadvantaged communities.

"Before, I was unemployed, but I was chosen by the community committee to work on this project through a wage employment scheme, which has improved my situation and that of many other labourers," Muhammad says.

Because of the way that community contracting works – by hiring and paying local community members to improve their own infrastructure and using local resources as much as possible – these projects also help foster a greater sense of community as neighbours work together for the good of the whole village, resulting in a sense of ownership and belonging.

Many of the projects that work best in the community contracting format are directly related to agriculture and combating the effects of climate change. Key projects include road rehabilitation and the protection of agricultural land through the building of gabions and irrigation canals that help mitigate desertification.

When these projects happen, the entire community participates – including women. Women are also offered the opportunity to learn a profession and deliver skills that are needed in the local labour market, increasing their employability for the long term.

Barakah Khamis, a resident of the Ba-Yahia region in the governorate of Shabwah, was a key contributor in rehabilitating rainwater irrigation channels in her area. "The training provided me with the set of skills needed to be a community contractor to clear shrubs and waste from the irrigation channels," she said. "I even hired 30 other women from the area and worked together to get the job done."

These community-based projects offer some of the best solutions against deteriorating conditions across vital areas of infrastructure, such as the poor road conditions seen across much of the country. One such project targeted a dangerous stretch of road in Al-Sarrah, a sub-district of Al-Odein, Ibb Governorate.

In Al-Sarrah, the paved road has brought new life and business to the area. "This road serves more than 100,000 people, giving them access to many services in the city," explains Sadiq Saif, head of the beneficiaries committee.

These projects have enabled Yemenis to prioritize broader recovery efforts and development planning – giving them a longer-term focus.

The Emergency Social Protection Enhancement and COVID-19 Response Project (ESPECRP) supports nutrition-sensitive cash transfers and temporary employment, while also improving access to sustainable livelihoods, key services, and economic opportunities for geographically focused areas affected by hunger, malnutrition, and climate related shocks.

Funded and supported by the World Bank's IDA, the US\$232.9 million ESPECRP is implemented by the Social Fund for Development (SFD), the Public Works Project (PWP), and the Small and Micro Enterprise Promotion Service (SMEPS) in partnership with UNDP Yemen.



Muhammad, like many other workers who participated in this project, completed training on how to mix concrete, how to properly lay rocks and how to plaster walls before starting work onsite.



Women are also offered the opportunity to learn a profession and deliver skills that are needed in the local labour market.

## PILOTING LIVELIHOODS IN MARIB BY PROVIDING SUPPORT ON SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES

In Marib, a governorate hosting more than one million internally displaced persons (IDPs), SI is contributing to find more sustainable solutions to reduce vulnerability and promote resilience-building among displaced populations. With ongoing Centre de Crise et de Soutien (CDCS) funding, SI has piloted an activity to support and restore income generating activities for IDPs through the provision of cash grants and training.

SI targeted Al Sabran displacement site in Marib City District with an integrated response of emergency relief in food assistance, access to water, hygiene promotion, provision of latrines, shelter and non-food items, and access to livelihoods. In the context of a protracted food emergency (IPC4) in Marib, SI provided cash grants of US \$650 to 54 households in the IDP site and provided training on sustainable business practices.

Alaaw Yahya Morait is a 37-year-old, father of six children. He has been living in Al Sabran IDP site for the past four years with his family after they fled their home village of Al Ma'mal in Nihm district, Sana'a Governorate at the start of the conflict. Alaaw used to be a livestock breeder before his displacement. "I lost my land, home, livestock, and other valuable possessions." This led to a significant disruption in his life and left him without a stable source of income. Alaaw was a beneficiary of food baskets from the World Food Program (WFP) and also relied on daily work, which was often unreliable, earning no more than \$3-5 per day, making it extremely difficult to meet the basic needs of his family.

Alaaw was selected as a beneficiary of the cash grant activity after providing SI with a business plan proposal.

After participating in a seven day training on business management, development and entrepreneurship, Alaaw purchased six goats (3 male and 3 female) with the grant provided by SI. They were all vaccinated thanks to SI's two vaccination campaigns by a certified veterinarian and two assistants.

"There has been no reported incidence of diseases or death [of livestock] since". Alaaw was happy that this service was provided, since he knows the importance of vaccination for an animal's health and protection from common diseases, and ultimately, the sustainability of the business.

As a livestock breeder, Alaaw was also trained on hydroponics, the cultivation of plants without using soil, in order to support the production of animal feed for his goats. This smart, simple, and cost-efficient solution uses less water and space to provide green feeders for animals throughout the year. Alaaw explained that hydroponics allows for maximizing plant growth and productivity year-round. "Now, I can provide my animals with healthy green feed at a lower cost, whatever the season, thanks to the hydroponics training I received," he added proudly.

Alaaw is now able to think more about the future and how to improve the living conditions of his family. He has gone from earning an irregular wage of \$5 per day on a good day to a monthly income ranging between \$120 and 150 – and just from selling the hydroponic feeders to other livestock breeders! "Now I have two sources of income: livestock breeding and the selling of feeders I sell to other livestock breeders," Alaaw added with a smile on his face.

