

**The impact of the conflict on Yemeni Internally Displaced Children**

**Child-Led Assessment Report**

**Hodeida and Amran Governorates**

**Yemen**

**August 2015**

# Yemen: A crisis within a crisis

Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the Middle East, with 53% of the population suffering from multi-dimensional[[1]](#footnote-1) poverty even before the escalation of conflict. The country also registers one of the highest chronic malnutrition rates in the world with half of the two million children under the age of five acutely malnourished and 47% stunted.

The outbreak of the conflict in March between the Saudi-allied national government and Houthi armed groups in Yemen has only exacerbated these issues and prompted a large scale protection crisis that now runs parallel to the overwhelming humanitarian needs that pre-existed the start of the conflict.

Today, 21.1 million people, including 9.9 million children (80% of the population) are now in need of humanitarian assistance. Over 4,000 people have been killed including almost 400 children and over 22,000 people have been injured including over 600 children[[2]](#footnote-2).

The conflict has displaced more than a million people, destroyed infrastructure and resulted in serious shortages of fuel, food and other supplies. There are rising incidences of diseases such as dengue fever, and the health sector is on the verge of collapse in some areas, resulting in people dying of treatable and preventable causes. Potential famine has been highlighted as a risk[[3]](#footnote-3), as the food security situation continues to worsen, and over 12 million people are now facing critical levels of food insecurity.

In July 2015, Save the Children supported 20 children and young people to conduct an assessment of 105 displaced children between the ages of 12 and 18 from the governorates of Sana’a, Aden, Hajjah, and Saadah. In the context of increased level of displacement and reduced access to basic services; the purpose of the assessment was to gauge the impact the conflict has had on displaced children and the issues that they are facing due to the intensification of violence over the past months. Furthermore, the findings of the assessment will be used to inform programme design for Save the Children’s response.

**Child-led assessment findings**

105 displaced children (55 girls and 50 boys) were surveyed during the assessment. The children surveyed originally lived in the governorates of Sana’a, Aden, Hajjah and Sada’a and had been displaced to the governorates of Hodeida or Amran, where the assessment were conducted.

**Experience of Displacement**

76% of the displaced children interviewed said that they had faced difficulties when displaced from their areas of origin.

For the majority of the respondents the difficulties centred on the lack of transportation available when they had to move. 13% responded that they arrived to the place that they are now displaced to by walking for hours in the dark due to insufficient transportation as a result of fuel shortages.

The highest number of children who faced such difficulties were children from Sada’a. 34% of the children interviewed from Sada’a reported that they faced transportation difficulties during displacement, such as not having enough fuel to travel in their own family’s vehicles, or that they were unable to afford the expensive fees charged. Some children reported that there were more than 30 people in one small car during their escape from the conflict.

**Shelter Situation**

55% of the children interviewed said they had been displaced to a home belonging to a relative, while 11% to a home of a neighbour. 17% of the children said that they are currently living in abandoned schools and 8% are now living on the street or in make-shift shelters. The below chart provides a breakdown the current shelter situation for the respondents.

**Safety of Displaced Children**

48% of the children expressed that they don’t feel safe in the areas they have been displaced to, with the majority giving airstrikes and conflict as the principle reasons. Those displaced to schools and makeshift shelters noted that they felt unsafe due to the very basic conditions they were living in. Many reported that they don’t feel comfortable as they are treated as strangers by the local community and are unable to play with host community children.

**Violence Against Displaced Children**

During displacement many children were subjected to abuse. 19% of the children surveyed said they have been subjected to a form of abuse; mainly verbal or physical violence. While 81% stated that they didn’t face abuse directly many had heard about other children who were subjected to abuse, such as children being recruited into armed groups or being killed or injured as a result of the conflict. Several of the participants told stories of their friends or relatives having been killed or injured.

**Access to Health Care**

Almost three-quarters (74%) of the children noted that they have access to a health centre near where they are staying. Yet many explained that the quality of the services is not good. 45% of the children stated that there were no health workers present at the health centres when they had visited. Almost one quarter of the respondents (24%) said they would prefer to stay at home when they feel sick as they were too scared to venture outside.

