

CASE STUDY

# YEMEN 2020–2022 / CONFLICT

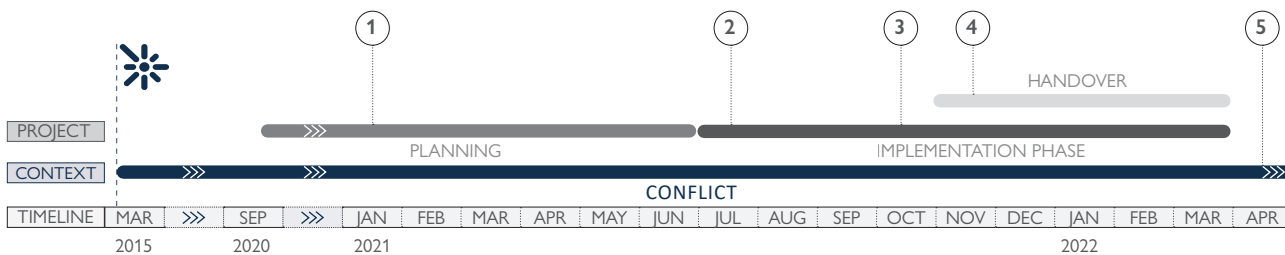
KEYWORDS: Community engagement, Security of tenure, Transitional shelter

<b>CRISIS</b>	<b>Armed conflict</b>	
<b>PEOPLE AFFECTED</b>	<b>23.4 million people</b> affected <b>12.9 million people</b> assessed to be in acute need.*	
<b>PEOPLE DISPLACED</b>	<b>4.3 million people</b> since the start of the crisis**	
<b>PEOPLE WITH SHELTER NEEDS</b>	<b>7.4 million people</b> *	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	Ma'rib, Ta'iz, and the West Coast	
<b>PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT</b>	<b>2,125 HHs</b> (14,875 individuals)	
<b>PROJECT OUTPUTS</b>	<b>2,125 transitional shelters</b> handed over to the most vulnerable households	
<b>SHELTER SIZE</b>	<b>18 m<sup>2</sup></b> per transitional shelter	
<b>SHELTER DENSITY</b>	<b>3.5 m<sup>2</sup></b> per person	
<b>DIRECT COST</b>	<b>USD 1,000</b> per shelter	

\* Yemen Humanitarian Needs Overview 2022  
\*\* Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan 2022

**PROJECT SUMMARY**

This project aimed to improve the living conditions of households living in IDP sites through the construction of transitional shelters in Ta'iz, West Coast, and Ma'rib governorates. The project specifically focused on the organization's Second Line Emergency Response (SLER) to the shelter needs of households displaced for more than three to six months. Beneficiary selection targeted most vulnerable households with severe shelter needs, i.e. households living under inadequate or inappropriate shelter conditions; female headed households; households with elderly or people with special needs. Affected families were provided with transitional shelter assistance with the aim of establishing safe, dignified, and sustainable shelters solutions in secure settlements.



**2015:** Start of crisis in Yemen

- 1 **Jan - Jun 2021:** Planning and coordination meetings with different stakeholders including local authorities, SNFI cluster, beneficiaries.
- 2 **Jul - Sep 2021:** Conducted needs assessments, verification and registration exercises.
- 3 **Oct 2021:** Provided technical training to staff and beneficiaries on construction related skills. Provided awareness raising on targeting and selection criteria to beneficiaries.
- 4 **Nov 2021 - Mar 2022:** Development of BoQs and designs, distribution of materials, construction of transitional shelters.
- 5 **Apr 2022:** Post distribution monitoring exercises to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of the project.



Child walking in Aden, Yemen, an area that has been affected by war since 2015

## CONTEXT

Yemen, a small country on the Arabian Peninsula, has become the site of grave civilian suffering amid an intractable civil war. Yemen's civil war began in 2014 when Houthi insurgents took control of Yemen's capital and largest city, Sana'a, demanding lower fuel prices and a new government. Following failed negotiations, the rebels seized the presidential palace in January 2015, leading the president and his government to resign. Beginning in March 2015, a coalition of Gulf states led by Saudi Arabia launched a campaign of economic isolation and air strikes against the Houthi insurgents. The president rescinded his resignation and returned to Aden in September 2015, and fighting has continued since.

A United Nations-brokered truce was agreed upon and came into effect on 2 April 2022. The subsequent six-month truce period, up to its expiry on 2 October, offered a glimpse of hope for many people. Among the many overarching benefits of this period were an overall reduction in fighting – the first extended reprieve since 2015. Civilian casualties and displacement decreased, and no airstrikes or major military operations took place. The truce also saw an increase in fuel deliveries and the smooth flow of other essential items through Al Hodeidah Port, as well as the reopening of Sana'a International Airport after years of closure, enabling approximately 40,000 people to travel on commercial flights including to access medical treatment and education opportunities abroad. However, fighting did not completely cease, and localized clashes continued in some pockets of the country.

