

Delivering Social Protection in the Midst of Conflict and Crisis: The Case of Yemen

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Delivering Social Protection in the Midst of Conflict and Crisis:

The Yemen Emergency Crisis Response Project

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Abstract: Despite a situation of an active violent conflict, the Yemen Emergency Crisis Response Project continues to deliver services and cash to the poor and vulnerable nationwide. This paper captures lessons learned from this innovative and pioneering project, which will be particularly relevant for shaping the World Bank's crisis response under IDA 18.

Key words: Social Protection and Labor, Fragile and Conflict Affected States, Capacity, Social Assistance, Cash Transfers, Cash-for-Works, Emergency Assistance, Humanitarian Assistance, Trends, Challenges, Yemen, World Bank, UNICEF, Poverty Targeting, Proxy Means Test.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CBO	Community Based Organizations
CEN	Country Engagement Note
CMU	Country Management Unit
CRW	Crisis Response Window
DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
ECRP	Emergency Crisis Response Project
ECT	Emergency Cash Transfers
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCV	Fragile, Conflict and Violent
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
IDA	International Development Association
IDA18	International Development Association's 18 th Cycle of Funding
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
INGOS	International NGOs (nongovernmental organizations)
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KfW	German Government's Development Bank
LIWP	Labor-Intensive Work Program
MENA	Middle East and North Africa (World Bank region)
MFI	Micro-Finance Institution

MSEs	Micro and Small Enterprises
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PWP	Public Works Project
SFD	Social Fund for Development
SMEPS	Small and Micro Enterprise Promotion Program
SPJ	Social Protection and Jobs sector
SPJGP	Social Protection and Jobs Global Practice
SWF	Social Welfare Fund
TPM	Third-Party Monitoring
TTL	Task Team Leader
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
VCC	Village Cooperative Council
YRT	Yemen Reengagement Team

All currency is in US dollars (US\$) unless otherwise stated.

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary.....	7
2. Overview	10
3. Country Context	12
4. Project Description: Concept, Key Design Principles, and Early Results.....	14
4.1. Social Protection and Jobs Dimensions.....	17
4.2. Equity and Resilience Dimensions	20
4.3. Opportunity Goals.....	19
4.4. The Humanitarian-Development Nexus	20
5. Lessons Learned	22
5.1. Operational Lessons.....	22
5.2. Institutional Model Lessons	30
5.3. Partnership Lessons	32
5.4. Social Protection and Jobs Sector Lessons.....	33
5.5. Corporate Lessons.....	36
6. Conclusion.....	40
7. Bibliography	42

1. Executive Summary

During times of conflict, meeting humanitarian needs is crucial for saving lives; but the development community is increasingly realizing that protecting human and social capital is just as important, and is vital for post-conflict reconstruction and sustained recovery.

In Yemen, the ongoing conflict and political instability has made it nearly impossible for the World Bank to operate. And yet it is clear that despite the high risks associated with taking action, inaction—or a much-delayed response—by the World Bank would be far costlier from the strategic, institutional, and development points of view. After developing an exceptional approach to reengagement in Yemen while the country is still in conflict, the Emergency Crisis Response Project (ECRP) was the first project to test the approach before developing a full emergency response package¹. ECRP was approved by the World Bank Board in July 2016.

To date the ECRP, working successfully with multiple partners, including UN agencies, public service delivery institutions, local communities, and the private sector, has disbursed a total of US\$436 million (87 percent of the total project funds). The project demonstrated rapid results and nationwide coverage within the first year of implementation and is providing a model of how to deliver services and operate effectively at the nexus of humanitarian aid and development.

This paper aims to capture the experiences and the emerging lessons learned from the ECRP to better understand the complexities of operating in such a context. These are some of the key lessons learned:

- Inclusive community-based approaches can support social cohesion even in settings of conflict.

¹ Eventually the IDA-funded emergency response package was expanded to include: the original project ECRP project (\$50m) and its two scale-up grants (\$450m), Health and Nutrition Project, including cholera response additional financing (total \$483 m \$xx), Integrated Urban Service Emergency Project (\$150 m), Emergency Electricity Access Project (\$50 m) and the Smallholder Agricultural Production Restoration and Enhancement Project (\$36 m Trust Fund).

- Building and investing in national systems and institutions during peace enables rapid and scalable crisis response during conflict.
- The political neutrality of implementing agencies is of crucial importance, and development partners must ensure that it is not compromised in conflict situations.
- Institutional autonomy of public implementing agencies allows for the greater flexibility that is critical for delivering services during conflict.
- Transparent targeting strategies increase buy-in from diverse, and often opposing, political actors, and conflicting parties.
- Third-party monitoring and the use of technology and social media for remote monitoring allow for better oversight.
- Frequent and comprehensive review and assessment of implementation risks allow for timely identification of potential risks and real-time mitigation actions; and therefore, for continuation of the project despite the high risks involved.
- A robust Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) must be functional at every level of the program in order to be effective.
- The World Bank and the UN agencies needed to adapt to a different model of partnership and doing business to achieve an effective way of leveraging complementarities between humanitarian and development aid and serve populations affected by conflict.
- Flexibility in the interpretation and application of World Bank policies—especially OP7.30 (Dealing with De Facto Governments) and OP2.30 (Development Cooperation and Conflict)—has allowed the World Bank to deliver high-quality operations in a fragile setting.
- World Bank engagement in Yemen has created an effective and credible platform for donor coordination and resource mobilization in an otherwise fractured country.
- The intertwined goals of equity, resilience, and opportunity set forth in the World Bank Social Protection and Jobs (SPJ) sector strategy are relevant even in the direst of crises, and they provide a platform for cooperation across multiple sectors.

- Maintaining a collaborative and ongoing dialogue with the legitimate government of Yemen, including during program suspension, allowed for rapid reengagement when the opportunity arose.
- Complementarity with other human development operations to maximize human capital impact is only effective when operationalized at the local and site level.

Peace is the most sustainable way to bring an end to the suffering of the population. The prolonged conflict is threatening the country's hard-won development gains of past decades. The humanitarian response in Yemen aims to save lives and provide short-term relief; the World Bank's involvement complements these efforts by investing in people and institutions for the medium term. The ECRP is providing valuable lessons on how this can be done effectively.

2. Overview

The current conflict in the Republic of Yemen stems from a complex history of decades of civil war, national and regional political tensions, longstanding fragility, and grievances over corruption and the elite capture of resources, as well as tribal, regional, and more recently sectarian divisions.² Prompted by the steeply escalating conflict and deteriorating security situation on the ground, in early March 2015 the World Bank triggered Operational Policy (OP)7.30, the World Bank policy relating to Dealing with De Facto Governments, and suspended all disbursements to the Republic of Yemen. By March 26, all World Bank missions to Yemen had been suspended, and the staff had been evacuated from the country.

As peace negotiations fell apart in 2016, and the steep human and developmental cost was becoming clearer, it was critically important that the World Bank find a way to reengage in Yemen, and play a role in reducing high losses in the country's human capital as well as helping preserve its service delivery institutions. It was decided that despite the high risks of taking action,³ inaction, or a much-delayed response, would be even costlier from the strategic, institutional, and development points of view. Reengaging in the country would not only support the resilience of the conflict-affected population, but would also help to preserve local institutional capacity and delivery of services. It could also accelerate the World Bank Group's (WBG) post-conflict assistance efforts.