While SI's assistance has brought about positive changes in the lives of beneficiaries like Alaaw Yahya Morait, there are still remaining needs to be addressed in conflict-affected areas. To further support vulnerable populations, SI continues to focus on capacity-building initiatives, such as business management and entrepreneurship training, to ensure the sustainability of income-generating activities.



Hydroponics training with Alaaw Yahya Morait, Al Sabran IDP site.



Livestock vaccination campaigns for beneficiaries of cash grants in Al Sabran site, Marib City.



Livestock vaccination campaigns for beneficiaries of cash grants in Al Sabran site, Marib City.



# Health and Nutrition

Photo: Angela Wells/IOM 2023

## HADEEL'S STORY

Saleh\*, a 29-year-old father, and his family struggle to meet their daily basic needs. His 16-month-old daughter, Hadeel\*, is suffering from severe malnutrition. Born with a harelip and an opening in the roof of her mouth, Hadeel\* has additional health challenges. She could not breastfeed naturally due to her harelip and her mother's poor nutritional condition. Her father also could not afford expensive baby formula, causing Hadeel's health and nutritional status to worsen.

Ultimately, Saleh\* took Hadeel\* to the nearest health centre, where health workers assessed her condition and enrolled her in a project focused on the management and prevention of moderate acute malnutrition. Hadeel\* was in critical condition and required intensive healthcare in Amran city. Although Saleh\* couldn't afford the relocation, Save the Children, supported by BHA and WFP, covered the costs of transferring Hadeel\* to Amran to receive the specialized medical treatment she needed.

The support provided by Save the Children included nutrition supplies, educational sessions to raise awareness about proper nutrition, and medical evaluations to monitor her condition and treatment progress. Knowing the family's financial constraints, Save the Children also covered the costs for Hadeel's\*

urgent transfer to Amran city for intensive care. They also provided a cash transfer to assist the family in meeting their basic needs, thereby ensuring Hadeel's\* continued her recovery.

"People kept telling me that Hadeel's situation was hopeless, and she was likely to die. Desperate, I drove my daughter and wife two hours to the nearest health centre supported by Save the Children. The health workers examined Hadeel\* and decided she needed to be sent to Amran city for intensive care, as her condition was too severe to be treated at the local centre, especially given her harelip. I told them I couldn't afford the trip, but they managed to cover my transportation and basic costs," explained Saleh\*, Hadeel's\* father.

"After 22 days in Amran city, Hadeel's health improved. We were allowed to return home and continue her treatment at the nearest health centre, which provided nutritional supplies for both Hadeel\* and her mother. We also attended educational sessions where we learned how to use these supplies and prepare nutritious, low-cost meals. For the first time in a long while, I feel relieved and can finally sleep peacefully."



\*Saleh with his daughter Hadeel\*



## FUTURE OF HEALTHCARE IN AHWAR: A RADICAL TRANSFORMATION BRINGS HOPE

Ahwar District in Abyan Province is renowned for its special location on the international coastal road linking the provinces of Hadramout, Shabwa, Abyan, and Aden. It shines like a jewel amidst Yemen's rich cultural heritage and stunning natural landscapes. The region has a deep-rooted history and culture, but has faced significant challenges in healthcare.

Ahwar General Hospital, established in the 1970s, lacked an operating room for many years, limiting it to providing only primary medical services. This lack of medical infrastructure forced residents to travel to other cities for necessary treatment, increasing their suffering and financial burden.

In response to these urgent challenges, the Field Medication Foundation, in partnership with the Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF), undertook transformative efforts to rehabilitate the hospital. The hospital was equipped with a fully functional operating room, laboratory, and blood bank, enabling the hospital to offer more comprehensive medical services and perform essential surgeries.

During the blessed month of Ramadan, in a historic moment for the hospital, the medical team, supported by the foundation, successfully performed its first surgical intervention since its founding--a caesarean section ('C-section') that saved the life of a mother and her newborn.

This success not only demonstrates the improvement of medical services, but also boosts confidence in the hospital's capabilities to handle complex medical cases and offers new hope to the local population.

This transformation of Ahwar General Hospital highlights the importance of partnerships between medical entities and humanitarian organizations in enhancing health infrastructure and providing adequate care in remote areas, improving the quality of life for local communities and reducing the financial and emotional burdens associated with traveling for treatment.

Mohsen, the father of the child born through the C-section shared his experience. "The doctor told me that my wife needed a caesarean section. I was prepared to transfer her to Razi Hospital in Zinjibar Abyan, which is three hours away, but the doctor surprised me by saying that the operation could be performed here." He continued, "At first, I couldn't believe it. Thankfully, the operation was successful, and my wife and son are fine."

This testimony reflects the tangible transformation in healthcare within the region, where residents now receive advanced medical services in their geographical vicinity, reducing the need to travel for better care and enhancing the sense of security and confidence in local medical facilities.



