

Report for: Isle of Man Government's International Development Committee
Ref: EMR039.16
Grant received: £20,000 July 2016



Section A Basic Information

Project title	Yemen Relief Project (Project Hope)	
The Supporting Partner project reference number (if applicable)	N/A	
The name of the Implementing Partner receiving funding	Operation Mercy	
Implementing Partner contact person details:		
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The name and role of the person approving the report for the Implementing Partner. This person must be duly authorised.	Cathy Stanley	
Project and Report Dates	Start date of Project	Period of Report
	September 2016	Sep 2016 - May 2017
The date of submission of the report	19 Aug 2017	

Section B Situation Report / What's New? (Maximum one page)

Describe any change in local conditions that have affected or could affect your work. This may include political or legal changes, social or economic changes, or changes to in the physical environment. How do you think the change or changes might affect your work?

One of the project's target locations, Ibb, was greatly affected by the war. The war led to a rise in food prices and a drop in the exchange rate of the Yemeni Riyal against foreign currencies. Since Ibb has been seen as safer than the surrounding governorates, many people from the war-ravaged regions have

migrated to it. About 18,000 IDP families have migrated to Ibb, making it one of the governorates with the highest load of IDP arrivals in the country. Additionally, because of the control of the Houthis in this area, the community and the movement of commercial activity were affected. The Houthi's lack of confidence in various NGOs (and seemingly the entire NGO system) increased and resulted in them stopping Op Mercy's project work for no apparent reason. The Houthi branch for relief oversight, the Executive Relief Unit, has gotten very involved in almost all NGO work in their territory, and this was true in the case of Op Mercy's project in Ibb, especially during the survey and distribution periods. The Houthis intruded into the beneficiary selection process, demanded the inclusion of certain new beneficiaries, and even asked for money under the pretext of operating expenses for them or as protection services for NGO work. This is in addition to the role of the local office of the Ministry of Planning, which has become weak in Ibb, and the authority seems to now be in the hands of the Executive Relief Unit.

The situation in the project's other targeted area, Mukalla, did not differ significantly over the course of the project. Of course, like all governorates, the region also witnessed a rise in food prices and the collapse of the Yemeni Riyal against foreign currencies. In particular, the community was affected by the occupation of Al-Mukalla city by Al-Qaeda for one year from April 2015 to April 2016, with the ensuing fear of al-Qaeda's return or the presence of sleeper cells in the city. There was fear of distributing aid openly or placing the organization's logo on the distributed materials, especially after a threat was published on a social networking site of extremist groups saying to target humanitarian organizations. Additionally in Al-Mukalla, the city continued to witness an increasing number of displaced people from other governorates. As charities have shifted to focus their efforts on the displaced, a great burden has been left on the poor families of the resident population, who are now largely without assistance. A final change observed in both Al-Mukalla and around the country has been the deterioration of the health situation and the spread of diseases like diarrhoea and dengue fever.

Section C Stakeholder Accountability (maximum one page)

How have you sought the feedback of participants and other people interested in the project? Have you had any feedback from project participants or others with an interest in the project (including any government officials or other decision-makers who were influenced through advocacy)? What feedback did you receive? What did you do about the feedback you received?

For the beneficiaries in Ibb, a questionnaire was prepared to collect household data on the socio-economic status, health status, source of drinking water, number of beds, and additional data for all targeted families. Data was collected through home visits, which included personal interviews and open, two-way conversations. Data was entered in the database and categorized and analyzed. The basic goods needed by the targeted families were also identified. Awareness sessions were conducted for the target population after the questionnaire was confirmed and the target families met. The awareness sessions discussed how to stop the spread of diseases and explained the importance and use of water filters distributed to families. Additionally, follow-up interviews were conducted with a sample of beneficiaries which addressed their questions about the mechanism of distributing cards and materials and how they benefited from the materials received.