Given the lack of a local presence, however, the WBG sought to reengage in Yemen through triggering OP 2.30 (Development Cooperation and Conflict), the World Bank policy which stipulates that if there is no government in power, assistance may be initiated by requests from the international community (for example, from UN agencies), subject in each case to the prior approval of the World Bank Board.

² For further details on the country context, refer to the Country Engagement Note (CEN). Republic of Yemen FY2017/18.

³ Overall risk rating for Yemen is High. CEN 2016. p. 23.

The Yemen Emergency Crisis Response Project (ECRP) was initially designed to be implemented in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), but was later scaled up to also include partnership with UNICEF. Considered innovative and unprecedented in terms of IDA financing, ECRP is providing support to the citizens of Yemen during an active conflict.

ECRP is implemented by UNDP and UNICEF as the recipients of IDA grants. The project's activities are implemented through engaging with public institutions, the Yemen Social Fund for Development (SFD) and the Public Works Project (PWP). It builds on the design and experience of a preexisting national system of cash transfers; and engages local private sector service providers. These public institutions have been supported and financed by the World Bank for the past two decades, primarily for the purpose of delivering social protection interventions. It is unclear whether the World Bank could have continued to operate in such a highly volatile environment if not for the presence of these highly capable local institutions with their proven track record and ability to maintain their political neutrality.

In keeping with the Yemen Country Engagement Note (CEN)⁴, one of the primary aims of the ECRP is to support and strengthen the resilience of local institutions. This is important in order to reach the most vulnerable populations during times of conflict, and also to sustain and maintain existing local service delivery institutions for post-conflict recovery. In addition, the new MENA Strategy (2015)⁵ shifts the World Bank Group's engagement from working around conflict and instability to directly targeting peace and stability, and provides a comprehensive framework for responding to the challenges of Yemen today.

⁴ Approve by the Board in July 2016 and prepared in parallel to the restructuring of the pre-conflict Yemen portfolio and the preparation of the original ECRP project. The CEN covers Fiscal Years 2017-2018.

⁵ Devarajan, Shanta. 2015. "Promoting Peace and Stability in the Middle East and North Africa," World Bank.

The purpose of this paper is to share the experience of ECRP and capture the lessons learned from the design, development, and implementation of the project. It will demonstrate that when it works effectively across the organization as well as with our development partners to achieve a common goal, the World Bank Group has the resources, the technical capacity, and the ability to come up with innovative solutions, and to deliver them even under the most challenging conditions.

The paper is divided into three main sections: 1) Country Context; 2) Project Description, Concepts and Results; and 3) Lessons Learned (at the operational, institutional, sectoral, partnership, and corporate levels).

The lessons learned in Yemen may provide guidance for World Bank task teams and other partner agencies operating in other conflict-affected situations. These lessons will be particularly relevant for World Bank task teams as IDA 18 increases its focus on delivering services in Fragile, Conflict, and Violent (FCV) contexts. These lessons should be read differently for: (i) FCV countries in which the Government and World Banks (as well as other development partners) have invested in developing institutional capacity prior to conflict (such as Yemen); (ii) other FCV countries; (iii) countries at risk of becoming FCV and one might expect that strengthening Social Protection institutions would pay-off if a country is hit by some crisis.

3. Country Context⁶

The Arab Spring arrived in the Republic of Yemen in early 2011. Following several dramatic political and security events that occurred between 2011 and 2014, Yemen descended into a full-fledged military conflict⁷ in March 2015. This conflict, coupled with insecurity, political

⁶ IDA Project Appraisal Document for Yemen: ECRP. July 5, 2016.

⁷ Yemen's ongoing conflict is the result of a complex combination of multiple civil wars; an Arab coalition of 10 countries active in military actions against the Houthis; and terrorist organizations seeking to gain control in

instability, blockages to food and fuel deliveries, and general economic collapse has led to a severe humanitarian and development crisis, which has exacerbated what was already a fragile situation.

In 2015, the economy contracted by about 28 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), underpinned by widespread disruptions of economic activity, with many enterprises losing up to 70 percent of their business, and about 55 percent of the work force having been laid off. Oil production and exports, the mainstay of the pre-conflict Yemeni economy, came to a halt. An estimated 8 million Yemenis have lost their livelihoods, and/or living in communities with minimal to no basic services. Civil service salaries have only been partially paid since September 2016. In addition, 1.5 million households in the national Cash Transfer Program had not received any support since January 2015. The economic situation remains equally dire to date. Deteriorating security conditions have resulted in significant increases in poverty: the poverty rate has increased from 35 percent in 2005 to 49 percent in 2014, and is estimated to have increased to a level estimated between 62-78 percent in 2016.⁸

The repeated and successive exposure to multiple shocks – protracted conflict, food insecurity, disease, job losses, and institutional failures such as the nonpayment of civil servants’ salaries, which has impacted basic service delivery—has made the crisis in Yemen a formidable challenge that threatens to reverse gains in human development. In July 2015, the UN declared a Level 3 humanitarian emergency in Yemen.

The situation is continuing to deteriorate because of the protracted conflict. According to the UN,⁹ as of January 2018, around 75 percent of the estimated 28 million population is in need of humanitarian or protection assistance. More than 8 million people are suffering from

some parts of the country by taking advantage of the power vacuum. For more details on the conflict and its economic and developmental impact, please refer to Yemen Country Engagement Note, World Bank Report No. 106118.

⁸ World Bank. 2017. “Free Falling: Living Standards During Times of Conflict in Yemen.”

⁹ UNOCHA. *Humanitarian Bulletin*. (January 28, 2018. Issue 30).

severe food insecurity and are at risk of starvation, while 1.8 million children and 1.1 million pregnant or lactating women are acutely malnourished. An estimated 2 million children are out of school because of the fighting and insecurity, and an estimated 16 million people need assistance to access safe water and basic sanitation and hygiene facilities. The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has risen to 3 million, with the majority of displaced people hosted by local communities.

In response to this crisis, which has been categorized by the UN as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world, the UN agencies have a large-scale presence in Yemen. In addition to the urgent need for humanitarian assistance, there is also a critical need to protect Yemen's past development gains, social cohesion, and institutions. The scale of these challenges calls for close coordination and complementarity between development and humanitarian actors and efforts.

At present in Yemen, the World Bank is operating under OP2.30 (Development Cooperation and Conflict), which sets out the framework and parameters for engagement in conflict-affected countries. This policy allows the World Bank to continue its work through international agencies such as the UN when its own staff are unable to travel to the country due to security concerns, but when there is an urgent need to respond to the devastating consequences of the conflict. In the current situation, most Yemenis are in dire need of basic services, safety nets, job opportunities, and livelihood support. The ECRP provides a model for how to operate and deliver services in this very important nexus of humanitarian and development needs.

4. Project Description: Concept, Key Design Principles, and Early Results

In July 2016, the World Bank Board approved the Yemen Country Engagement Note FY17-18, and a US\$50 million IDA Grant for the Emergency Crisis Response Project (ECRP). In light of the scale of the crisis, the enormous needs in the country, and the parent project's rapid

delivery of results across the country, the project was scaled up in January 2017 with additional financing of a US\$250 million IDA grant to expand coverage. This was followed by a second additional financing of a US\$200 million grant in May 2017, funded by IDA under the Crisis Response Window (CRW), as part of the international response to the threat of famine in Yemen. The second additional financing introduced a new program – the Emergency Cash Transfer Program (ECT) as an additional component to ECRP. The ECT targets Yemen’s most vulnerable households, primarily to address food purchasing power constraints.