The medical team successfully performed its first surgical intervention since its founding in the newly opened operating room.

## SCALING UP INTEGRATED HEALTH RESPONSE FOR LIFE-SAVING IMPACT

Malnutrition among mothers and children remains a major public health humanitarian crisis in Yemen. Mothers and children, especially in rural areas, face challenges in accessing health services due to the lack of specialized doctors and nurses, insufficient essential medical supplies, and limited access to services, resulting from economic and information barriers. In 2024, approximately 5 million children under five and 2.7 million pregnant and lactating women (PLW) are in need of life-saving integrated nutrition interventions.

CARE and the Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) scaled up an integrated health response in Khanfar District, Abyan Governorate, to reach more women with awareness and basic health services, increase child screening rates, and improve child survival through early diagnosis of malnutrition.

The response supported health centres in Al-Kood and Kadamat Alsaïd Qassem areas in Khanfar with much-needed equipment and medicines. In addition, it supported a mobile clinic and supported and built the capacity of health workers and community health volunteers to conduct awareness-raising and outreach activities.

Sana Ahmed, one of the supported health workers, works as a nurse in the therapeutic feeding unit at Kadamat Alsaïd Qassem Area Health Centre.

She enjoys her work because it saves children's lives and gives them a good start in life. Sana says, "As a health worker at the therapeutic feeding unit, I always welcome the mother and child and check their registration information, admission and referral papers, and vaccination records. We start by measuring the MUAC height and weight, which is how we define acute malnutrition in children aged 6-59 months".

Based on the measurements, the child is referred to a doctor for diagnosis. Then, the child goes to the Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) room to receive the appropriate medication and treatment for their condition. "It's heartwarming for me to accompany young children and their parents on their journey to recovery. There is nothing that makes me prouder than to see a young child strongly defeat malnutrition," she concludes.

"The centre provides parents with nutritional counselling for their children, as well as vaccines, medicines and vitamins. We have helped over 1,000 patients and vaccinated 1,000 children. The dream is to help more people in the future," says Dr. Bassam Saeed, supervisor of the health centre.

Due to economic hardship, Aisha Saad, a mother of five from Abyan Governorate, was unable to provide the necessary medication for her malnourished child. Through outreach activities conducted by community health volunteers, she found out about the services available at the health centre in the Kadamat Alsaïd Qassem area.

Aisha was relieved to learn that the health centre provided free treatment for malnutrition. "The staff at the health centre were accommodating. When I came to the centre, they immediately gave my son special food to help him. And after the doctor examined him, they said he had a serious case of malnutrition and gave him treatment right away. They also taught me how to take care of him and how to feed him and my other children properly, so they don't get sick," said Aisha.

Now, Aisha visits the centre regularly to ensure her 18-month-old son gets the care he needs.

Midwife Asia Saleh is one of the health workers at the mobile clinic. She and the team work tirelessly to reach remote areas and sites hosting IDPs, often over rough terrain. The mobile clinic team consists of five health workers who travel throughout the day between IDP sites and communities in need in Khanfar District to provide free, life-saving health services to the most vulnerable.

"It's challenging to move between the most remote areas every day to reach every child and mother who needs our services," says Asia. "Our mission as health workers is what motivates us to keep moving forward to reach more children than the day before. My greatest joy is to see babies and mothers happy and healthy," she concludes.



A health worker holds a baby during an awareness-raising session in Khanfar, Abyan Governorate. Photo: Bassam Saleh/CARE.



Sana Ahmed, a health worker, measures the mid-arm circumference of a child at the health centre. Photo: Bassam Saleh/CARE.



Asia Saleh, a midwife in the mobile clinic with a child and his mother during awareness activities in Khanfar, Abyan Governorate. Photo: Bassam Saleh/CARE.

## THE SILENT STRUGGLE: YEMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

Years of conflict have cast a dark shadow on Yemen, both on its physical infrastructure and on the health and well-being of its people. Mental health has been overlooked for far too long, and now a hidden crisis is festering.

Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services are lacking in many parts of the country, owing to shortages of trained professionals and treatment facilities. Even where such services are available, people may feel unable to access them owing to social disapproval.

An estimated 7 million people, about a quarter of Yemen's population, grapple with psychological trauma and stress inflicted by the ongoing conflict. All require mental health support, yet only 120,000 of this number have consistent access to services.

A WHO collaboration with the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) has helped to strengthen mental health and psychosocial support in Yemen and prioritize the most vulnerable groups with mental illness.

Asma's\* story exemplifies the tragedy of this neglected crisis and the silent struggle of those affected. Living under the constant stress of war, Asma experienced the depths of depression. She withdrew from life, which left her isolated and contemplating escape.

"I felt down; I was always zoned out and wouldn't want to leave my room," Asma explained. Her mental health continued to decline until she reached a point where she didn't want to meet a single person and yearned for escape: "I felt trapped in my house, I wanted to leave everyone behind and run away."

It was only through her family's concern and eventual action that Asma sought help at one of the WHO-supported mental health departments. With therapy and counselling, Asma found solace and a path to recovery, reclaiming her ability to connect with loved ones and embrace a brighter future.

