"STORIES FROM THE FIELD"
COVID-19 RESPONSE

COVID-19 awareness campaign in Abyan Governorate (AYF)

The coronavirus (COVID-19) presents another threat to the Yemeni people in addition to the protracted humanitarian crisis caused by almost six years of conflict. Yemen’s health care system has been decimated by the conflict, and it is critical to raise awareness about COVID-19 to protect the population and prevent it from being overwhelmed. Even though it was not until April that cases of COVID-19 were reported in Yemen, an outbreak seemed only a matter of time as the number of cases in surrounding countries increased.

Abyan Youth Foundation (AYF), a Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) implementing partner, leaped into action in March 2020 and initiated a COVID-19 awareness campaign in Khanfar and Zinjubar districts in Abyan Governorate. AYF adapted an existing US$300,000 YHF WASH-funded project targeting 31,000 of the most vulnerable people in the Abyan Governorate to conduct hygiene awareness activities with a focus on COVID-19 symptoms and prevention measures. The prevention activities were implemented in collaboration with WASH Sub-Cluster and UNICEF, who supported the campaign with 600 hygiene kits for sites for internally displaced persons (IDPs). Besides, 20 community volunteers were trained in coordination with the Abyan Health Office.

The AYF initiative has made a real difference by tackling a lack of knowledge about COVID-19 among vulnerable communities. Awareness campaigns continue and feedback indicates they are helping communities to implement protection measures. At one IDP site, a man explained “we had heard the word Corona a lot, but we didn’t know what it was about. Now we know how to protect ourselves.” An elderly woman noted, “I cannot read but I can see the posters in the latrine, so every time I go in, I follow the steps and wash my hands thoroughly”.

The Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) supported the Abyan Youth Foundation (AYF) to implement a $300,000 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene project to support WASH interventions for the most vulnerable communities Zinjibar and Khanfar districts of Abyan Governorate in Yemen.
Yemen continues to be the world's largest humanitarian crisis, with high levels of acute food insecurity. Two million out of nearly eight million people living in southern governorates are estimated to be severely food insecure. Prolonged conflict, as well as high food prices, depreciation of the local currency, and disrupted public services, are the major drivers of acute food insecurity. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic, devastating flooding, and an unprecedented desert locust upsurge have further exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities in the country.

Most Yemeni people who work in agriculture do not have access to the material they need to successfully cultivate. Price instability and fuel shortages continue to impact seed quality and the availability of much-needed services such as water, transportation, and electricity. As a result, many farmers left their hometowns in the countryside in search of livelihood opportunities, leaving behind their farms.

Villages in Rasad and Sarar districts in Abyan Governorate were once known for their...
excellent millet and sorghum crops. Nearly half of the residents there depend on agriculture as the main source of income. Yet the conflict, together with the economic recession, has limited their access to seeds and cultivation supplies.

“Farming isn’t just my main means of earning a living; it’s a passion that I inherited from my ancestors,” says 63-years-old Salem Qasim enthusiastically.

Salem lives in Sarar District with his nine children. During the agricultural season, he would farm his land and teach the Quran to village children. After the harvest, he used to move to the city away from his children for six months to work to support his family.

“Agricultural productivity was very low in my village due to the usage of traditional farming techniques and poor farming practices,” he says.

As part of the YHF-supported project to improve food security levels through supporting agriculture-based livelihoods project in Abyan Governorate, CARE trained 76 farmers in Rasad and Sarar districts including Salem and Ghanya on best farming practices and new farming technologies including micro-dosing, timely planting, proper spacing, and row cropping. The project also provided improved millet and sorghum seeds for 1300 farmers, along with much-needed agricultural tools such as sickles, rakes, hoes, and carts. And to help the targeted farmers survive until harvest time, the project provided them with monthly cash assistance of 50 US dollars for three months.

As a result of higher quality seeds which can be harvested in a short time, the production of millet and sorghum dramatically increased in the target areas.

“The improved seeds we received work like magic,” says Ghanya. “Can you imagine how my income would increase if I harvested nearly two bags of crops every month?”