Box 4.1: Remarkable Results Achieved in the First 18 Months

- 1.45 million households (9 million individuals) supported by cash transfers, with women comprising 45 percent of direct recipients;
- 90 percent of beneficiaries reported that cash transfers are used to purchase food, medicine, and repay household debt;
- 217,000 people benefited from wage employment (Females: 30 percent, IDPs: 20 percent, Youth: 35 percent)
- More than 1 million people are benefiting from access to basic services either directly or indirectly;
- More than 110,000 women and children under the age of 5 have benefited from nutrition-sensitive cash transfer;
- Project activities reached all of Yemen’s 333 districts despite significant security challenges;
- 2000 micro and small enterprises were supported by the project and restored their businesses.

The ECRP employs an innovative and flexible approach that enables the World Bank, in partnership with UN agencies, to respond robustly to the dire and unprecedented needs of the population, especially the poor and most vulnerable. With a total IDA financing envelope of US\$500 million, the project is providing much-needed support to Yemeni citizens across the country during an ongoing conflict.

The ECRP design adopts the following key principles: (i) Simple design and fast disbursement arrangements to facilitate rapid response to the crisis on the ground; (ii) Prioritizing and

addressing the most pressing needs of the poor and conflict-affected population; (iii) Promoting approaches that preserve and foster social cohesion and national institutions; (iv) Building the resilience of community-based structures, thereby strengthening social capital; (v) Engaging male and female youth as beneficiaries as well as change agents and promoters of peace-building efforts; and (vi) Ensuring political neutrality and inclusiveness.

ECRP aims to protect the human capital of the poor and vulnerable by building the resilience of individuals and communities as well as national social protection institutions.

It does this by financing a range of interventions, including delivering urgently needed social safety net services through unconditional cash transfers and labor-intensive public works initiatives; community-based nutrition interventions for pregnant women and young children; support for youth employment as well as for micro and small enterprises (MSEs)—while supporting existing local social protection and service delivery institutions. The project takes a bottom-up approach and relies on local capacities, networks and institutions to maintain the delivery of critical services across the country¹⁰.

The underlying theory of change posits that protecting Yemen’s human capital and supporting the resilience of communities and local institutions during conflict will enable a smoother transition into recovery and rebuilding once peace is restored. This approach relies on the long-standing partnerships the World Bank enjoys with Yemeni institutions that have proved to be resilient and fairly independent from political pressures throughout the crisis, as well as building new operational partnerships with the UN system. During this prolonged period of crisis, Yemenis have become increasingly more reliant upon these institutions.

¹⁰ Details on the project design including type of activities, size of transfers, benefit formulas, level of wages in the cash-for-works program, frequency of payments, fund allocations and targeting, etc. can be found in the project appraisal documents of ECRP and its additional financing <http://projects.worldbank.org/P159053?lang=en>

The project is expected to provide unconditional cash transfers to 1.5 million households (over 8 million individuals); wage labor and livelihood support to around 500,000 individuals; generate 7-8 million labor days; and provide access to services and community infrastructure (rural roads, water schemes, and agricultural terraces, among other community assets) to around 2.5 million individuals. Seven microfinance institutions (MFIs) and 4,000 distressed microenterprises are also targeted for assistance. The community-based approach and youth engagement aspects of the ECRP are seeking to help promote social cohesion and the hope for peace. The project has achieved remarkable results in its first year of implementation (see Box 4.1) and despite very challenging operating environment, it is progressing well towards achieving its end targets.

4.1. Social Protection and Jobs Dimensions

With more than 80 percent of the population classified as in need of urgent attention according to the UN, the focus of the international community’s support to Yemen has been on ensuring basic survival and addressing short-term humanitarian needs. ECRP has presented a complementary instrument with a slightly longer-term perspective, designed to preserve human capital, maintain local institutional assets, and foster social cohesion and resilience. The complementary set of ECRP project components adheres to the goals of the World Bank’s Social Protection strategic framework, and demonstrates that the intertwined goals of equity, resilience, and opportunity set forth in the strategy are relevant even in the direst of crises.



Table 4.1: Conceptual Framing of ECRP Social Protection Goals and Interventions

ECRP GOALS AND INTERVENTIONS			
	Equity	Resilience	Opportunity
GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protects against destitution and promotes equality of opportunity • Smooths consumption • Protects against extreme poverty • Protects against loss of human capital • Addresses gender inequality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insures against the negative impact of a range of shocks • Improves food security • Reduces reliance on harmful coping mechanisms • Strengthens livelihoods and productive assets • Fosters social capital and social cohesion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes human capital (access to education, health, nutrition services) • Invests in physical capital and community assets • Improves employability for youth • Connects men and women to productive employment • Enhances productivity
INTERVENTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cash transfers - Cash for Work - Health/ Education/ Nutrition interventions - Gender-sensitive design and monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (Counter cyclical) Labor-intensive public works (LIPWs); and cash transfers - Support to MFIs and clients - Support to farmers - Community self-help interventions, community empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Labor-intensive public works - Support to MFIs and clients - Youth training and employment - Support to farmers and enhancing of farming techniques

By simultaneously working toward the three goals of equity, resilience, and opportunity, ECRP is able to provide a rather comprehensive set of complementary social protection measures.

4.2. Equity and Resilience Dimensions

The direct Cash Transfer Program targets the poorest as well as the socially vulnerable (female-headed households, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and orphans). The labor-intensive Cash for Work program, which has been scaled up nationwide in response to the crisis, protects the poorest and most vulnerable individuals, households, and communities from catastrophic economic shocks and destitution by employing labor-endowed households. Receiving a steady income during crises reduces the use of harmful coping mechanisms such as reducing consumption, selling assets, and withdrawing children from school, while improving livelihoods and making beneficiary households more resilient in the face of negative shocks. Support to farmers affected by the conflict with seeds, seedlings, drip irrigation systems, and other agricultural inputs restores their ability to grow food and generate income, thus improving food security. The program also shields households from irreversible loss of human capital by supporting access to education and health services as well as nutrition interventions.



4.3. Opportunity Goals

Vulnerable youth who participate in the Cash for Work program not only receive wages, but are also provided with skills training in delivering health, education, and nutrition services: they also act as rural youth advocates for community development. These skills enhance their employability beyond the duration of the ECRP. The project supports clients of MFIs to rehabilitate and revitalize their damaged businesses. In addition, given the important role that MFIs play in rehabilitating livelihoods during times of crisis, this component supports the operating deficit of existing rural MFIs. Input support to farmers also promotes agricultural

wage employment. Last but not least, by supporting local service delivery institutions and small private sector service providers (MFIs, contractors, suppliers, etc.), as well as community organizations and networks, the project facilitates trust between communities and local institutions, strengthening social capital as well as community cohesion and resilience, all of which will be critical for Yemen's recovery in the long term.



4.4. The Humanitarian-Development Nexus

The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit called for challenging the long-standing divide between humanitarian and development efforts, and for identifying the means to foster new partnerships, in order to achieve collective outcomes. Meeting humanitarian needs during conflict is critical for saving lives, but the development community is increasingly realizing that protecting community assets, especially human capital, and a country's institutions and social capital is just as critical for sustained recovery and reconstruction. Therefore, removing unnecessary barriers to collaboration between development and humanitarian actors is essential in order to achieve the immediate, as well as the longer-term, collective outcomes.