Asma's story is far from unique. Many suffer in silence and avoid seeking support, fearing the stigma

associated with mental illness. But Nabilah\*, an English teacher and a mother of 5 children, took a different path. Aware of her mental health struggles and driven by a desire to heal, she defied stigma and was unafraid to seek help.

At first, Nabilah suffered from what seemed to be the symptoms of an allergy, as well as a sleeping disorder and anxiety. She saw a dermatologist, who revealed that Nabilah's skin complaint had been caused by psychological factors. He advised her to find ways to reduce her stress levels to clear up the issue, or seek mental health support.

Recognizing the link between her anxiety and physical symptoms, Nabilah found professional support before the burden became too much. "I'm not ashamed," said Nabilah. "Mental illness is just like physical illness, which can be cured."

Nabilah studied psychology at university for 3 years, so knew about mental illness and types of mental disorders. "I was fully aware that I was suffering mentally and it had started to affect my medical condition," she said. "I tried to beat it considering my knowledge and awareness, but it was beyond my capacity, so I sought support before it got worse."

This case highlights the importance of awareness and education. Moreover, Nabilah's courage reveals the need for both individual awareness and social acceptance of mental health struggles.

Yemen's mental health crisis is a silent battle and demands urgent attention. By prioritizing mental health care, combating stigma through greater awareness, and building a robust support system, Yemen can help those struggling in the shadows to embrace life once more.

Asma's journey from isolation to recovery shows how it's possible to heal even amid the bleakest circumstances: "Finally, I can connect with my family and lead a normal life. This change has transformed me and those around me."



With therapy and counselling, Asma found solace and a path to recovery at one of the WHO-supported mental health departments.

A young girl in a black dress and white headscarf is using crutches to stand in a room. She is looking out a window with a diamond-patterned frame. In the background, another person is carrying several bags. A bed with a floral patterned blanket is visible in the foreground.

# Protection

Photo: Al-Baraa Mansoor/Save the Children

## LOOKING OUT FOR EXPLOSIVE HAZARDS FROM THE BACK OF A CAMEL: BASHAR'S STORY

In Taiz, Yemen's third largest city, the impact of conflict can be found all around. Lives have been lost, families displaced, and homes destroyed, leaving many grappling with homelessness and hunger. Amidst this turmoil, those who remain in Taiz face the ever-present threat of landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW), risking injury or death in their daily lives.

Bashar is 15 years old and lives in Sabir Al-Mawadim District in Taiz. Bashar had to leave school because his family could no longer afford the books and the fees. "I had to work using my camel by moving heavy items for people, and this affects me physically because it is not suitable for my age," Bashar said. The presence of landmines and other explosives has made it more difficult to find meaningful employment, and it has increased prices of goods and services, as access to Taiz has been made more difficult. Bashar now uses his camel to make a living. Every day he moves heavy items from one place to another for members of the community. Forced to earn a living this way Bashar is at much greater risk of harm from landmines and ERW.

The HALO Trust has delivered explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) sessions to communities in Taiz, including to Bashar and his friends. "I benefitted from the EORE session a lot. I now know the impact of explosive items and I learned how to recognize areas with explosive hazards. I will be more careful to care for my safety, and my family's safety, when moving around. I learned not to touch any strange items and recognize

the signs that indicates danger. I hope to protect myself, my family and my camel."

In Yemen, HALO has delivered EORE sessions to more than 45,000 people, both adults and children. Especially in Taiz city, where people living amongst the rubble are at a higher risk of accidents with explosives. While survey and clearance of explosive items is the only permanent solution, this requires time and sustained effort, and mine action cannot effectively address the full scale of this problem in the short term. Delivering EORE to at-risk people is therefore a crucial tool to reduce the risks by improving the knowledge of threats for individuals and communities to encourage behaviour change.

HALO has been operating in Taiz since 2021 and is mapping, marking and recording hazards with the support of key informants in the communities, identifying 1,000,000m<sup>2</sup> of hazardous area. At the same time, the work of mechanical and manual mine clearance teams resulting in more than 2,000,000m<sup>2</sup> now being safe from explosives and returned back to the communities.

Bashar wished all land to be cleared and free from explosives and for people to return home safely, so his father and others in the community can go back to work. Bashar wishes nothing more than returning to school and play with his friends.



Photo: Bashar attending the EORE session in Dhabab neighbourhood, Sabir Al Mawadim District, Taiz.

## FINDING A SAFE SPACE

Hiam, 15, was forced to make ends meet for her family.

When conflict in Yemen escalated in 2015, her father's less than a dollar-a-day job of carrying goods by donkey went with it. Her mother, gravely ill with cancer, required constant care herself. As the eldest child in a family of nine, Hiam stepped up to care for her siblings and to ensure the family survived.

"Giving up on school was the hardest part for me," says Hiam. "I still feel deep sadness, but fate takes you down paths you don't want, so I learned to live, fight, and strive to reach my goals."