Similarly in Mukalla, regular sessions were held with various project participants (volunteers, vendors, and local women's NGO) both before and during the distribution period to learn their views and suggestions, get feedback on the selection of target areas, and to clarify the mechanism for selecting the target families and develop the work plan. A report was subsequently requested from these same participants to document the positive and negative things before, during and after the distribution of cards and materials to the beneficiaries. These brainstorming and feedback meetings, although taking a lot of time, helped to ease the process during the implementation phase later. Also interviews were conducted with a sample of the beneficiaries to ask about the distribution process, the vendor, the quantities of goods received, if the items were delivered with dignity, and how much impact the goods had on the family. With the local authorities, the governor of Hadramout governorate was contacted and he gave written approval to the Office of Planning and International Cooperation to cooperate and facilitate our work during distribution. Our local coordinator in each city also met with the director of the

Office of Planning to explain the project, target areas, target groups, and beneficiary selection criteria, as well as to submit periodic reports on the project's progress.

Section D Project Achievement (maximum two and a half pages)

Use Option A if you completed a Simplified Logical Framework in your proposal.

Use Option B if you completed a Project Plan Summary in your proposal.

Option A Use the following format to report against the Simplified Logical Framework from your project proposal:

Activities

What was Scheduled	Indicators	Progress Made	Explanatory Narrative
Activity 1 (Hygiene Kits): Gather price quotes for all components in hygiene kit from three different vendors	Price quotes in hand	Complete	Three price quotes were obtained for the Hygiene Kits and Food baskets in both Ibb and Mukalla
Activity 2 (Hygiene Kits): Select phase 1 beneficiaries in coordination with local councils in each target area, and after confirmation through field visits	Target household lists in hand	Complete	After coordinating with local authorities and community representatives, and conducting household visits, final distribution lists are in hand.
Activity 3 (Hygiene Kits): Distribute vouchers to beneficiary families and confirm pick-up date with selected vendor	All vouchers in hands of beneficiaries	Complete	Vouchers for Months 1, 2, and 3 distributed to each beneficiary household
Activity 4 (Hygiene Kits): Distribute hygiene kits which includes healthy hygiene practice awareness materials (once a month for two months)	Hygiene kits in hands of beneficiary households	Complete (+ extra)	Hygiene kits distributed to all target beneficiaries for 3 months
Activity 5 (Assessment): Arrange with area leadership to visit assessment area	Completion of first visit to assessment area	Cancelled	See further explanation below. After the Yemeni government closed down OpM Yemen, we were forbidden from initiating any new projects or surveys
Activity 6 (Assessment): Teams of two will conduct household interviews (80 homes in each city)	Completion of household interviews	Cancelled	See further explanation below.
Activity 7 (Assessment): Data will be gathered and discussed	Completion of team	Cancelled	See further explanation below.

amongst the team	meeting		
Activity 8 (Assessment): After reviewing data and tallying statistics, the team will narrow to 3 priority areas in that city area	3 priority areas per city selected	Cancelled	See further explanation below.
Activity 9 (Assessment): Findings will be passed onto staff member in Taiz who will gather all the findings from the 3 cities and compile a final report and translate it into English	Assessment report translation completed	Cancelled	See further explanation below.
Activity 10 (Assessment): Expatriate staff (remotely) will review and make edits to the final assessment report and follow up with local staff in Yemen with questions and make a final copy of key findings.	Final assessment report submitted	Cancelled	See further explanation below.

Outputs

What was Scheduled	Indicators	Progress Made	Explanatory Narrative
Output 1 (Hygiene Kits): Distribution of 300 hygiene kits per month to war-ravaged families	300 hygiene kits in hands of needy families by August 31, 2016, and another 300 kits again by September 30, 2016 (as evidenced by copies of ID cards and hygiene ration cards, receipts from local suppliers, and photos from pick up day)	Complete (+ extra)	Hygiene kits delivered to 310 beneficiary families for 3 months
Output 2 (Hygiene Kits): Distribution of awareness materials on healthy hygiene practices to 300 war-ravaged families per month		Complete	Hygiene awareness materials included in hygiene kits and delivered to 310 beneficiary families for 2 distributions
Output 3 (Assessment): Completion of a survey and bridge assessment in targeted areas between phase 1 and phase 2 of the project to identify the most vulnerable families and to understand the situation of the people in more depth.	80 families in each city surveyed through home visits, totally 240 families/households by the end of October 31, 2016 (evidenced by 300 completed surveys in hand, in addition to photos of assessed areas)	Cancelled	See further explanation below. After the Yemeni government closed down OpM Yemen, we were forbidden from initiating any new projects or surveys
Output 4 (Assessment): Three priority areas selected to focus on for phase 2 project Baseline data compiled to measure outcomes for phase 2		Cancelled	See further explanation below.