“I learned new and effective technologies like preparing natural fertilizer at home and reducing fertilizer consumption through micro-dosing,” says Ghanya. “Now, I visit my friends in neighboring villages every Friday and talk to them about these technologies.”

The Yemen Humanitarian Fund supported CARE to implement a US$4.3 million project to improve food security levels through supporting agriculture-based livelihoods in Abyan Governorate. The Yemen Humanitarian Fund, CARE was able to reach 5,300 families with life-saving cholera awareness and hygiene promotion messaging, coupled with the distribution of hygiene kits.
As part of the emergency education support project for the IDPs and most at-risk students in Hayfan and Damt Districts, implemented by the Millennium Development Foundation (MDF) and funded by the Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF), MDF paid volunteer teachers a monthly incentive to encourage them to continue teaching.

Jawad was nominated by the school’s administration. The monthly incentive he received as part of the project was indispensable for allowing him to support his family. In the meantime, his students noted that he became more available to offer lessons and that his teaching methods had improved.

“This project has given us hope in the educational process and made volunteer teachers work hard and filled a lot of shortages because of the country’s current circumstances,” Jawad said.

The Yemen Humanitarian Fund supported Millennium Development Foundation (MDF) to implement a $700,000 Emergency Education Support to IDPs and Most at Risk Students in Hayfan and Damt districts of Taiz Governorate. As a result of this support, MDF supported 98 teachers with a monthly incentive in 12 schools in Hayfan District.
The first normal delivery in Ahamah health unit (Human Access)

Location: Al Azariq District, Ad Dali’ Governorate

“Ahamah Health Unit is the best in providing health services in this and the surrounding areas.”

Normal baby delivery is made possible

The four-wheel-drive vehicle trekked through the rough terrain crisscrossing the stones and potholes. Iyad Al-Nimri was not concerned that the bumpy drive might damage his car. His only priority was to save the life of his 20-years old wife Hindia Saleh, who was in labor.

When they reached the Ahamah Health Unit, the medical team found that Hindia was not fully dilated and might require surgery in case of any complications. The couple had driven for an hour from the Hoorat Ghania area, in Al Azariq District of Ad Dali’ Governorate. When the health personnel asked Iyad about the reason for traveling the long-distance, he said:

“Ahamah Health Unit is the best in providing health services in this and the surrounding areas.”

The Unit was barely operational after its creation in 2006. The people of the Ahamah area, which is bordered to the east by Al Azariq District in Ad Dali’ Governorate and to the west by Mawiyah District in Ta’iz Governorate, suffered to access health services, especially with the deterioration of the health system in Yemen since the beginning of the conflict. In 2017, the Charitable Society of Social Welfare (CSSW), which recently changed its name to Human Access for Partnership and Development (HUMAN ACCESS), began providing health services through a multi-sectoral project funded by the Yemen Humanitarian Fund, which has contributed greatly to alleviating the suffering of the inhabitants of this area.

The Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) supported HUMAN ACCESS to implement a $900,000 health project providing high-impact health responses in Khanfar and Sarar Districts of Abyan Governorate and Al Musaymir District of Lahj Governorate.

Hindia’s birth was the first since the Unit was rehabilitated. Nabilah, the midwife, opened the delivery room and rushed towards Iyad, carrying the good news that his wife had given birth to a baby boy and that the mother and the baby were healthy. Tears of joy poured out from the eyes of Iyad upon learning that he had just become a father. He muttered words of thanks, praise for God, and rushed to see his son.
In conflict-torn Yemen, many pregnant women face delivery complications that threaten their and their babies’ lives. Many families cannot afford to seek basic health care services, including prenatal care for pregnant women.

To help address these issues, with funding from the Yemen Humanitarian Fund, the Yemeni Development Network (YDN) initiated a project to provide primary health services in Amran Governorate.

On 30 December 2020, Reem, a 23-years-old mother who suffered from severe pain, reached Al-Berar Health Unit in Raydah District. She was diagnosed with obstructed labor and needed a cesarean section. She was transferred to Amran maternal and child hospital and supported with referral transportation cost.

Reem was escorted by a health worker from the health unit to the hospital to avoid any complications. After the necessary tests and examinations were completed, the surgery was completed successfully, and she delivered a beautiful and healthy baby. The mother and baby received appropriate follow-up care.