She trekked out to distant farms to buy vegetables and sell them in her neighbourhood. The money covered her family's basic needs, yet the work came with hidden, cumulative costs.

"As the only girl in the market, there was so much abuse, every single day. This all added to my sadness. It had a significant effect on me," says Hiam.

Afraid and under immense pressure, Hiam was close to breaking point when she heard about a UNFPA-supported safe space for women and girls. In desperation, she reached out for help.

Hiam received counselling from a group of trained professionals for a month, and having built back her confidence, she took classes in sustainable farming to secure her family's future.

Today, she makes around \$30-50 a month, which keeps her seven siblings in school. Her home farm also produces enough food for three meals a day for the whole family.

"Now I'm an agriculturalist, and my life and economic situation have really improved. Everyone calls me 'the agricultural girl' and I love that," Hiam says.



"Now I'm an agriculturalist, and my life and economic situation have really improved. Everyone calls me 'the agricultural girl' and I love that," Hiam says.



## LIFE AMIDST LANDMINES: AHMED'S JOURNEY OF SURVIVAL AND HOPE

In Hodeidah, Yemen, landmines pose a serious challenge faced by civilians as a result of the armed conflict that has been ongoing since 2015. The use of landmines has spread widely in Hodeidah during the conflict, posing a significant threat to the lives and safety of civilians.

Ahmed, a 24-year-old young man, is the eldest member of his family of 13. After the death of his father nine months ago, Ahmed became the main provider for the family. Prior to that, they relied on the father's meagre income, which did not exceed 17,000 Yemeni rials [32 dollars]. This amount was not sufficient to meet their basic needs, so Ahmed and his siblings worked alongside their father in any daily work they could do to earn extra income to support themselves.

"This is our normal daily life. We divide ourselves into groups in the morning, with one group going to collect firewood to sell, and another group taking care of preparing food," said Ahmed.

Due to the danger of landmines planted in the current area of Hodeidah Governorate, Ahmed's family was forced to leave their home and move to another area considered safer. They now live in a single shelter with only a kitchen and a bathroom. Ahmed used to go daily to collect firewood from an area known as a landmine-contaminated area in the past. Despite claims of clearing the area of landmines, there are still people losing their lives due to the presence of mines there. Even with Ahmed's awareness of the danger of the area, he felt safe as he had not experienced any accidents during his daily visits.

On one of his regular mornings, as he always did, Ahmed went out with his friend to collect firewood to sell in the market. In the early hours of their work, a mine exploded. Ahmed was injured and was quickly transported by the donkey they used to carry the firewood to the hospital.

Ahmed arrived at the hospital in Hodeidah on December 27, 2023, in an extremely critical condition. With support from the European Union Humanitarian Aid, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) was able to cover the entirety of Ahmed's treatment expenses as a crucial part of their victim assistance program.

Ahmed's grave injuries necessitated the amputation of his right leg and three life-saving surgeries. The DRC transferred him to Sana'a for advanced, specialized care, where he received two further surgeries and financial aid for his recovery needs and transportation expenses.

"I am grateful to DRC for taking full responsibility for my treatment. Without them, I couldn't have received the treatment or imagined my current condition."

When Ahmed's condition improves over several months, DRC will maintain direct contact with him in order to support him throughout the recovery process and refer him to the necessary services.

During this time, DRC will facilitate his transfer to another specialized organization to fit him with a prosthetic limb to ensure he reaches the maximum benefit and can return to his previous life as much as possible.



Photo: Nuha Haider



# Rapid Response Mechanism

Photo: YARD/UNFPA

## REBUILDING LOST HOPE: WASEEL'S EMPOWERMENT THROUGH MULTI-PURPOSE CASH ASSISTANCE

Waseel is a 42-year-old father of four children with two wives. His family were displaced from the Osifrah area in Al Qahirah district to the Al Harazieh area in Salah district due to the conflict. The family sought refuge in a dilapidated house with holes in the roof and dealt with dripping rainwater and dangerous animals such as snakes. Recognizing their dire circumstances, a local organization referred Waseel's case through the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) to receive multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) under the Cash Consortium of Yemen project.

When he spoke with Mercy Corps staff, Waseel expressed his desperation, stating "Our living conditions were unbearable, and I felt helpless as a father." Fortunately, Waseel's household qualified for six rounds of assistance under the program. He received five rounds of cash aid amounting to 1,200,000 YER (240,000 YER per round), and his family will receive the final round next month.

Over the course of five rounds, the cash support provided by the program proved to be a lifeline for Waseel and his family. It enabled them to meet their basic needs, repair damaged belongings, and even send their children back to school. In Waseel's own words, "The assistance gave us hope and allowed us to rebuild our lives."

The impact of the MPCA extended beyond immediate relief. It empowered Waseel, giving him a renewed sense of purpose and control over his family's well-being. "Being able to provide for my family ignited hope for a better future for my children," Waseel said.

With the assistance, Waseel could repair their damaged house. Additionally, he prioritized his children's education, recognizing its importance for their future. The program served as a foundation for the first step of stability and growth, enabling Waseel to take charge of their well-being.