At the end of 2022, nearly nine years into the current conflict, a comprehensive political settlement remains elusive. The Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI) Cluster estimates that 7.5 million people in Yemen reside in inadequate shelter conditions, often lacking essential household items. Among them, over 5.3 million people are in acute

need. The increase in need is primarily due to the recent conflict, which induced displacement of 234,000 people, the impact of climate change (which affected nearly 517,000 people in 2022) and the protracted nature of the crisis – affecting over four million people who have been displaced for more than a year.

## SITUATION DURING THE CRISIS

Yemen's public services and infrastructure have been severely impacted by the conflict, the deteriorating economy, and recurrent natural hazards. By the end of 2022, more than 80 percent of the country's population struggled to access food, safe drinking water and adequate health services, while nearly 90 percent of the population had no access to publicly supplied electricity. Most public sector employees, including teachers and healthcare workers, have not received a regular salary in years.

IDPs continue to face a myriad of challenges, with the average displacement duration being eight years with at least 25 percent being displaced two or more times during that period. Of the 4.5 million IDPs, over two-thirds are living in rental accommodations or hosting arrangements. A recent study showed that 82 percent of them reported serious difficulties in paying rent, and 76 percent did not pay rent for more than three months, thus heightening the risk of eviction, particularly in low-income households whose ability to meet basic needs diminished due to deteriorating economic conditions and increased cost of necessities. The other one-third of displaced people reside in last-resort informal and spontaneous settlements, exposed to hazards such as flooding, landslides, fire risks, and even landmines and unexploded ordnances.

The economy has shrunk by more than half since the conflict escalated in 2015, largely due to currency depreciation, loss of government revenue and rising commodity prices.



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2,125 transitional shelters were handed over to the most vulnerable households in Ma'rib, Ta'iz, and the West Coast

## COUNTRY HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN (HRP)

The Country Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) objectives included the provision of life-saving emergency shelters and Non-Food Item (NFI) support to newly displaced people by conflict and disasters, as well as rental subsidies, maintenance and upgrade interventions, construction of transitional shelters and home rehabilitation and reconstruction. As per the plan, relevant Shelter/NFI interventions for vulnerable households would include protection from natural hazard risks, winterization assistance and support for achieving relative security of tenure. The Shelter/NFI Cluster aligned its objectives with the HRP.

### PROJECT DESIGN

The project aimed to construct 2,200 transitional shelters (TS) for displaced households residing in informal IDP sites, to reach the most vulnerable populations affected by the crisis.

Targeted households were provided with all material and labor required for their self-construction of the shelters. Implementing organization engineers and technical team focal points provided technical assistance and conducted training sessions on shelter construction and maintenance.

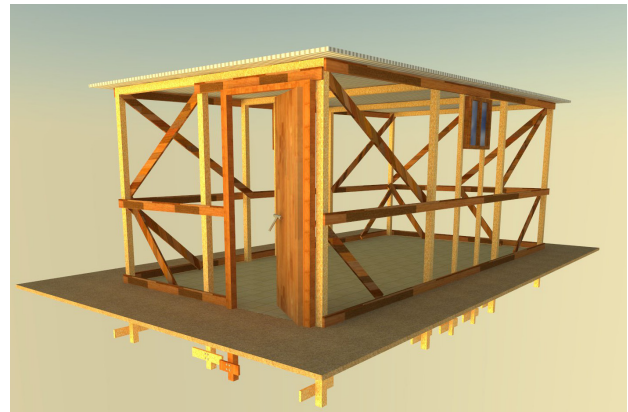
The shelter design was determined according to cluster guidance, beneficiary preferences, local practices and land property conditions: as most of landlords would not allow to build permanent structures on their land, materials such as concrete or brick were not permitted, and the design previewed the possibility of easily dismantling and transporting the shelters to another location. Materials were procured locally.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Prior to implementation, the project team conducted need assessments identifying target sites where the support was feasible and allowed by landowners. The team conducted IDP household registration and verification according to the selection criteria of vulnerable households displaced over six months with the intention of staying for another six months in the same site.

The team also provided sensitization on the overall project to ensure participants understood the intervention. Sensitization was conducted in three stages: 1) Target community was briefed on the overall project, donor and selection criteria; 2) Door-to-door awareness raising was carried out to reiterate previous info shared and to provide more details on the implementation process and feedback mechanism; 3) During construction, teams informed participants of their roles in the construction process.

