

Making a Difference: Delivering Services for Yemeni People During Conflict

REPORT

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Hameed, a twelve-year-old Yemeni is currently recovering from a Cholera infection. He was fortunate to receive treatment at a public hospital north of the Yemeni capital, Sana'a. The treatment included an oral rehydration solution at a cholera treatment unit supported by the World Bank and the UN children's agency, UNICEF. Hameed's condition is improving daily. This is not, however, his first bout with Cholera. He has already survived one infection. Like millions of children in Yemen he is at constant risk.

A conflict-linked cholera epidemic has caused 900,000 suspected infection cases, 35% of them among children. Cholera is not the only risk, in another sign of the sharply deteriorating conditions, 77 percent of the population is in need of some form of humanitarian assistance, and nearly 400,000 children are suffering from acute malnutrition.

In the face of this urgent and deepening crisis, the World Bank has joined forces with humanitarian organizations working inside Yemen. In early 2017, the World Bank initiated one of the biggest programs in support of health services in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The program is being implemented by UNICEF and the World Health Organization, as well as Yemeni government agencies and non-governmental organizations.

A large portion of the beneficiaries are children; so far 5 million children have been vaccinated against preventable diseases and 650,000 Women and children under the age of five have received basic nutrition services.

In August, the Bank approved an additional US\$200 million to help combat the fast-spreading cholera epidemic. Medicines were rushed in and support was provided to health care workers and facilities. 860 Cholera treatment centers and Oral Rehydration Points were established and 440,000 suspected cases were successfully treated. In addition, bulk chlorination supplies were brought in to address the source of the epidemic—contaminated drinking water supplies and inadequate sanitation systems.

As a result, the cholera epidemic rate of new cholera infections has slowed and the death rate for those infected with the disease has fallen from 2.3 to 0.3 percent.

The World Bank is strengthening the health care system so that it will be in a better position to respond to future crises. Currently, 50 percent of the country's health care facilities are not functioning.

“The conflict and the malnutrition and disease that have accompanied it are having a devastating impact on Yemen’s population,” said **Sandra Bloemenkamp, the World Bank’s Yemen Country Manager**. *“Yemenis need urgent support now to help them get through the conflict, but also so that they will be ready to start rebuilding when the fighting ends.”*

Among the main results so far of the Emergency Health and Nutrition Project:

- 7.1 million people are receiving essential health, nutrition and population services in all districts of the country’s 23 governorates. (The goal is to double this assistance to 13 million people—nearly half of Yemen’s population of 27 million).
- 16 million people have been reached through a nationwide, house-to-house cholera prevention campaign - 450,000 people have been successfully treated for cholera.
- Over 4 million people have benefited from water disinfection and hygiene promotion as part of the cholera control campaign - The project supported a national polio campaign, which has vaccinated 5 million children against polio and other childhood diseases.
- 650,000 Women and children under five have received basic nutrition services - Supplies and operating costs for more than 1,700 primary health care facilities have been either fully or partially supported. This represents 50% of public sector primary healthcare facilities and 30% of public hospitals - Over 3,600 health workers have been trained in different program areas including Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI), Community Based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM), infant and young child feeding (IYCF), and immunization.

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