Waseel with his children, August 2023.

## RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES COLLECTIVELY

Shaima left school at just eight years old to support her family's farming business in Hajjah, in northern Yemen. Conflict had erupted and the country's economy went into freefall, leaving the family almost destitute and with no means to pay for her schooling.

A few years later, the violence spread to Shaima's village. Her family of six crammed onto their father's motorbike and travelled more than six hours to reach the Sa'ada Governorate.

Finding nowhere else to go, Shaima and her family took shelter in a refuse tip in Quhza District. They resorted to collecting plastic bottles, which they transported by motorbike to sell at a market in the city, earning less than \$1 dollar a day. They could barely scrape together one meal for the family, but at least they were together.

That changed when heavy rains lashed their shelter in August 2023, washing away their motorbike. Shaima's father and brother rushed to catch it, but were pulled into the floodwater. Shaima, too, tried to help but was dashed against the rocks by the force of the current. A neighbour pulled her to safety, but both her father and brother drowned.

Now Shaima, at age 16, is the sole provider for her mother, her 6-year-old sister and 13-year old brother.

A rapid response team, met with Shaima's family, providing them with emergency support and referred them for shelter and cash assistance. To meet the needs of people displaced in an emergency, UNFPA leads the distribution of emergency relief items as part of the UN Rapid Response Mechanisms which includes dignity kits, containing hygiene and menstruation supplies, to women and girls, alongside ready-to-eat food from WFP and hygiene kits provided by UNICEF.

Shaima told UNFPA, "My only hope for the future is to be able to secure the very basic needs for the rest of my family to survive."

The effects of climate crises exacerbate the vulnerability and protection risks inherent in displacement, especially for women and girls.

That was the case for Souad, 45, and her seven children, who had been sheltering in a mud hut they built themselves – before the flash floods demolished it.

"I was in shock – what's left to be destroyed in my life?" she asked. They had already been displaced by conflict, and her husband recently died from kidney disease. Like one quarter of displaced families in Yemen, Souad was left to look after her family alone. She resorted to selling household utensils, while her children helped to collect plastic items that had been thrown away.

The rapid response team met with Souad's family, as well. "I was surprised when the rapid response team came and provided us with these kits, I didn't expect them to arrive so quickly."

Souad was referred by UNFPA for cash assistance, shelter and to a protection team for counselling; later she will be offered training in livelihood skills so she can recover financially and support herself and her family.

"This gives me hope that our situation can improve," Souad said to UNFPA upon receiving her RRM kit.

Yemen ranks third among the countries in the world that are most vulnerable to climate change but least prepared for its shocks. Severe drought, record rises in temperature and devastating floods have combined to upend the lives and security of tens of thousands of people.

The UN rapid response mechanism in Yemen, supported by the European Union, the United States Government and the Yemen Humanitarian Fund, ensures life-saving assistance within 72 hours of the onset of an emergency. In 2023, some 312,690 people across the country have been supported through the UN Rapid Response Mechanism, some two thirds of whom were families affected by severe weather.



A displaced man carries an RRM kit after heavy flooding wrecks their homes in Sa'ada, Yemen. Photo: UNFPA/YDF



# Shelter and Non-Food Items

Photo: Abdullah Al Keldi/DRC

## REHABILITATING HOMES, RESTORING LIVES

Ali Hamad, a 63-year-old, found himself amidst Yemen's turmoil, leading a family of five members. Their home in the Barat Al Anan district of Al Jawf Governorate bore the scars of conflict, inflicted with considerable damage. Fleeing the chaos five years prior, they sought refuge in the Ofay area, leaving behind not just a house but a sense of belonging.

"We were forced to flee, leaving our house, lands, and properties in search of peace and a secure life," Ali recounted. However, their damaged abode remained a constant reminder of their displacement. Without the means to effect repairs, returning home seemed an elusive dream. "We couldn't come back to our damaged house as we had no cash in hand to repair it," he lamented.

Thankfully, assistance arrived in the form of the Cash for House Rehabilitation Program initiated by UNHCR. With resources at his disposal, Ali seized the opportunity to restore his sanctuary. "Having cash in hand enabled me to repair my house before we return," he expressed. Thus equipped, Ali and his family made the journey back to their cherished home, reclaiming not just bricks and mortar but a semblance of normalcy.

In Aden, a dusty alley became a scene of resilience as Aziza, 60 years old, stood amidst her damaged home. Aziza, grappling with caring for her ailing husband and son's daily quest for work to sustain the family, faced the added burden of conflict's aftermath. Torn ceilings and rain-soaked walls threatened their home. However, UNHCR's Cash for House Rehabilitation program offered a lifeline. With the assistance of local skilled labour and locally sourced materials, Aziza could patch up the roof and paint the walls, reclaiming her home.

"This is our sanctuary—and now I have a sense of relief," Aziza shared, her voice tinged. Despite bearing the marks of struggle on her weathered face, her eyes sparkled with newfound determination.