Box 4.2: The Demonstrative Effect of Relief Efforts: Highlights from Field Monitoring

Emergency support to farmers has shown a remarkable spillover effect in the wider farming community, as well as in building social cohesion. Farmers supported under ECRP were able to employ IDPs who were being hosted in their communities. Supported farmers also shared gained knowledge on modern and sustainable farming techniques with fellow farmers who had not received support. Productivity in these communities has increased by 167 percent, thus contributing significantly to food security. Project data shows a high level of replication (for example, a total of 262 replications occurred in the Hamdan district compared to the 72 farms supported by the project). The replication effect has increased job opportunities and food security in these communities.

Source: Small and Micro Enterprise Promotion Program. SMEPS, 2017

ECRP's approach operationalizes the humanitarian-development nexus by bringing together humanitarian and development agencies to collaborate on the ground through interconnected packages of interventions that simultaneously address the immediate need for relief and crisis response, as well as the need to build the resilience of communities, protect human capital, and foster opportunities to build social capital and preserve local institutional capacity.

While the humanitarian agencies are focusing on survival interventions for conflict-affected individuals, ECRP is responding to the crisis by providing immediate income relief to nearly

10 million of Yemen's chronically poor, and most vulnerable citizens, in order to enhance their purchasing power for food and other basic necessities.

At the same time, ECRP is attending to the development agenda by enhancing Yemen's social protection delivery system; extending



access to basic services (roads, water, health, education, irrigation, etc.); supporting families by investing in their children's health and education; assisting youth in acquiring skills; promoting entrepreneurship; building social capital (through village development councils, community self-help groups, and local councils); and preserving the capacity of Yemen's critical social protection institutions. Furthermore, ECRP support (through SFD) in building the capacity of youth advocates and the Village Cooperative Councils (VCCs) has been instrumental in supporting the efforts of humanitarian agencies in delivering humanitarian aid. In 2016-17, SFD-supported VCCs volunteered in implementing 1,121 humanitarian activities for the World Food Program, UNICEF, Save the Children, UNDP, Vision Hope, Oxfam, Al-Tanwir, and Care International, among others.

The humanitarian-development nexus is being further supported through data sharing, with ECRP leveraging the data generated by the humanitarian actors to develop more inclusive

and conflict-sensitive targeting approaches (more details on targeting solutions will be provided in the section on “operational lessons”), better identification of needs/gaps (e.g. in nutrition, health, education and WASH) to complement the current humanitarian response where relevant and better understanding of the risks and vulnerabilities that inform development interventions for better results.

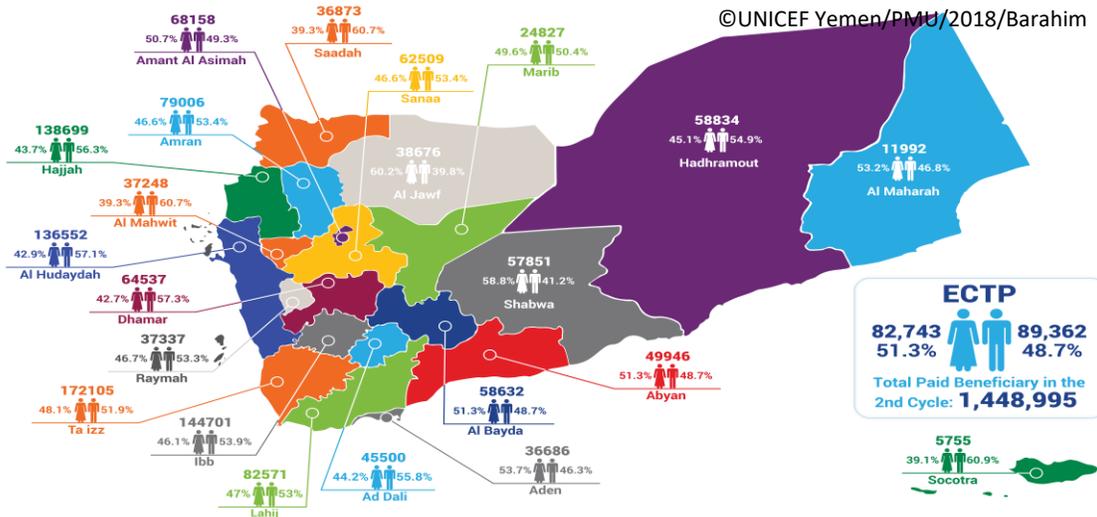
5. Lessons Learned

This section focuses on lessons learned during the design, development, and implementation of the ECRP. The lessons fall into four categories: 1) operational; 2) institutional; 3) sectoral; and 4) corporate. We have attempted to highlight the key project elements that have led to ECRP’s success in promoting resilience in the face of crisis and granting it legitimacy in the eyes of development partners, actors on the ground, and the majority of poor and vulnerable Yemenis.

5.1. Operational Lessons

Building and investing in local capacity and national systems during peacetime enables rapid and scalable crisis response during conflict. During crises development agencies strive to find effective mechanisms for service delivery. In the process, they often opt to create new emergency structures and/or to deliver humanitarian assistance through international NGOs (INGOs) primarily because local institutions are not capable of responding during times of crisis. Figure 5.1 illustrates the geographical outreach of ECRP’s rapid scale-up during the first three months of project’s operation.

Figure 5.1: Emergency Cash Transfers Reached National Coverage in Three Months



Prior to the current conflict, Yemen had relatively well functioning social protection programs, implemented through national institutions like the Social Fund for Development (SFD), the Public Works Program (PWP), and the Social Welfare Fund (SWF), in which the government, donors and development partners have invested over the past two decades. The operational autonomy granted to SFD and PWP, their emphasis on developing effective administrative and delivery systems, their community-based networks (CBOs and local councils), as well as their accountability to the government, to donors, and to local communities have all contributed to making these institutions resilient against the multifaceted implementation challenges that arise during conflict. These preexisting capacity and delivery systems were instrumental in achieving rapid results for the emergency response program, and have significantly increased institutional resilience, enabling the project to reach millions of people with a diverse range of interventions that are addressing multiple vulnerabilities of the affected population.

Box 4.2: Evolution of SFD Capacity Over Two Decades

SFD grew from a USD 44 million program of its phase one program in 1997 to USD 912 million in phase IV program (2010-2015). Initially financed entirely by the World Bank, by 2010 the SFD attracted financing from a consortium of over 14 regional, bilateral and multilateral donor partners. Government funding (prior to the conflict) increased from zero in phase one to 20 percent in phase IV. All donors subscribe to and support the core objectives of the program through pulled funding arrangement, and implementation is guided by one operational manual updated by the SFD and endorsed periodically by the government and donors.

The institutional set up of the social fund constitutes of a HQ based in Sanaa and 9 branch offices covering all 22 governorates. The agency has expanded organically based on need as well as available financing. The total number of core/professional staff increased from 27 in 1997 to 198 in 2014. SFD also hires local consultants -primarily based in field offices – who perform technical and operational tasks, these have increased from 33 in 2005 to 224 in 2014 mirroring the rapid expansion of the program. As the technical capacity of field offices have increased over time, several key functions including the authority to identify and develop subprojects, manage procurement and disbursement, etc. have gradually been delegated to field offices. At present more than 60 percent of SFD's disbursement is transferred directly from branch offices to project beneficiaries. Overall oversight of the operation, however, rests with the Sanaa based HQ team.