Output 5 (Assessment): Baseline data compiled to measure outcomes for phase 2	Cancelled	See further explanation below.
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Purpose

What was Scheduled	Indicator	Progress Made	Explanatory Narrative
Purpose 1 (Hygiene Kits): To see a decrease in preventable sickness in the families who receive hygiene kits; To educate the families on hygiene that can prevent future sickness; To encourage healthy water and sanitation practices	Report from majority (51%) of families during bridge assessment of a decrease in doctor visits in past two months	Semi-complete	The bridge assessment had to be cancelled due the reasons shared below, so verifiable statistical data was not able to be obtained formally after the distribution period. However, through personal interviews and anecdotal evidence, families are reporting overall better health.
Purpose 2 (Assessment): To gain a better overall picture of the needs in the targeted areas and be able to formulate three main priority needs for each city area for phase 2 of the project; To make phase 2 of the project more sustainable (relief leading to development)	Final Assessment Report completed by October 31, 2016, including identification of 3 priority areas, one per targeted city, as well as recommendations for phase 2	Cancelled	See further explanation below. After the Yemeni government closed down OpM Yemen, we were forbidden from initiating any new projects or surveys

Goal

What was Scheduled	Indicator	Progress Made	Explanatory Narrative
Goal 1: War-ravaged families in three of Yemen's biggest cities are better able to survive, care for themselves, stay healthy, and live with dignity	Daily hand-washing practiced by majority of beneficiary families by end of phase 1 project (as evidenced in home visit surveys and bridge assessment); Majority of families report continued use of hygiene projects even after conclusion of project when they are not provided for free (as evidenced by follow-up calls to beneficiary families by Dec 31, 2016)	Semi-complete	The bridge assessment had to be cancelled due the reasons shared below, so verifiable statistical data was not able to be obtained formally after the distribution period. However, through personal interviews and anecdotal evidence, families are reporting overall better health.
Goal 2: Use the findings from the assessment to plan and design phase 2 of our project	Proposal for Phase 2 completed and sent to donors by Nov 31, 2016,	Cancelled	See further explanation below. After the Yemeni government closed down OpM Yemen, we

at a more sustainable level (evidenced by increased donor giving expanding our project duration through the end of the calendar year)	taking into account assessment findings from Phase 1; More funding for Phase 2 raised by February 1, 2017 that was raised for Phase 1		were forbidden from initiating any new projects or surveys
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Option B: Use the following format to report against the Project Plan Summary and Annual Work Plan from your original project proposal:

Desired situation at end of project
What specific changes do you hope to see at the end of the project? <i>This section should be filled in from the original project plan summary.</i>

Planned activities (from annual work plan)	Activities that we actually did	Planned immediate changes (from annual work plan)	Actual immediate changes that happened	Evidence for changes	People involved in the changes (how many men, women, children)

Section E Participant Analysis

How many people in the following groups have benefitted or participated in the project to date?

Category	Number of people		Percentage (of the total)
	Direct	Indirect	
Men (over 18 years old)	732	27 (local staff, partners, and contractors)	22.9%
Women (over 18 years old)	946	22 (local staff, partners, and contractors)	29.6%
Boys (up to 18 years old)	702	0	22.0%
Girls (up to 18 years old)	813	0	25.5%
TOTAL	3,193	49	100.0%

Section F Impact and Sustainability Analysis (maximum two and a half pages, excluding case studies, stories which can go into appendices). *This section is not required in six monthly reports.*

In this section, you will need to write about the longer term changes (“Impact”) the project is bringing about, and about whether or not you think those changes are likely to continue once the project is finished (“Sustainability”).

F.1 List the main changes that you outlined in your original proposal in the table below and give a comment on the progress towards the changes. Think about the evidence you have for progress, factors that are inhibiting progress, and include numerical information (eg how many men, women, children), where appropriate. If it helps to explain the changes taking place, you could tell a story or provide a case study. You can refer to it in the table and add more information after the table or as an appendix.