**Malnutrition Situation**

42% of the children said they had heard about cases of child malnutrition in the places they had been displaced to. Yet despite the clear needs many of the children stated that there was no specialised medical treatment available for malnutrition cases that they were aware of: 55% said there are no medical staff to treat malnutrition cases in their displaced areas and 55% said that there was no medical staff to treat malnutrition cases in their area of origin.

**Increased Child Responsibility as a Result of Displacement**

38% of the children who interviewed said that they know of children who now have to take care of other children due to the loss of family members.

**Child Labour**

12% of children surveyed stated they were now responsible for finding income for their families since being displaced. 61% stated that income responsibility sat with their fathers, 15% with their elder brothers and 13% with their mothers. Some of the children stated that they often go to search/beg for free food or clean water at nearby markets or from the host community.

**Rights of Displaced Children**

Only 52% of the interviewed children said they knew about their rights in an emergency situation. While, 46%, responded that they did not know the meaning of the words “Child Rights”.

**Displaced Children’s Views on the Conflict:**

Despite the huge challenges that displaced children are going through most of those surveyed were optimistic about the future. 63% of the children said they believe the conflict will end soon and that they will then be able to go back to their homes and schools.

**Child Friendly Spaces**

50% of the respondents said that they have knowledge of/attend Save the Children’s Child Friendly Spaces (CFS). But only 38% of the children who attend the CFSs said they participate in setting plans and activities with many asking for activities to be more child-led. Many of the children said the CFSs are useful and are helping them to get over their experiences.

**Access to Information Concerning the Emergency and Conflict:**

76% of children stated that media is a good resource for getting information about the current conflict. 77% of the children said that TV is their main source of information and only 2% radio. Almost two-thirds (64%) of them said they would like to receive awareness materials that are visual and have nice designs and drawings.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

The findings from this child-led assessment underline the disastrous impact the conflict is having on Yemen’s displaced children.. As in any escalation of hostilities, children are the most vulnerable and are at higher risk of being separated from families in the event of displacement, and for exploitation, abuse and recruitment into armed groups or forces. They are also at risk of suffering psychosocial distress from witnessing and experiencing violence.

If we do not ensure those affected get the appropriate support to move on with their lives an entire generation runs the risk of suffering for years to come, unable to get over their experiences or contribute to building a stronger, peaceful Yemen.

**Save the Children programing recommendations:**

* Save the Children holds a workshop with those children who took part in facilitating the assessment to ensure the findings are shared and that child-led recommendations are created to influence stakeholders, the international community and programming design
* Save the Children continues to train and disseminate information to children on their rights; providing them with the safe space and platform to share their views, inform stakeholders and influence programming design
* Save the Children to expand child protection programming to ensure that children who are heading a household, suffering from distress, or have been victims of the conflict or abuse get appropriate support
* Save the Children to work with the Ministry of Public Health and Population to ensure that nutrition services are delivered in all health centers Save the Children supports.
* Save the Children to expand assessment/ protection outreach services to target specific vulnerable groups, such as IDPs living in schools and informal settlements. ]
* Save the Children to increase information and outreach to vulnerable populations to ensure they are aware of service provision in their area, preferably via television as suggested by respondents. .

**Recommendations for the international community and parties to the conflict:**

* To prevent further cycles of conflict-triggered displacement, all parties to the conflict must immediately end the violence and seek a negotiated solution to the crisis.
* The international community must work with all parties within Yemen to ensure that life-saving assistance, including medical supplies and fuel, and commercial supplies, such as food and basic items, are allowed to enter Yemen and move freely
* Donors and the international community should support a fully funded, coordinated, impartial and needs-based response

**END**

**ANNEX**

**Demographic Information:**

This section provides general information about the gender and location of origin on the respondents. The assessment interviewed 105 displaced children as below:

**Location of origin of the respondents:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **No. Respondents** | **Percentage** | **Governorate** |
| **10** | **10%** | **Sana’a** |
| **33** | **31%** | **Aden** |
| **17** | **16%** | **Hajjah** |
| **45** | **43%** | **Sada’a** |
| **105** | **100%** | **Total** |