She was grateful for the support she received from health workers in the Al-Berar Health Unit. “I am thankful to YDN and YHF for the support and providing the needed medicines and medical services and I hope the project continues,” Reem said.

The Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) supported the Yemeni Development Network for NGOs (YDN) to implement a $322,000 Primary Health Services Project in six health units in Kharif and Raydah districts of Amran Governorate.
Qadria, a seventy-four-year-old woman living in Khayran Al Muharraq District of Hajjah Governorate in Yemen. Hajjah has been one of the areas hardest hit by the ongoing conflict and is known for its grinding poverty and lack of clean water. Hundreds of families struggle to reach and bring home clean water from unprotected wells and it takes them two hours to get there by foot across a long mountainous road. It is a journey that even a donkey has difficulties maneuvering and endure while carrying water jerry cans.

“I don’t have children, but I had a nephew who fell into a borehole at the age of ten while trying to fetch water. The bucket fell from his hands and when he tried to reach out to take it, he fell into the borehole, and no one was able to save him. Since then, I have been fetching water myself, even though I do not have the energy to walk long distances at this very age. I wish to have a house adjacent to water well,” said Qadria.

In January 2020, the Relief and Development Peer Foundation (RDP) started implementing a project aimed to improve easy access to safe and clean drinking water targeting 25,226 individuals through the rehabilitation of water schemes and the construction of two main water tanks in Khayran Al Muharraq District. The project has helped thousands of people get adequate access to safe drinking water. They no longer have to travel long distances across mountainous roads to get jerry cans filled with unsafe water. Most of all, the provision of clean water helped minimize the spread of infectious diseases such as cholera.

The Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) supported the Relief and Development Peer Foundation (RDP) to implement a $930,000 WASH response project for IDPs and the most affected population in Khayran Al Muharraq District of Hajjah Governorate and Al Qafir District of Ibb Governorate in Yemen.
Improving and promoting sanitation services and good hygiene practices (SI)

Location:
Taizz and Al Hodeidah Governorate

“We can only say thank you to Solidarités International for your help in providing us with bathrooms that contributed to improve and promote hygiene, easing our suffering, and bringing us some psychological comfort.”

About 18 million people in Yemen have limited or no access to safe drinking water or sanitation services. To help address existing needs, the Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) supported Solidarités International to implement an emergency WASH assistance project targeting conflict-affected people in Tai’z and Al Hodeidah governorates. The project aimed to improve sanitation services and reduce open defecation, which was one of the main causes behind the spread of diseases.

Mohammed’s family is one of the beneficiaries of this project. Mohammed’s family, and especially his four daughters, were able to safely go to the bathroom at any time without worrying about going out at night looking for a suitable place. More importantly, the bathroom that was built helped Mohammed and his family to reduce their chances of getting sick due to poor hygiene and sanitary conditions.

“We are very happy with what Solidarités International provided to us. They worked tirelessly to provide and build bathrooms for us. We can only say thank you to Solidarités International for your help in providing us with bathrooms that contributed to improve and promote hygiene, easing our suffering, and bringing us some psychological comfort.” Mohammed says.

Fleeing the fighting, 55-year-old Muhammad, his wife, four daughters, and four sons ended up living in a run-down one-room temporary shelter covered with tree branches. The shelter didn’t have a latrine and the family had to walk a long distance to the bush to hide from the eyes of people if they wanted to relieve themselves.

“Women suffered a great deal, Muhammad added. “They are unable to relieve themselves during the day and must wait for nightfall to go out to a place far from people’s eyes. They are always afraid of being harassed. We were also facing other risks such as the spread of diseases such as diarrhea that afflicted our children”

Solidarities International targeted 960 families and worked on building and rehabilitating 412 latrines, in addition to digging and covering sewage pits in the targeted areas. Also, the hygiene promotion teams carried out a community awareness session on the importance of personal hygiene and to raise awareness of families about good health practices, benefiting 10,858 people.