A transparent targeting strategy ensures political neutrality and increases buy-in by diverse – and often opposing – political actors. In situations of conflict, the targeting strategy used by development partners for distributing benefits can often exacerbate underlying tensions. Having clear, transparent, and objective targeting criteria has allowed ECRP to be seen by all parties as a politically neutral program. ECRP uses a multilayered approach for targeting project communities and beneficiaries. While the project is implemented in all governorates and districts, the level of funding is determined based on a “distress index” that is constructed by determining the spread and intensity of people with emergency needs and food insecurity, and the level and intensity of displacement (i.e., the number of IDPs in the governorate, and

their share of the total population).¹¹ Each district is given an index ranking that determines its level of distress relative to other districts in the country. In addition, participatory approaches are used within districts to help in community and beneficiary targeting. These include: Over time the targeting strategy has been further refined to address concerns that using the number of IDPs as part of the weighting formula marginalizes those communities that have experienced high levels of conflict and/or returnees, but have few IDPs. An indicator related to malnutrition has also been added to ensure that communities that have high levels of distress and malnutrition but do not have a significant number of IDPs are also reached. Similarly, the ECT uses geographically balanced pre-conflict targeting criteria to reach the poorest and socially most vulnerable groups in the country. These clear, non-contentious, and fair criteria help to ensure political neutrality and reduce the potential of humanitarian interventions leading to or exacerbating conflict at the local level.

¹¹ The Food Insecurity Index is derived from the Yemen Food Security Survey that was issued by the FAO and the Technical Secretariat of Food Security in June 2015. The displacement index is derived from the Task Force on Population Movement Report issued by IOM and UNHCR in March 2016, using the number of IDPs in all governorates.

Box 4.3: Community and Beneficiary Level Targeting Approaches

Beneficiary targeting under the cash transfer program are those already identified in the national database of the poor from pre-conflict and identified based on the proxy means test approach and meeting a categorical profile (e.g. disability, old age, orphans, female-headed hh, etc.).

Community targeting under the cash-for-works (SFD) and labor-intensive works (PWP) programs is implemented by the branch/regional offices of SFD and PWP, based on available field data and information documented at the community level (e.g. numbers of IDPs/returnees, damaged infrastructure, loss of livelihood, scarcity of community assets and so on), as well as through consultations with local leaders, civil society organizations and international non-governmental organizations. SFD also applies participatory rapid appraisal methodologies (e.g. wealth ranking and village resource mapping), these are implemented by community workers and youth advocates trained and hired by SFD to help improve community prioritization and selection.

Beneficiary targeting for the cash-for works program. Once communities are selected, targeting at the beneficiary level follows the self-targeting approach. The program uses the household as the unit for targeting while prioritizing female-headed households. Each registered household is offered wage employment with a maximum number of work days equivalent to a max. US\$500 in total (50-60 days). The size of funding for each community is determined by the total number of participating HHs multiplied by US\$500/HH. Households have the choice to alternate work participation among adult members. Women are provided with flexible hours and type of works as well as on-site child care (if requested) to ensure their access and they are paid directly for the days they work.

Inclusive targeting and community-based approaches promote social cohesion. Social Protection interventions that emphasize targeting approaches that are sensitive to the needs of different community groups facing different vulnerabilities, as well as community-based identification and implementation of interventions is believed to help foster social cohesion and promote a sense of community solidarity and collaboration. According to the ECRP Third Party Monitoring Reports,¹² targeted communities reported that project interventions are bringing host communities, returnees, and IDPs together around a common development goal, and that they are leading not only to immediate benefits for the population in terms of income support and community assets, but are also helping to bring a sense of stability and

¹² Moore Stephens. "Yemen, Third Party Monitoring (TPM) Report: 4th TPM Report for the period of July – December 2017". Sana'a, Yemen, January 2018; and "Third Party Monitoring Report, March 2017". Sana'a, Yemen.

hope. ECRP communities expressed that they believe the project is contributing to social cohesion and cited the following project features that contribute to social cohesion: i)

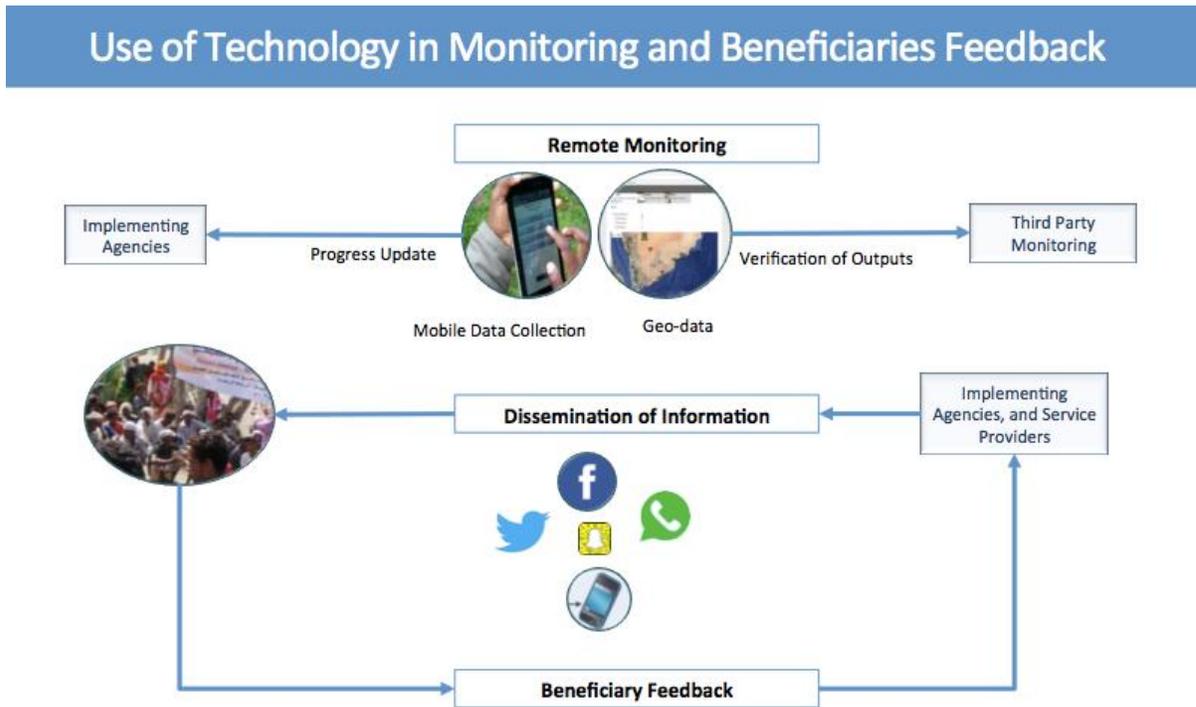
participatory and community-led identification of subprojects leading to strong ownership within the wider community; inclusive participation whereby different community groups are given equal opportunity to engage at different stages of implementation, including resolving any dispute when and if arises; and the clarity



and transparency of the beneficiaries' selection process which is found satisfactory and therefore supported by the wider community members. The TPM reports have also found that youth-led interventions and facilitation of community collaboration have created positive impact within the community because they were able to identify problems and facilitate solutions before escalation of potential tensions.