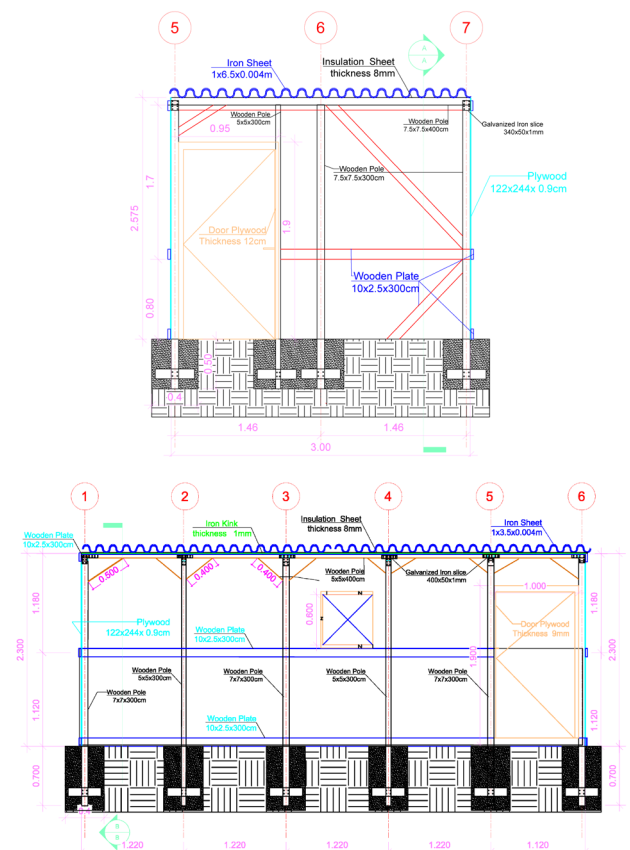
Prior to launching activities, the team obtained the required landowners' approvals in coordination with the organization Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) team and local authorities.



Design of the t-shelter allowed for easy dismantling and transporting the shelters to another location.



Targeted households were provided with all material and labor required for their self-construction of the shelters. All materials were procured locally.



Detailed drawing of a transitional shelter constructed in Ta'iz and Ma'rib

Through a public tender, a contractor was identified to supply the required materials and implement the construction. The organization team conducted market assessments and consultations with relevant stakeholders including affected households, landowners, CCCM teams, WASH teams, the SNFI Cluster and local authorities.

Accordingly, the SNFI team finalized the designs and bills of quantities (BoQs) ensuring the use of plywood and non-permanent materials such as cement and bricks, as agreed with the landowners. Continuous coordination, follow-up, monitoring, and guidance was maintained throughout implementation. Community members willing to participate were trained in the construction process and techniques and encouraged to take ownership in the implementation by coordinating closely with the contractor and providing guidance as needed.



Community ownership and participation was encouraged throughout the implementation of the project



Family after moving to a new wooden transitional shelter that provided safety, security and comfort from harsh environment conditions.

## TARGETING

- Participant selection targeted the most vulnerable households (HHs) with severe shelter needs, such as:
- Female-headed and child-headed HHs.
- HHs with pregnant and lactating women, widows, and adult women in families with multiple wives.
- HHs with older persons (above 60), and HHs headed by elderly.
- HHs with people with disabilities (mental or physical).
- HHs with people with chronic diseases/serious medical conditions.
- Large families with more than 5 children (under 18 years old).
- Newly displaced HHs who have been living on the site for six months or above.
- Marginalized individuals.
- Isolated elderly individuals.
- HHs living in emergency shelter, family tent, or local material and do not have the capacity to rehabilitate and upgrade their shelters.
- IDP families living in structures without solid walls, such as IDPs without shelters and people living in damaged or unfinished buildings.
- IDPs in dire need of shelter assistance who had not been supported with SNFI in the past.
- Families with inadequate shelter or living in old/damaged local transitional shelters (it does not protect them from external influences, whether natural or other including heavy rain, strong wind, and heat).
- A displaced family with many members who would not have enough living space in their shelter or more families living in the same space and would not have enough shelter to accommodate them all.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community ownership and participation were encouraged through focus group discussions and in consultation with affected households to ensure that participants were actively involved in all phases of the intervention.

The outcomes highlighted key preferences which were taken into consideration during the design stage, including adding insulation sheets to the roof, improvements to provide more protection for water leakage by painting the shelter from the outside and changing the slope direction of the roof, adding more than one window for better ventilation and increasing the height of the structure for more air circulation.

Community participation promoted community ownership, aiming to enhance self-resilience and sustainability of the assistance.

## MAIN CHALLENGES

The activities were stopped due to interference by landowners and site community members who tried to add additional families to the project who did not meet selection criteria. Despite continued efforts and several meetings with landowners, a compromise was not easily identified, and works were suspended several times. The construction was actually prolonged and exceeded the timeline of the project due to a combination of factors: accessibility issues, reoccurrence conflict, delays in the materials delivery and skilled labor availability.