The YHF supported Solidarités International to implement a $1.3 million project to provide emergency WASH assistance for vulnerable people affected by the crisis in Mawza’ District of Taizz Governorate and At Tuhayta and Ad Durayhimi districts of Al Hodeidah Governorate.
Marwa’s family used to take her and her siblings to the open field at night to defecate. Her mother, who is a widow could not afford to construct a latrine for the family. Marwa spoke about how the situation was before they had their latrine.

“My family did not have a latrine and we were suffering from going to the open field to defecate. That was depressing and tiring for me and my siblings. My mother took us at night and we were afraid of the many dangers from being out in the dark.”

Through funding from the Yemen Humanitarian Fund, ZOA has been implementing a WASH response for newly displaced people in Lahj and Aden governorates. The project supports a community-contribution-based approach to latrine construction. ZOA covered the cost of basic construction materials enabling communities to build their household latrines. Marwa’s family participated and benefited from this activity.

With ZOA’s support community members managed to get a great and clean latrine.

ZOA’s hygiene promoter added: “I asked Marwa how she felt after her family received the new latrine,” said ZOA’s hygiene promoter. “We suffered a lot, but we now have our latrine and no longer go to the open field to defecate and we will save time and we are no longer in danger,” Marwa said with a smile.

The Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) supported SZOA (Stichting ZOA) to implement a $600,000 WASH project to scale up first-line WASH assistance in areas of new displacement in Al Qubaytah District of Lahj Governorate and Al Burayqah District of Aden Governorate in Yemen.
PROTECTION SERVICES

Ibrahim get his health back and his father learns a new skill (INTERSOS)

In February 2020, 9-year-old Ibrahim was involved in a car accident that caused him an intracranial hematoma compounding underlying health conditions as he suffered from epilepsy. He requires regular medical follow-ups, but due to their financial hardship, his family could not afford the cost of the necessary examinations and treatments.

Ibrahim was displaced with his family from Shar’ab Ar-Rawnah District in Taiz Governorate and resettled in Ras Al-Ara of Al Madaribah Wa Al Aarah District in Lahj Governorate. His father lost his job and the family’s living conditions worsened. The family lives in an old and dilapidated wooden house, too small to accommodate a family of six people.

When Ibrahim visited the INTERSOS Community Center in Ras Al-Ara, he and his father were immediately provided with physio social first aid. Through the Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF), INTERSOS has been providing integrated emergency protection response for the most vulnerable conflict-affected people in Al Madaribah Wa Al Aarah District in Lahj and Dar Sa’ad District in Aden. The social workers assessed Ibrahim’s case and approved the disbursement of cash assistance to enable him to reach the closest hospital in Aden to undergo medical examinations and cover the cost of the necessary medicines.

Through the integrated support, Ibrahim’s father was referred to the protection team, which approved him for multi-purpose cash assistance funded by UNHCR. He used the cash assistance to repay debts he incurred to buy medicines for Ibrahim and to rehabilitate their shelter. Ibrahim’s father was also enrolled in a WHF-supported solar systems and electrical wiring training to help him earn a livelihood.

The Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) supported INTERSOS to implement a $650,000 protection project providing Integrated emergency protection response for the most vulnerable conflict-affected people in Dar Sa’ad of Aden Governorate in Yemen.
Abdullah Mabkhout, an 80-year-old man originally from the AlJawf Governorate, settled in the Al-Set IDP site in Marib due to recently intensified conflict. He explained his journey:

“This is the second displacement site I have lived in. The first one was in Medghal where I spent six months. I left it because the armed conflict reached the site. None of these sites are better than the other. They are not my home. There is no place like home for anyone.

I used to have a good life in Al Jawf. I had my flock of sheep. And my farm. I never used to ask for help from anyone. But now, we live dependent on help from organizations. Everything they give and anything they give we have a use for it. All are good and any little help means life to us. It is their help that allows us to live. Without them, we will die.

They give us food, water, blanket mattresses, and tents. I’m an old man. Whitebeard man and I are so weak. I can’t work or search for a job.

The hardest thing we faced these days is a lack of water and the winter weather. The water is not enough, it is salty, and we have difficulties in carrying water home.