Third-party monitoring, as well as the use of technology and social media for remote monitoring allows for better oversight. ECRP employs multiple levels of monitoring, with an emphasis on the use of an independent Third-party monitoring (TPM) arrangement and the use of technology, to complement field monitoring efforts by the implementing agencies and compensate for security challenges to free movement in the field (see Figure 5.2). Third-party monitoring systems have been put in place to provide implementation oversight. The TPM agency complements its own direct monitoring through a Community Monitoring Program, a cost-effective approach that uses trained community members to provide daily verbal and visual feedback using mobile and cloud-based applications. The use of mobile phone technology and GPS-enabled devices and geotagging of project sites also help provide timely and reliable information even from remote and difficult-to-access areas.

Figure 5.2: ECRP’s Use of Technology in Monitoring and Beneficiary Feedback



Social media can also be used to solicit feedback on the program. Feedback is monitored, and relevant data are communicated to the project management teams so that a process of data triangulation is activated to check facts and take necessary action. WhatsApp platforms are used by service providers contracted under the project to communicate information to beneficiaries about the processes underway. The program also airs beneficiary feedback on Twitter and envisages live streams on Snapchat, and Facebook chats among donors, beneficiaries, and the wider population of social media followers in Yemen. For example, the Cash Transfer Program relies on routine monitoring of feedback from staff WhatsApp groups, and is piloting a rapid text message-based monitoring mechanism to collect immediate feedback from beneficiaries on their experience with cash transfer processes and use. The feedback provided through these monitoring approaches is also promoting learning from implementation and introducing adjustments as implementation experience evolves. These innovative approaches are supporting quality assurance, the credibility of the program, and the accountability of implementing agencies and service providers.

Fully functioning Grievance Redress Mechanisms (GRM) enhance accountability and quality. The ECRP has a robust automated Grievance and Complaint Handling Mechanism (GRM) connected to focal points throughout the country. When a complaint is received, an automatic response is sent to the complainant. The complaints are coded, and a complaint ID is generated. The complaint is then assigned to the relevant project staff by the GRM administrator. The assigned staff follows up until the issue is resolved, and prepares a report that is cleared by management. Finally, a response is sent to the complainant.

Lessons learned from the analysis and actions of received grievances are captured by the GRM teams and are fed back into program enhancement. The GRM system is fully automated and is therefore a repository for experiences/lessons learned, and a reference point for quality assurance. It also allows management to capture and more quickly resolve recurring issues. In a conflict situation, the presence of a responsive and robust GRM system reduces the potential of grievances over project interventions to escalate and turn into more general resentment of the project.

Strong field-level facilitation by local staff is necessary in order to ensure broad access and sensitivity to conflict. In the ECRP, local level partner institutions and their staff play a strong supporting role in enabling access to populations across the country, regardless of the political situation on the ground. Engaging local staff at the field level helps to foster better understanding of the local political and social dynamics, and therefore more conflict-sensitive communication and better handling of potential tensions. Local staff members facilitate communication about the program: as trusted members of the local community, they can provide assurance to local authorities and control groups (including those belonging to opposite sides of the conflict) about the developmental--and nonpolitical--aims of the program.

5.2. Institutional Model Lessons

Institutional autonomy of the implementing agencies allows them greater flexibility, which is critical for delivering services during conflict. Building resilient and effective local

institutions requires considerable investment in building their capacity during peacetime. The law that created the SFD granted it a high level of administrative and financial autonomy: it also established a clear division of labor between the policy level (the Board of Directors) and the implementing body (where authority is given to the managing director). This institutional autonomy—combined with a demonstrated high level of capacity even before the crisis—has allowed SFD to function without the usual barriers faced by government institutions (i.e. bloated bureaucracies, complex procedures, multiple levels of control without sufficient accountability, and so on). SFD is able to sign agreements with donors, open bank accounts (including in private-sector commercial banks), decide on fund allocations, hire (and fire) staff on performance-based contracts, and in general to operate with a satisfactory level of transparency and flexibility. These features have allowed SFD to respond efficiently and effectively in the face of numerous crises experienced by the country, ranging from high food prices in 2008, to natural disasters (hurricanes/floods/droughts), to political unrest and armed conflict.

Political neutrality of the implementing agencies is of crucial importance, and development partners must ensure that it is not compromised during conflict. Despite being a government institution, the SFD has been able to operate in a crisis environment because its key stakeholders—beneficiaries, local councils, and donors—have perceived it as neutral and impartial. From its inception, the SFD has strived to deliver services throughout the country, with every district in Yemen receiving an allocation based on poverty, population size, and emerging needs and vulnerabilities resulting from the conflict; and regardless of political affiliation. While prior to the conflict the authorizing environment supporting political neutrality was derived both from the government of Yemen and from SFD donors, during the conflict donors have a key role to play in supporting SFD’s neutrality by clearly communicating to the political factions that donors are not willing to compromise the political neutrality of local institutions, and are committed to serving all people in need.

Lean and flexible staffing and management structure of social protection programs support adequate and timely response. SFD and PWP staff remain outside the civil service and are hired on performance-based contracts with clear terms of reference. This has allowed them to expand or downsize as necessary, depending on their workload. During the current crisis, when operational funding was reduced dramatically, these programs operated with a lean team of first-tier (management and core) staff, and significantly reduced the size of the second-tier staff (extended-term consultants and field workers). As the program expanded its mandate in response to the crisis, the programs were able to gradually increase their staff through competitive recruitment processes based on the new operating environment, and the skill set required for the ECRP interventions.

Donor funding is critical for preserving key national service delivery institutions during conflict. Deterioration of the government's ability to continue financing public institutions has threatened agencies like the SFD with the possibility of being shut down. The SFD has been kept operational during the conflict by external aid from a consortium of donors that is providing approximately 80-85 percent of its financial resources, with IDA-funded ECRP being the largest. Managing multiple sources of financing can be challenging, but in this case the diversity of donors has proved to be helpful to SFD during the current crisis. While some donors have reduced or suspended their financing because of the political crisis others, including the World Bank (through UNDP), have continued to finance the program. Had the program relied on only one or two donors, it might have had to shut down entirely when financing declined. This was observed as a significant risk when large donors (such as the World Bank) stopped financing during 2015 and part of 2016: during that period, SFD and PWP were at risk of having to lay off part of their core staff, which would have significantly impacted their future capacities.

Donor support of local institutions during conflict ensures scalability of postconflict recovery and reconstruction activities. World Bank funding through ECRP has allowed SFD and PWP to maintain full capacity of their staff, and local consultants in their headquarters

and branch offices across the country. This is crucial not only for enabling these local



institutions to deliver services during conflict, but to ensure their readiness for scalable implementation during the recovery and reconstruction phase, once peace is established. Through the ECT program, the World Bank-UNICEF partnership has been able to introduce improvements to the delivery

process of cash transfers in Yemen (including payment modalities, monitoring, and grievance redress functions) that can eventually be passed on to the Social Welfare Fund to strengthen their own delivery systems.

5.3. Partnership Lessons

The World Bank’s partnership with the UN agencies is an effective way of leveraging the complementarities between humanitarian and development agencies in order to support populations affected by conflict. ECRP is being implemented as part of a strategic as well as an opportunistic World Bank-UN partnership for delivering critical social services and safety net programs to Yemen’s most vulnerable population in the midst of a violent conflict. In addition to funding, the World Bank brings its technical expertise in delivering social protection and job (SPJ) services in FCV areas, and builds on its longstanding policy dialogue and relationship with Yemen’s public institutions. The partner UN agencies provide the instruments that enable the World Bank to engage in Yemen despite its inability to work through the government during the conflict. The UN agencies also have a strong country presence; access to all parts of the country; high risk tolerance; and the ability to coordinate the numerous humanitarian and political actors on the ground.