In 2023, UNHCR supported more than 2,500 families across Yemen through the Cash for House Rehabilitation Program with the disbursement of US \$6 million. Through the provision of resources and support, the program became one of the durable solutions for displaced families across Yemen, restoring physical structures, revitalizing communities, and providing avenues for economic empowerment.

As Yemen grapples with instability, economic strife, and environmental challenges, initiatives such as these are essential for the 4.56 million Yemenis who remain displaced, offering tangible pathways toward recovery. Additionally, in 2023, UNHCR's cash program in Yemen disbursed more than \$30 million to the most vulnerable displaced Yemenis, refugees, and asylum-seekers, offering not just financial assistance but a lifeline to those striving to rebuild their lives amidst adversity.



Aziza, 60, stands in front of her fixed home. Years of conflict had torn apart her ceiling and rain would seep through the cracks. UNHCR's cash-for-shelter programme helped repair Aziza's home and live a more dignified life.



Ali Hamad's home in Barat Al Anan district, Al Jawf Governorate, before the Cash for House Rehabilitation Program.



Ali Hamad's home restored through the Cash for House Rehabilitation Program, showcasing the transformative impact of humanitarian assistance





# Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Photo: Abdullah Al Keldi/DRC

## REVOLUTIONIZING ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER

Under the harsh realities of armed conflict, the residents of Qutbah sub-district of Abs in Hajjah Governorate faced an ongoing struggle to secure safe drinking water. With only one salty well serving 11 villages, the community endured health risks and financial strain in their quest for clean water. For years, they grappled with the consequences of relying on a single, saline well for their water needs. This not only jeopardized their health but also imposed a heavy financial burden as they resorted to purchasing water at high costs.

The influx of IDPs further strained the already limited water resources, increasing the cost of water procurement. Diarrheal and kidney diseases became rampant, and the health situation deteriorated.

In response to the escalating crisis, Abs Development Organization (ADO) launched a holistic WASH intervention aimed at alleviating the suffering of the community members, including vulnerable groups such as persons with special needs. The cornerstone of this intervention was the implementation of a cutting-edge solution: a solar-powered water purification station. This innovative approach not only addressed the urgent need for clean drinking water but also ensured sustainability by harnessing renewable energy sources.

Thanks to the concerted efforts of ADO in coordination with local authorities and the General Authority for Rural Water Supply Projects (GARWSP), a total of 3,885 individuals, including women, men, girls, and boys, now have access to safe drinking water. The water purification station operates efficiently for 10 hours a day, pumping an impressive 1,500 litres per hour. Moreover, the establishment of a community committee to manage and maintain the station has further solidified its sustainability, ensuring a lasting solution to the water crisis.

By providing a sustainable source of safe drinking water, the organization has addressed the immediate health risks posed by the salty well while uplifting the entire community. Moreover, the financial burden on both the host community and IDPs has been eased, allowing families to redirect resources towards other essential needs.

In the face of adversity, ADO's intervention has brought about a transformative change, turning the tide against the water crisis in Qutbah sub-district.

Across the country, water needs remain high. Going forward, ADO remains committed to replicating this model in other communities facing similar challenges, ensuring that no one is left behind in the quest for clean water and improved health outcomes.



From struggle to sustainability: A solar-powered solution shines light on Qutbah's water crisis

## RIPPLES OF CHANGE: DURABLE WATER SOLUTIONS RESHAPE COMMUNITIES ALONG YEMEN'S WEST COAST

*The decade-long conflict in Yemen has left millions without access to basic services, especially displaced populations living in inadequate conditions. According to the 2024 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 17.4 million people are currently in need of water, sanitation and hygiene assistance – nearly half of the country's population.*

Mariam fled with her family from Ta'iz six years ago to join relatives in Yakhtol. Before the rehabilitation of the water supply system in the area, she used to send her 8-year-old daughter to fetch water from a collection point three kilometres from their shelter.

"I used to worry about her from the moment she left until she came back," recounts the mother of six. Now that the responsibility of collecting water no longer falls on her daughter, Mariam is finally considering sending her to school.

The rehabilitation of the Yakhtol water supply system is one of 17 community-led water projects that the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is undertaking along the West Coast. The initiative in Yakhtol involved constructing a collective water tank, installing solar pumping units and a generator, and setting up an equipment room. As a result, more than 14,000 people are now benefiting from access to clean water in the district.

The ongoing conflict in Yemen has forced many people along the west coast to flee from frontline areas to seek refuge in safer locations, often within host communities. In districts where new waves of IDPs continue to arrive, the existing water facilities are insufficient to meet the growing demand.

Despite the infrastructure established decades ago, a significant portion has fallen into disrepair due to the conflict, especially the pumping units and reservoirs. While past efforts from local authorities and different organizations have helped, water access remains inconsistent and over 20 million people still do not have access to enough water to cover their basic daily needs.

To mitigate water-related conflict, IOM's interventions aim to enhance water infrastructure, develop local capacity for conflict management, and implement sustainable solutions for long-term stability. This approach seeks to reduce aid dependency and alleviate social tensions in affected communities.