The winter is hard on us. It destroys our bones and freezes our muscles. We fall sick for many days. And now my wife is sick. We hope that she gets better but we cannot wait anymore. She needs to go to a hospital to get better.”

Abdullah’s spouse, Raziqa, described her condition: “I suffer from headache and my chest ache.”

Their youngest son, who is named Jaber, is only eight months old also suffers from the cold. He has a cannula in his hand to supply him with intravenous (IV) antibiotics. Razia gave birth to Jaber while the family was traveling to this camp.

Abdullah and Raziqa have six kids: three boys and three girls. Their oldest son is missing, and they think he is probably a victim of the conflict.

“We were given a tent, mattresses, and blankets. I did not set up the tent myself. My neighbor and other people from IOM helped us to set it up. The tent is fine for now, but it is hot in the day and cold at night. We will take whatever we can get,” said Abdullah.

IOM provided 316 displaced families like Abdullah’s with family tents and household items in the Al-Set IDP site through a contingency pipeline funded
by Yemen Humanitarian Fund. The Pipeline was established in January 2020 to provide critical emergency shelter materials and non-food items (NFI), as well as water sanitation and hygiene (WASH), supplies to humanitarian partners across Yemen.

The nationwide Pipeline allows for humanitarian actors to access relief items to timely deliver assistance to vulnerable populations after an acute shock. The Contingency Pipeline also empowers local response and coordination by providing humanitarian relief items to small and medium-sized national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

316 displaced families like Ali’s in Al Set displacement site were provided with tents and household items by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) supported through the Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) to implement a $15,188,200.74 pre-positioning of critical Emergency Items for the multisectoral contingency pipeline management for shelter materials, non-food items (NFI), as well as water sanitation and hygiene (WASH), supplies to humanitarian partners across Yemen.

Any little help means life to us (UNFPA)

One day, my father came and told me that I would be getting married. He said it was only for my interest, and that the husband’s home was a better place for me,” recalled Adara, who was to get married at the age of ten.

With the ongoing conflict in Yemen, women’s and girls’ welfare has deteriorated. An estimated 1.83 million children are losing access to schools, including over 830,000 girls. Child marriages, already a problem before the conflict, have increased as the devastation of the war engulfed the country. As formal and informal protection mechanisms have broken down, many child brides have nowhere to turn.

A recent study by UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, across three governorates showed that rates of child marriage were highest among displaced populations, with 1 in 5 displaced girls aged 10 to 19 years being married, compared to 1 in 8 girls in the host community.

Child marriage has long been a scourge in Yemen, one of the few countries in the region with no legal minimum age of marriage. In a 2013 survey, nearly 32 percent of women, aged 20 to 24, said they were married before reaching 18, and more than 9 percent were married younger than 15.

As a young girl, Adara1 did not understand anything of what her father was saying. However, her mother’s face made her feel that a bad thing is going to happen. Her mother decided not to let this happen. She couldn’t bear to see her daughters getting abused for the sake of money. She escaped to the local authority with her two

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1 Name changed to protect privacy
daughters to report the marriage of her young daughter. The local authority transferred them to the Yemen Women Union (YWU), which is supported by UNFPA through the Yemen Humanitarian Fund. They were protected from the abusive father.

“I am going to do anything, ANYTHING to make this marriage stop,” the mother said while narrating the story.

The marriage was stopped thanks to the efforts of the YWU and UNFPA working in collaboration with the security and judicial authorities, which provided remarkable legal support to Adara.

The father annulled the marriage and signed a commitment not to marry off his daughters until they reach the legal age. On the way back to their home, Adara and her sister Saba called their friends so they can play together again.

The Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) supported United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to implement a $1.5 million protection project that provided GBV mitigation and response services to the most vulnerable women and girls in collective sites and those newly displaced in 21 districts from 9 governorates in Yemen.
The Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) is a Country-Based Pooled Fund (CBPF) that makes funding directly available to humanitarian partners operating in Yemen so they can deliver timely and effective life-saving assistance to those who need it most. In 2020, 22 generous donors contributed a total of $98 million to the YHF, making it the second largest CBPF in the world. The Fund allocated $98.6 million to 62 humanitarian projects implemented by 35 partners.

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