The World Bank’s engagement in Yemen has created an effective platform for donor coordination and mobilization of the resources needed for economic activities, which are

even more critical in a FCV context. During peacetime, the World Bank played a key role in providing a platform for donor coordination and for the advancement of policy and institutional reforms; economic and social development; and building national capacity in Yemen. The World Bank's continued engagement during the conflict has served as a leverage to mobilize resources beyond humanitarian funding. Additionally, its support for a continuing dialogue among donors in the SPJ sector has contributed to better coordination and alignment of interventions within the sector. The design of ECRP has been adopted (in full or in part) by the World Bank as well as by other development agencies working in the social protection sector such as DFID, KfW, USAID, UNDP, and UNICEF as an effective modality for the delivery of safety-net, livelihood support and basic social services to Yemen's conflict-affected population. Coordination of humanitarian and development initiatives is also supported through UN-supported thematic clusters, which have been instrumental for data exchanges and for supporting the coordination of interventions in the field.

5.4. Social Protection and Jobs Sector Lessons

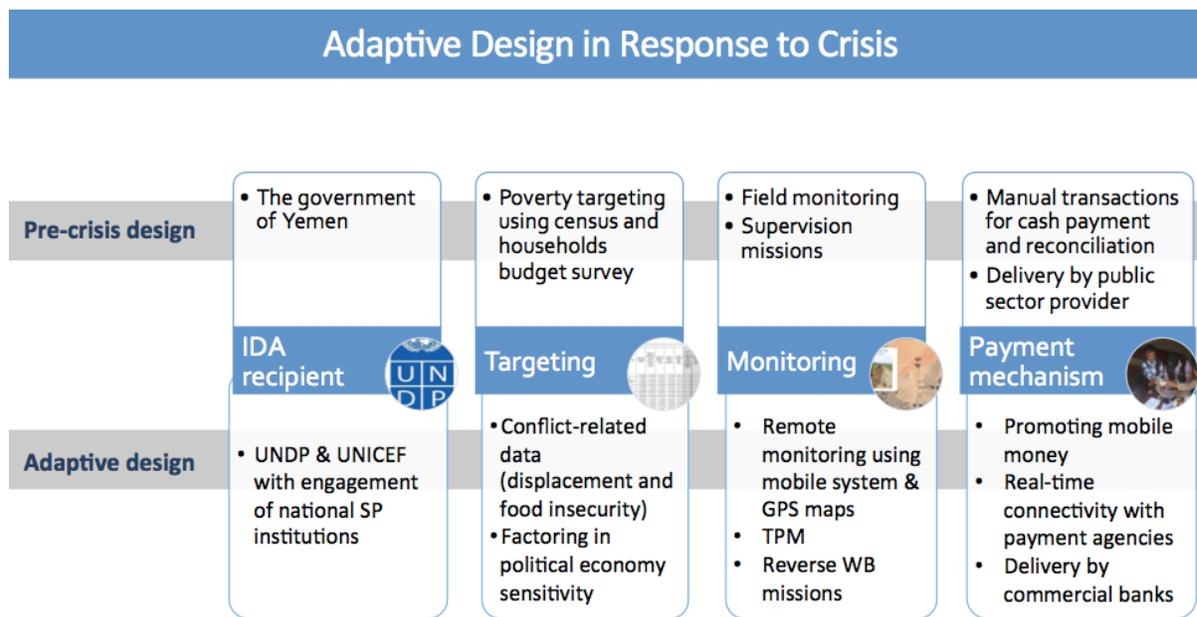
While many of the lessons outlined in previous sections are relevant for the Social Protection and Jobs (SPJ) sector as well as other sectors, the following suggestions are particular to the sector.

ECRP has required considerable technical support and quality assurance from the Social Protection and Jobs Global Practice (SPJ GP) and cross-sectoral collaboration. Significant effort was needed from the SPJ GP to deliver a high-quality operation in a complex environment, in a timely manner. The task team's inability to travel to Yemen, and the lack of an operational local in-country office were considerable hurdles to overcome. Assigning task teams and a task team leader (TTL) who were not only technically competent but also familiar with the country, and with the conflict, ensured that the project design was appropriate. Low turnover of the TTL and core team members allowed for quality assurance from the preparation stage into implementation support, and therefore adaptive and high-

quality support for the client. Flexibility of the budget helped to mobilize a strong, multi-GP team, and enabled adequate frequency and team composition of implementation support missions.

ECRP has benefited from adaptive and conflict-sensitive design and implementation. The ECRP design benefits from the existing capacity and experience of Yemen’s social protection institutions. However, it was important to incorporate an adaptive design in order to respond to the realities of the conflict, such as a significant increase in poverty; emerging new vulnerabilities; and the challenging political and security environment. Maintaining a balance between the need to provide a rapid relief response while still focusing on system strengthening and building the resilience of households, communities, and institutions for the short and medium term developmental response, was critical in this context. As illustrated in Figure 5.3, the targeting mechanism, implementation arrangements, delivery, and monitoring systems all needed to be adapted to the conflict situation.

Figure 5.3: Adaptive Design in Response to Crisis



Conflict-sensitive targeting is important. Crisis situations demand that all dimensions of vulnerability are considered and well understood: it is not enough to focus on just one or two aspects. For example, in the case of ECRP it was important not only to focus on internally displaced persons (IDPs) as part of the targeting formula, but to also take into account returnees, as well as communities that have experienced high levels of conflicts, the levels of malnutrition in villages, etc., as part of the distress index. In relation to this, women and youth should not only be viewed as groups that are especially vulnerable to the impact of conflict, but as a resource for peace, since their proactive participation in local development and community-based service delivery is important for recovery and peace building.

SPJ provides a platform for cooperation across human development interventions and across multiple sectors. ECRP interventions are tightly linked to other sectors, primarily health and nutrition, education, water, agriculture, and MSE development. It is important to keep this in mind, to work closely with the relevant GPs, and to support human development interventions, especially in times of crisis, to the greatest extent possible. For example, while social protection interventions address the demand side of health and nutrition challenges such as the identification of high-risk families, the affordability of accessing services, and behavioral challenges, the health and agriculture sectors address the supply side and the quality of service aspects. In the education sector, cash transfers provide vulnerable families with income support, which addresses the affordability of school supplies; and under the Cash for Works Program, the youth employment component trains and employs youth to provide health and education services where there is a shortage of service providers.

5.5. Corporate Lessons

The underlying enabling factor for reengagement in Yemen, and the development and implementation of ECRP and a few other follow-up projects, is the authorizing environment represented in: i) the corporate agenda for scaling up the World Bank's support to FCV

countries; and ii) the World Bank’s MENA regional strategy, which calls for building resilience and supporting recovery and reconstruction in the region. With this kind of support, the country team, led by the Country Management Unit (CMU), has embarked on a process which has required thinking out of the box and taking calculated risks in order to develop and test new ground for doing business in the context of an active and ongoing conflict. In this section, we highlight some of the key elements and lessons learned through this journey.

Making IDA resources available. Prior to March 2015, Yemen had a World Bank-financed portfolio of US\$1 billion consisting of a mix of IDA grants and credits (termed a “yellow” light country)¹³. To accelerate post-2011 crisis support, the World Bank front-loaded all available IDA17 grant resources, and as of FY2014/15, except for US\$50 million on grant terms, only IDA credits were available. As OP 2.30 was triggered, it was not possible to reengage in Yemen under the IDA credit terms.