Specific long term changes that project will try to achieve (from original proposal)	What signs of these changes can be seen as a result of the project’s work?
Restore hope and dignity in a dire situation through life-saving food and water distribution at a grass-roots level	The project helped to restore hope and dignity to the targeted families by providing them with basic foodstuffs. As our interviews and household visits revealed, before the project many of the families were resorting to begging. Others were trying to take on even more debt to buy food for their families. This project gave them something so simple and practical, yet incredibly powerful and symbolic at the same time. Hope and dignity were found in this project in a very tangible form. Food for the month meant not having to resort to very un-dignified and hopeless behavior.
Play a role, even if really small, in helping prevent Yemen from becoming the next Syria	We do not know for sure if this project was able to contribute to transformation at this macro level. However, we do know that 310 families, through their own admission, were able to stay fuller and healthier for at least three more months than before. And fuller, healthier people can serve as the building blocks for a better, more peaceful future.

F.2 Are there changes that have occurred that have surprised you, or which were not planned? These might be positive or negative changes. Explain what occurred and why you think these changes happened.

The following are some of the unexpected negative changes we faced:

- The interval between registration (July 2016) and the first distribution (October 2016) was greater than anticipated (because of delayed government approvals) (Mukalla and Ibb)
- Some outside groups sought to insert themselves into Op Mercy’s project as controlling influences, especially Executive Relief Unit of the Houthis (Ibb)
- The Houthi Executive Relief Unit sought to influence the beneficiary selection process and even to change the names of 55 beneficiaries after the first distribution round (Ibb)
- After the second distribution, the project was halted after the Houthi-controlled National Security Bureau ordered the cessation of all project activities on a national level until further review. This led to a multi-month delay before we were able to complete the third distribution (Mukalla and Ibb).

Although the challenges we encountered in this project with the authorities seemed all-pervasive and discouraging at every level, the biggest discouragement was the continual delays the authorities forced on us, thus causing this quite small and simple project to drag on endlessly (or so it felt to our local and expat staff).

- The decline in the Yemeni Riyal exchange rate related to foreign currencies led to an increase in some food basket item prices, although we were still able to stay under budget overall for food basket purchases.

The following are some of the unexpected positive changes we faced:

- We were surprised by the great cooperation of volunteers to work with us to make the project a success, especially in the initial survey process

F.3 To what extent has the project contributed to bringing about lasting change by influencing the policies and practices of those in positions of power (i.e. from being involved in advocacy)? If you don't have direct evidence that you have changed policies and practices please report against these proxy indicators:

- **Has there been an increase in the ability of communities / participants / partners / churches to approach, and access, government?**
- **Has there been an increase in the dialogue between communities / participants / partners / churches, and government?**
- **Has there been improved provision of, and access to, government services by communities / participants / partners / churches?**
- **Has there been increased consciousness of rights by communities / participants / partners / churches?**
- **Has there been increased monitoring, and claiming, of rights by communities / participants / partners / churches**

First, regarding how this project affected those in government and positions of power, we heard from multiple influential local government officials that they were quite surprised by Operation Mercy at the beginning of the project and how we operated. They said OpM was quite different than the rest of the NGOs they worked with, for example in not compromising in the process of beneficiary selection; in choosing food baskets composed both of high quality items and high quantity rather than skimping; in credibility through meticulous management of ration cards and pickup from the vendor and documentation. They also noted that OpM does not give financial contributions to influential government figures or local authorities without cause. Being "different" is something quite noteworthy in the current NGO climate in Yemen, and those in power started to notice a number of positive ways that OpM is truly different. We believe the impact of our example and integrity will live on and continue to set a standard among the local government officials that we interacted with most.

Second, regarding improved community dialogue and cooperation, during the project we divided the beneficiaries into groups according to living locations. Thus each group was able to more easily transport the food baskets and hygiene kits to their homes more efficiently by working together and sharing transportation. This became a kind of social communication, cooperation and coordination between the beneficiaries, which further improved their confidence, communication, and sense of teamwork.

F.4 Sustainability - Think about the changes that have already taken place, as well as the ones you hope will take place;

- **Do you think that the physical benefits or other changes resulting from the project will continue once the project is finished? