Who we are

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.

How we work

Donor contributions are unmarked and are allocated to eligible partners through an inclusive and transparent process in support of priorities set out in the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP). There are two types of YHF allocations: standard allocations and reserve allocations. The Fund holds a standard allocation once or twice a year through a call for proposals for collectively identified strategic needs in the YHRP. Reserve allocations are launched in response to sudden onset humanitarian needs and specific crises.

Cluster coordinators drive the prioritization exercise, while the Humanitarian Coordinator, in consultation with an Advisory Board, determines the amount available for each allocation. This approach ensures that funding is prioritized at the local level by those closest to people in need, which empowers the leadership of the humanitarian operation and fosters collaboration and collective ownership of the emergency response.

To ensure fairness, project proposals are assessed by an inclusive strategic and technical review committee based on a pre-defined scorecard. Funding levels and assurance mechanisms applicable to each successful project are guided by the partner’s risk level, which is determined by a capacity assessment and past performance.

The OCHA Humanitarian Financing Unit (HFU) manages day to day operations of the YHF.

What our priorities are

In 2021, the YHF will focus on the following priorities:

- Helping respond to acute vulnerabilities through covering gaps in first and second line cluster response as identified in the YHRP. This includes emergency, life-saving assistance and protection to people most at risk.
- Covering critical gaps with a focus on hard-to-reach areas.
- Leaving no-one behind by focusing on a range of needs and vulnerabilities specific to different population groups. In support of this, the YHF will ensure funding goes to all marginalized people in most acute needs, including minority groups, people most at risk, people excluded from services and with a view to promote gender equality.

2020 achievements

In 2020, 24 donors contributed almost $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 through one standard allocation and two reserve allocations. This includes $67.4 million to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and Red Crescent societies (68 per cent of the total amount) including 19 per cent ($12.6 million) to national NGOs. The YHF provided the humanitarian community with the capacity to respond to emerging needs as they arose. In 2020, this was demonstrated through a reserve allocation which provided short-term funding for the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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1 Food Security and Agriculture; 2 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene; 3 Non-Food Items; 4 Rapid Response Mechanism; 5 Camp Coordination and Camp Management Sector; 6 Emergency Telecommunications.
The YHF continued to expand accountability to affected populations by ensuring the existence of systematic complaint and feedback mechanisms in each partner’s projects and by introducing the Beneficiary Verification Mechanism (BVM) and Beneficiary Feedback and Complaint Mechanism (BFCM). BVM is used to contact beneficiaries by phone in remote villages and increase the number of beneficiaries interviewed to verify the quality of services provided by YHF partners. Through the BFCM, beneficiaries have the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the implementation process and assistance received from YHF-funded projects by calling a toll-free hotline number set up by third party monitoring (TPM) companies. The YHF managed almost 1,800 feedback calls from beneficiaries in 2020.

Top ten reasons to contribute to the YHF

1. Reach

In 2020, our 35 partners targeted 4.5 million Yemenis, including 2.38 million women and girls, across 20 of Yemen’s 22 Governorates. As in 2019, the YHF also provided dedicated funding to front-line responders who could expand humanitarian service delivery in hard-to-access areas, including areas of conflict.

2. Inclusiveness

As of January 2021, 75 UN agencies, international and national NGOs, and Red Crescent societies are eligible to receive YHF funding. The YHF relies on its inclusive governance and decision-making structures to effectively implement its mandate: the activities of the YHF are carried out under the overall leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator, who is supported by an Advisory Board composed of representatives from donors, UN agencies, and international and national NGOs. Project review committees are similarly inclusive, with cluster coordinators appointing representatives from each implementing partner constituency to participate in the process. To ensure all partners have an equal chance of accessing YHF funding, in 2020 OCHA trained over 1,000 partner staff on YHF procedures, allocations, its operational manual, project cycle management, the Gender and Age Marker, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, and inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian programming. This is more than twice the number of partner staff trained in 2019.

3. Localization

The YHF is one of the largest sources of direct funding for national NGOs in Yemen, with almost $72 million allocated to national NGOs between 2019 and 2020 and $172 million since 2017 (excluding funds received as sub-implementing partners of YHF-funded UN and international NGO projects), thus meeting the Grand Bargain of aid localization. National NGOs are represented on the YHF Advisory Board and allocation review committees, giving them an active voice in the Fund’s governance and decision-making processes. Training and support is provided throughout the project cycle.