In rural areas, women play a pivotal role in agricultural activities, including water collection for household needs. They often have to walk on foot for several kilometres to access water points, significantly impacting their daily lives. While donkeys are sometimes used to help carry the water, women still bear the responsibility of hoisting the jerrycans onto them.

Families also face health challenges amid harsh conditions, as the arduous journey to fetch water not only consumes valuable time but also poses health risks, especially during scorching summer months when temperatures soar. By addressing water supply needs, IOM aims to support communities who currently depend on costly water trucking while also shielding them from waterborne diseases such as cholera.

"Before the supply system was rehabilitated, we distributed water according to a very strict schedule, so that everyone could have access to a minimum supply," explains Saleh Al Shathely, Head of Water Supply Management in Yakhtol.

Thanks to the current flow of water reaching people's homes day and night, the impact has been huge. "People don't fight over water anymore," Saleh explains.

*IOM's rehabilitation of the water supply in Yakhtol is funded by USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance.*



Despite the challenges, Yemeni women persistently collect water for their families, often walking long distances to reach water points.  
Photo: IOM/Monica Chiriatic



Water committees are vital for ensuring the upkeep of water and sanitation systems in affected communities, particularly in sites for IDPs.  
Photo: IOM/Monica Chiriatic

## WHERE WATER WHISPERS

In the heart of Yemen's Dhamar Governorate lies Al Meqranah, a community of 7,000 people facing a critical challenge: access to clean water. The daily reality for these residents includes a six-hour journey to fetch water from springs 2,500 meters away, a testament to their resilience in the face of adversity.

The cost of water trucking places a significant financial burden on the inhabitants of Al Meqranah, many of whom have limited resources. Recognizing the strength and solidarity of this community, a collaborative initiative has been established to address their water crisis.

A key component of this initiative is the implementation of a 2,100-meter pipeline project, aimed at providing a more consistent and accessible water supply. This effort is the result of diverse groups coming together to support a common goal, highlighting the importance of collective action in improving living conditions.

The Al Meqranah pipeline project serves as a reminder that infrastructure development is about more than just physical construction; it's about fostering health, economic empowerment, and social stability within communities.

As we acknowledge the progress made, we also recognize the continuous need for support. Our work in Al Meqranah is part of a larger commitment to assist communities in creating sustainable futures for themselves.

This narrative is not an end but a beginning. It is an invitation for ongoing partnership and acknowledgment of the many challenges that still lie ahead. The pipeline is a step forward, but the journey continues as we endeavour to build a more equitable and sustainable world for all.

In unity, there is strength. The story of Al Meqranah showcases what can be achieved when we commit to supporting our collective humanity and work together to confront global challenges.



The Al Meqranah pipeline project is bringing clean water to a community of 7,000 people. Photo: Salah Taher/ADRA Yemen

## TOWARDS A BETTER LIFE: YEMEN EMERGENCY ELECTRICITY ACCESS PROJECT REACHES REMOTE VILLAGES OF ZAMEH IN YEMEN

In Zameh subdistrict of the Al-Naderah district in Ibb Governorate, Yemen, fetching water used to be a daily ordeal for the people of Zameh. However, thanks to the WB-funded Yemen Emergency Electricity Access Project (YEEAP), their lives have changed significantly.

Muhammad Abda Ubaid, a resident of Zameh, says: "Women and children used to embark on a four-hour journey to fetch water from a distant well and bring it home. They started the journey as early as 3 a.m. to be one of the first arrivals and avoid the crowding at the well."

In 2023, YEEAP brought about a significant change to Zameh village and neighbouring villages in Zameh subdistrict. UNOPS designed and installed multi-stage solar-powered water pumping systems to bring water to the households in the remote villages. Water is pumped from the well to a tank on one mountain, then relayed to a second tank on another mountain, and relayed to a third tank on a yet higher altitude. This approach ensures that several villages benefit from clean water supply.

"This is a blessing!" added Muhammad. "Today, water reaches our homes. Women and children no longer have to walk long distances to bring water – it's a dream coming true!"

Across Yemen, especially in rural and peri-urban areas, lack of reliable electricity hinders communities' access to clean water, and essential services. By harnessing solar energy, YEEAP supports Yemeni communities to have better access to electricity.

Under YEEAP phase I, the project powered 234 schools, 220 health centres, 40 water wells and 23 COVID-19 isolation units. Additionally, it provided 117,000 households with pico systems, benefiting approximately 3.2 million people.

Currently, YEEAP Phase II is underway and builds on the success of the first phase, expanding coverage to power more critical facilities and distributing pico systems for households.



Solar system at the top of Zameh mountain, Ibb. Photo: UNOPS 2023



Retaining walls were built at the well to protect against water flooding. Zameh, Ibb. Photo: UNOPS 2023.



Women and children in Toomr village on their daily journey to bring water from Zameh water well to their homes. Photo: UNOPS 2023.



Yemen Humanitarian  
Communications  
Network

WFP/Mehedi Rahman