In May 2016, the World Bank and IMF determined that Yemen was in high debt distress (“red” light country) and that therefore all remaining resources would be transformed into full grant terms. Recognizing that the process of unlocking the suspended IDA resources would take a few months, the CMU decided to start developing and testing an approach for reengagement with the readily available US\$50 million grant, and to draw on the emerging lessons learned to inform the development of a full-fledged country program: this in turn led to the development of the ECRP. The project was presented to the World Bank Board for approval in July 2016, together with the Yemen Country Engagement Note (CEN) for FY2017/18).

Once ECRP had provided confidence in this approach, scalability became the next step to explore. The CMU led a bold and inclusive process for portfolio review consisting of 20 projects—16 IDA projects and 4 trust funds—and the cancellation and restructuring of

¹³ World Bank debt distress risk ratings framework (translated in “traffic lights”) which determines the share of IDA grants and highly concessional IDA credits for each country: high risk or in debt distress (“red” light) is associated with 100% grants, medium risk (“yellow” light) with 50% grants and 50% credits, while low risk (“green” light) is associated with 100% credits and zero grants.

Yemen's pre-conflict portfolio, while ensuring that funds related to canceled projects would remain available for recommitment to Yemen. This resulted in freeing up the IDA resources that had been locked earlier, under the suspension.

Testing the approach and designing an informed scale-up. Encouraged by the rapid and impressive results delivered by ECRP in its early months, the CMU was soon able to unlock and recommit a total of US\$450 million through a unilateral restructuring of selective operations. In January 2017, the World Bank Board approved (i) additional financing to ECRP, scaling up the funding envelope from US\$50 million to a total of US\$300 million; and (ii) a US\$200 million Emergency Health and Nutrition operation. The rapid results achieved through the ECRP parent project, and demonstration of the effectiveness of the approach, were critical elements for justifying such rapid and significant scale-up of the engagement.

The key design principles of ECRP have proven effective and have inspired a further expansion of the World Bank's crisis response in Yemen, with additional operations now operating in SPJ; integrated health, nutrition and water; agriculture; urban development; and solar power. The result was an impressive scale-up of the World Bank emergency response, up to a total of US\$1.2 billion in FY2016/17 and FY2017/18, with remarkable on-the-ground results.

Maintaining a collaborative dialogue with the legitimate government. Flexibility was needed not just from within the World Bank, but also from the legitimate government of Yemen, which has demonstrated its flexibility by accepting the World Bank and UN initiatives, showing confidence in their neutrality, and agreeing that funds were urgently needed to support the most vulnerable Yemenis in all 22 governorates.

Continued involvement in dialogue with national stakeholders and development partners. The World Bank has continued the dialogue between its teams and their national counterparts and institutions during portfolio suspension. This was critical in order to maintain relationships, remain updated on in-country developments, and help with readiness for rapid support when the opportunity arises. The CMU has also continued to provide funds for the teams and has encouraged them to continue to engage remotely with local

counterparts, and to jointly develop scenarios and plans for interventions even before additional funding becomes available.

The allocation of available resources to the project that best suited Yemen’s situation was identified through competitive internal selection. With a limited remaining country allocation of IDA resources, there were only enough resources for one project. In early 2016, the CMU launched a call for proposals from all GPs with a specific set of selection criteria, such as crisis relevance; rapid results; support for local service delivery institutions; and innovative partnership and implementation arrangements. It is through this process that ECRP was eventually selected.

Establishing a “reengagement team” to support the scale-up of the World Bank’s engagement. At the same time, the CMU established the Yemen Reengagement Team (YRT), composed of a small team of senior staff representing the CMU and the legal and fiduciary GPs, to support the reengagement process and agenda. The YRT is led by the country manager and supported by the country director. This team met on a regular basis during the early phase of the process. It supported the portfolio review and the restructuring/cancellation process; reviewed and assessed proposals submitted by various GPs for financing; monitored political and institutional developments in the country; and supported the World Bank’s active role in the coordination mechanisms for the development partners. The YRT arrangement facilitated and encouraged a one-team approach to identifying and building consensus on country priorities and promoted multidepartmental collaboration.

Recognizing the high cost of doing nothing in the face of the crisis in Yemen, the World Bank has shown flexibility in the interpretation and application of its operational policies, especially OP 2:30. The legal interpretation of operational policy (specifically paragraph 3 of OP2:30) stipulates that if there is no government in power, World Bank assistance may be initiated by requests from the international community (for example, from UN agencies), subject in each case to the prior approval of the Executive Directors of the World Bank. In

this regard, the first key legal and policy challenge was to trigger OP 2:30. A request from the UN for the funding addressed this question. Under IDA's policy framework, however, grants to entities other than the sovereign entity are offered only outside of the regional window. In this case, for the first time in the World Bank's history, the proposed grants were to be made out of the country's IDA resources. Keeping in mind the political reality of Yemen, and despite the many risks identified in the CEN and project appraisal documents, the World Bank decided to move ahead, because it was clear that the risk of doing nothing in this crisis far outweighed the risks of using the country's IDA allocation without government acquiescence. These issues were discussed in detail by the MENA regional vice president and with the Yemeni delegation to the World Bank Group Annual Meetings.

Increased implementation risks call for a robust risk mitigation and monitoring arrangement. The identification of potential political, security, operational, fiduciary, and capacity risks—and the development of a risk mitigation framework—were imbedded in the design of this project, as in all World Bank projects. These have been monitored closely by the task teams as well as by our UN partners during the implementation support missions; are discussed in the mission aide memoires; and are being to the attention of World Bank management as appropriate. However, shortly after implementation began, as the political and security situation continued to deteriorate, and the risks escalated in both nature and scope, the CMU proactively established and began to lead a higher-level weekly (or biweekly, depending on the situation) country portfolio-wide risk-monitoring mechanism, to ensure timely identification of risks, and real-time mitigation actions.

Our UN partner organizations review the risk framework regularly with their implementing partners and discuss them with the World Bank task teams. In addition, updates are prepared on real-time and are fed into the weekly/biweekly emergency portfolio risk- review meetings for discussion. Management guidance is sought as needed, and when determined by the country director, some of the critical risks and proposed mitigation measures are presented to senior management. The portfolio risk-review meetings are chaired by the country director

and include the participation of the country manager, task team leaders, fiduciary, governance and legal teams, country economist, country operations officer, practice managers, and a representative of the front office of the regional vice president.

6. Conclusion

Peace is the most sustainable way to bring an end to the suffering of Yemen's population, especially the poor and vulnerable. The ongoing protracted conflict is threatening the loss of the country's hard-earned gains of recent decades in terms of human capital and infrastructure, as well as Yemen's social fabric. While the humanitarian response aims to provide lifesaving and short-term relief, development interventions can complement these efforts by investing in the resilience of both the people and the country's institutions, as well as their readiness for recovery and reconstruction once peace is established.

The international community is committed to supporting the humanitarian-development nexus, but operationalizing this concept is yet to be tested and further developed. The World Bank's engagement in Yemen during this time of conflict, and the work of the ECRP, are contributing valuable lessons for the advancement of this critical agenda.

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Abstract

Despite a situation of an active violent conflict, the Yemen Emergency Crisis Response Project continues to deliver services and cash to the poor and vulnerable nationwide. This paper captures lessons learned from this innovative and pioneering project, which will be particularly relevant for shaping the World Bank's crisis response under IDA 18.

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