4. Accountability

The YHF builds on a comprehensive accountability framework enshrined in the YHF Operational Manual which has been adapted to the Yemen complex emergency. These accountability management measures include:

- A risk management strategy, identifying risks to the YHF, including fraud and aid diversion, with an analysis of potential impact and mitigation strategies.
- A systematic governance mechanism, ensuring the transparency and quality of allocation decisions.
- Verification of partner eligibility and capacity through clear due diligence and capacity assessment processes, and performance tracking grant recipients throughout project implementation and completion.
- A comprehensive monitoring system, combining field monitoring missions by OCHA and clusters with the support of two external TPM service providers. Audits are performed by an external company.

5. Flexibility

In Yemen’s complex environment, flexible humanitarian programming is essential. The unearmarked nature of the YHF allows it to allocate funding for priority interventions, wherever and whenever they are most needed. The YHF provides funding for in-kind and cash and voucher assistance, for small and large organizations, and for start-up and running costs. It also supports common services such as logistics, telecommunications, coordination, and needs assessments. Acknowledging the complex field realities, it allows partners to revise ongoing projects when the circumstances warrant it. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the YHF had to swiftly adapt to a new working environment and maintain dedicated support to humanitarian partners despite additional challenges. The YHF responded with increased flexibility and simplified funding arrangements while retaining accountability measures governing the use of funds. Flexibility measures were introduced at the global level allowing partners to re-programme interventions in support of the COVID-19 response, to include contingency line in their budgets and to seek no-cost extensions more easily.

6. Timeliness

The YHF allocates timely funding as humanitarian needs emerge or escalate. In 2020, the YHF supported the Yemen Contingency Plan by providing $15.2 million to a UN agency to support the humanitarian response with the procurement, pre-positioning and provision of non-food items, basic hygiene kits, mosquito nets, and emergency shelter kits, and with the provision of diesel for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities across Yemen.
The YHF launched a reserve allocation in August 2020 and injected US$16.8 million into the COVID-19 response, enabling payment of hazard allowances to health workers and provision of COVID-19 awareness-raising through risk communication and community engagement activities. The allocation came at a critical time when COVID-19 was threatening to overwhelm health services and exacerbate existing vulnerabilities.

7. Analysis
The HFU produces periodic analyses including on monitoring, and operational and bureaucratic impediments that YHF partners face in the field, and on audit findings. These analyses inform the YHF Advisory Board decisions and are included in YHF’s quarterly dashboards.

8. Cost-efficiency
The HFU’s direct costs in running the YHF was 3.3 per cent of funds received in 2020, making it one the most cost-efficient CBPFs in the world, while maintaining an adequate staffing structure to support YHF partners.

9. Risk-sharing
The YHF offers an opportunity for donors who do not have an in-country presence or the capacity to manage multiple grants to channel funding towards a wide range of partners, while OCHA handles grant management, the strategic use of the contribution, and monitoring and reporting. The pooled nature of the YHF enables donors to maximize impact in a high-risk environment.

10. Transparency
Real-time information on contributions and allocations, including projects funded, is publicly available on the global CBPF transparency website (https://gms.unocha.org/bi) which is fully compliant with International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) standards. Transparency is at the core of the allocation process – priorities for allocations are discussed collectively by the Advisory Board and explained in publicly available allocation strategy papers. Projects are selected after a collective strategic and technical review process that includes the UN, national and international NGOs, and cluster and HFU representatives, and individual feedback is provided to partners. Finally, OCHA’s HFU generates periodic public analytical information products and the Humanitarian Coordinator, supported by the OCHA HFU and the clusters, prepares the YHF Annual Report which features best practices, lessons learned and challenges, and showcases success stories and the YHF achievements.

Overview of the Yemen Humanitarian Fund 2015 – 2020

US$815M received
US$798M allocated
37 donors
79 implementing partners
583 projects implemented

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For real-time updates of contributions and allocations, visit CBPF Business Intelligence: https://gms.unocha.org/bi.