# Overview

Save the Children advocates for children’s rights in all situations, especially in emergencies. Through Save the Children’s Local to Global project we are working to highlight the issues that internally displaced (IDP) children in Yemen are facing as a result of the current crisis. We have been conducting advocacy activities with children, hearing their stories and highlighting the issues that they face as IDPs in order to influence decision makers at the highest levels to take real action to support and improve the lives of Yemeni children. Through this project a child-led assessment was conducted with displaced children in Amran and Hodeida governorates in partnership with our local partner Tawasal in Hodeida and in coordination with our Child Rights Governance (CRG) partner; the Democracy School – Children’s Parliament. The outcomes will be used to inform programme design for Save the Children’s response.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this baseline survey was to ensure that displaced children’s voices are heard and to highlight the issues they are facing in the current crisis. The survey was child-led by 20 members of the Children’s Parliament. Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) in Amran and Hodeida were also involved in conducting the baseline survey. The survey targeted displaced children between the ages of 12 and 18 from the following governorates:

* Sana’a
* Aden
* Hajjah
* Saadah

The findings of the baseline report will be used to inform policy makers, planners and programme design.

The objectives of the child-led assessment included:

* Collect information on the impact on children during the current humanitarian crisis
* Gather information on the psychosocial / protection situation for children and their understanding of their rights during the current emergency situation
* Create a space for children to express their opinions and talk about their experiences of displacement in the current emergency.

Findings of the survey will be used to:

* Plan follow up advocacy and awareness campaigns on children’s rights while the crisis is ongoing with a focus on the right to protection.
* Design communication and awareness materials that document the experiences of displaced children in the Yemen crisis.
* Garner media interest: publish stories to raise awareness of the issues facing displaced Yemeni children from the point of view of the displaced children themselves.

# Methodology

The baseline survey targeted 105 displaced children in two governorates. The participants were randomlyselected from both our projects in Hodeida and from our Child Friendly Spaces in Amran governorate. The activity was funded by SIDA as part of the 2015 Local to Global plan.

Children led in the design of the methods and the questionnaire and a 100% response rate was achieved. Save the Children’s Advocacy & Communication team along with the Monitoring, Evaluation, Assessment and Learning team provided technical support required by the children to facilitate the assessment.

## Questionnaire for the children lead Rapid Assessment

The aim was to develop a questionnaire which was simple to answer, simple to collect, and took a relatively short amount of time to complete (approximately 30 to 45 minutes on average per questionnaire). As such, there were several closed questions in the questionnaire to make the recording of answers simple and quick.

**Questionnaire content**

The following summarises the key questionnaire topics and information that was collected.

* **The experience on displacement:**

Questions focused on reasons for displacement and children’s experience of being displaced

* **Rights of displaced children:**

Questions focussed on what children already know about their rights in emergency situations

* **Child Protection issues facing displaced children:**

Children were asked if they were subjected to abuse (verbal violence, physical violence, recruitment, forced marriage) during displacement, and if they knew of other children who had experienced protection issues.

* **Children’s right to health:**

Children were asked if they have access to a health centre nearby, and if they heard about cases of malnutrition among their families or neighbours.

* **Access to information about the emergency and conflict:**

Children were asked what they felt were the best ways to get information about their rights and child protection during emergencies. They were also asked whether they prefer written or illustrated communication and awareness materials in emergencies.

In addition to the above questions, the assessment concluded by asking the children about their point of views concerning the conflict.

## Field work resources and logistics

In the fourth week of June 2015 a one day baseline training was held for those children conducting the baseline survey. 20 children participated in the training. The following day, they conducted the baseline survey. The questionnaire was drafted in Arabic and was tested during the baseline training by the children themselves.

## Data analysis and reporting

For data collection and the recording of data children used paper questionnaires to record the responses. The answers were reviewed and checked by Save the Children alongside the child conducting the interview. The data was then entered into an excel data base that was developed for the same purpose. The same database was designed to automatically analyse the findings.

1. Multi-dimensional poverty is made up of several factors that constitute poor people's experience of deprivation – such as poor health, lack of education, inadequate living standard, lack of income (as one of several factors considered), disempowerment, poor quality of work and threat from violence. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [UNICEF Humanitarian Situation Report 5-11 August 2015](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNICEF%20Yemen%20Crisis%20Humanitarian%20SitRep%205-11%20August%202015.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ye[men Food Security Information System (FSIS) - IPC INDICATIVE Acute Food Insecurity Situation Overview in YEMEN – June 2015](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Yemen_IPC_Indicative_Acute_Analysis_June_2015l.pdf)

   [↑](#footnote-ref-3)