HLP issues represented one of the main challenges. Most IDPs resided in informal settlements, where the majority live with precarious tenure arrangements (undocumented and verbal agreements), leaving IDPs vulnerable to price increases, evictions, and other forms of exploitation.

In addition, competition over the access and use of land and water resources had resulted in tensions and disputes between IDPs and the host communities.

The implementing organization faced bureaucratic challenges and lengthy processes to receive access permits by local authorities where they requested the organization to coordinate with landowners and obtain all necessary permits and landowner's approval, which delayed the implementation of assessments, verification, and registration activities.

Unexpected rejections from these landowners to construct shelters continued to delay project implementation despite the approval documents obtained and led to fear among other landowners. This occurred in cases where there were multiple landowners on the same land.

## OUTCOME AND WIDER IMPACTS

The transitional shelters provided a higher quality than emergency shelters, extending their lifespan and were aimed to offer affected households safe, secure, healthy, and dignified accommodation.

The materials and construction methods chosen for transitional shelters were familiar to the community, utilizing the skills and tools they could access. The designs and materials were also chosen so that after the construction was completed, the transitional shelters may be upgraded, reused for other functions, even sold, or recycled into permanent housing.

The outcomes of this project were measured by observing the lifespan of the shelters and how much protection they provided from external factors (floods, sun, or rain). Beneficiary satisfaction surveys and monitoring through regular field visits were conducted.

The local authorities were satisfied with the shelter design and requested other shelter partners to provide similar interventions. The project was used as an advocacy element to promote transitional shelter interventions in other locations.



Organization provided technical assistance and conducted training sessions on shelter construction and maintenance for the targeted households.



Roof was insulated to protect from the harsh environmental conditions.



The shelters were painted from the outside for additional protection against water leakage.



Design considerations from community participation and feedback were implemented to achieve the final outcome.

## STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

### STRENGTHS

- √ **Continued consultation and engagement** with target households throughout all stages of the project.
- √ Lessons learned and recommendations from the community were taken into the consideration and designs improved based on **input from the community**.
- √ **Continued coordination** with local authorities, shelter cluster, community leaders, CCCM and protection partners.
- √ The implementing organization **conducted capacity building programs with the community and site leaders** on different topics including targeting and selection criteria for the transitional shelters.

### WEAKNESSES

- × The number of the transitional shelters implemented **could not cover the huge need on the ground**, and the project targeted the most critical needs only – raising tensions in some areas. However, through regular awareness raising on the targeting and selection criteria – the project was successfully implemented.
- × Early in implementation, the host community around IDP sites were not fully engaged in project activities which led to the **disruption of activities and security threats to staff and workers** at the site. After establishing regular engagement with the community leaders and conducting awareness raising on targeting criteria, the situation was resolved and the project activities continued smoothly.
- × The project also faced **delays in procurement and construction**, mainly due to the current situation in Yemen including security and HLP related issues. The implementing organization is exploring different approaches to ensure effective project implementation. Currently the transitional shelters are being implemented either through vendor based or community-based approaches.

### LESSONS LEARNED

- Educating target beneficiaries and community leaders on the targeting and selection criteria for transitional shelters was crucial for activity success. Additionally, the provision of orientation on selection criteria to CCCM focal points and site leaders was helpful to support project activities.
- It was important to maintain regular coordination with local authorities, the CCCM team and the shelter cluster to facilitate and secure land approvals from all landowners and obtain land authorization/approval before moving with the construction of the transitional shelters. HLP experts or the HLP technical working group should be engaged to address HLP related issues.
- Awareness on the importance of learning how to install transitional shelters should be conducted while motivating affected households through their work with the contractor for a daily wage.
- The transitional shelter model should be designed in consultation with the community to improve its quality, efficiency, resistance and suitability in the area. Continue to revisit and improve the transitional shelter model after each stage of implementation.

### RECOMMENDATIONS MOVING FORWARD

- HLP issues were the main challenges for the implementation of transitional shelters in Yemen. Due to this, prior coordination with relevant stakeholders including local authorities, landowners, HLP experts or technical working groups and the shelter cluster should be given utmost importance before implementation.
- Target beneficiaries should be consulted at all stages starting from the project inception stage.
- Identify the skills and capacity available within the community, provide technical training to community members on the installation and construction of transitional shelters and motivate the community to participate in the construction for daily wages and to gain technical skills.
- Engage the host community from the earliest stages of the project and include the vulnerable host community households as participants of the project.



### FURTHER READING ON SHELTER PROJECTS

**On transitional shelter :** [A.3 / CHAD, 2018–2020 / CONFLICT](#); [A.8 / ETHIOPIA, 2011 / SUDANESE CONFLICT](#); [A.10 / JORDAN, 2013 / SYRIA CONFLICT](#); [A.3 / NEPAL, 2015 / EARTHQUAKE OVERVIEW](#); [A.7 / DRC, 2002 / VOLCANO](#)