

*"Cooking gas,
this is our priority."*

Saeedah

©UNICEF Yemen/2015/
Bani Al-Harith (Sana'a)/
Abdulkhaliq Zainah



TESTIMONIES

"Cooking gas, this is our priority."

Saeedah, UNICEF cash disbursement beneficiary

After receiving their first disbursement, they headed to the nearest market to get a new gas cylinder, diapers, clothing and medicines for the kids.

"I want to be a teacher. I want to recover."

**Hameed, 12, Thula Public Hospital,
north of Sana'a**

Hameed is receiving oral rehydration treatment for the second time in only a few weeks, this time at the UNICEF-supported cholera treatment unit. Over the last several years, he's been in and out of the hospital for complications from a near-death electrocution from a high-voltage cable during armed clashes in Amran in 2014. He dreams of becoming a teacher, like his father.





**Yemen's urban
garbage dwellers –
a life and death duel
(The daily routine)**



BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Yemen, one of the poorest countries in the Middle East, descended into a full-fledged military conflict in March 2015 resulting in a catastrophic humanitarian crisis. As of September 2017, some 21.1 million people (80% of the population) need humanitarian or protection support, and 9.8 million are in acute need. 17 million people (60% of the population) are food insecure, while 7 million are severely food insecure, including almost 2 million acutely or severely acutely malnourished children. At least 26.8 million live in affected areas, and 3 million are internally displaced. UNICEF confirms that 1,676 children have been killed and 2,760 injured, and at least 1,800 recruited or used by parties to the conflict. As of 10 September 2017, more than 646,000 suspected cholera cases had been reported, with more than 2,000 associated deaths. Only 45% of health facilities remain.

The formal social protection (SP) systems in Yemen are on the verge of collapse: the Social Welfare Fund (SWF) that used to deliver unconditional cash transfers to 1.5 million households suspended programs in March 2015. Other key welfare and development funds are non-functional. The Social Fund for Development (SFD) and the Public Works Project (PwP) are among a few programs currently being supported by the World Bank (WB) through UNDP with a view to promote short-term employment opportunities and safety nets.

UNICEF, with WB funding, recently launched an Emergency Cash Transfer (ECT) project for SWF beneficiaries across the country, though without formal engagement of the SWF. Informal SP mechanisms and networks are overstretched. WFP scaled up unconditional food and nutrition assistance to reach approximately 7 million beneficiaries per month and recently launched a school feeding initiative (Education Cannot Wait) complemented by textbook provision, school infrastructure rehabilitation and psychosocial counselling for conflict-affected students.

The humanitarian community continues to deliver its coordinated assistance out of five hubs. Since January, 128 national and international humanitarian partners assisted about 7 million people with some form of humanitarian assistance. The revised 2017 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP) seeks US\$2.3 billion to assist 12 million people. Due to the increased financial requirements, the revised YHRP is now only 41% funded (down from 44% prior to the revision).



PROMISING PRACTICES

1. From 2015-2017, UNICEF implemented a Humanitarian Cash Transfer Project (HCTP) in two governorates. More than 110,000 people (61,000 children) from excluded and the poorest minority communities in conflict-affected areas received unconditional cash assistance to address food insecurity, basic needs, access to social services and gender empowerment. HCTP also built institutional capacity through partnerships with the SWF for project coordination and grievance redressal; with Al Amal Bank for cash transfer disbursement; and with a local company, Prodigy Systems, for third-party monitoring.
2. UNHCR implemented a pilot project using the 'cash+' approach to provide cash transfers for 3-6 months to single mothers or heads of households who undergo vocational training, with a view to building resilience. UNHCR also manages 2 children development centers offering child care while parents work. The cash recipients must obtain birth certificates for their children with assistance from UNHCR and other partners.
3. Under the Enhanced Rural Resilience in Yemen (ERRY) initiative, UNDP together with FAO, ILO and WFP provide conditional cash assistance to vulnerable communities, including cash-for-work grants to rehabilitate clean water sources or roads. Beneficiaries can leverage the income for longer-term income-generation and self-employment opportunities to reduce their reliance on cash aid. UNDP also supports reviving key health and education services through enhancing access to solar energy and community local authority capacities. The joint program is implemented in 4 governorates.
4. Through an EU-funded project on Social Protection for Community Resilience in Yemen (SPCR), UNDP will provide conditional cash support to vulnerable households through a labor-intensive cash-for-work scheme to rehabilitate community assets, including health facilities for those affected by famine and cholera; identify and address the psychosocial needs of conflict-affected communities; and strengthen capacities of local authorities and communities.
5. UNICEF and government partners are working to fill evidence gaps for SP policy planning and programming through (i) institutional assessment of the SWF; (ii) assessment of cash payment agencies and payment delivery modalities; (iii) rapid randomized cluster sample survey of household poverty and vulnerability to poverty; (iv) analysis of SP systems; (v) child poverty analysis; (vi) market assessment to inform cash-based programming; and (vii) an integrated model of social assistance ('cash+'). UNICEF is partnering with the government and de-facto authorities, UN agencies, NGOs and others to set up the Social Protection Consultative Committee.

MAIN CHALLENGE(S) AHEAD AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

The current political and institutional challenges often mean humanitarian aid agencies must promote and implement SP initiatives in parallel to national SP systems, but engaging with national institutions is critical to ensuring the preservation, sustainability, effectiveness and efficiency of support systems for the poorest and most vulnerable. The partnership with Yemeni authorities on evidence generation presents an opportunity to move in this direction and contribute to a smooth transition from humanitarian relief to recovery and development.

The economic and political situation has meant that civil servants' salaries have not been paid for over a year, devastating state social infrastructure and SP systems. Authorities are unable to provide social services to the poorest and most vulnerable, including children, large families, the unemployed, the elderly, and refugees and asylum-seekers, contributing to the near collapse of social systems and networks. Access to people in need of assistance remains a serious challenge.



The main impediments are bureaucratic constraints and restriction of movement within or into the country; violence against humanitarian personnel, assets and facilities; interference in the implementation of humanitarian activities; and conflict- and logistics-related constraints.

USEFUL RESOURCES

[Brief on the UNICEF's Humanitarian Cash Transfer Project \(March 2017\)](#)

[ERRY Joint Programme Brief \(February 2017\)](#)

[Brief on UNDP's Yemen Emergency Crisis Response Project \(YECRP\)](#)

[Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan \(2017\)](#).

[UN Strategic Framework for Yemen 2017-2019 \(September 2017\)](#)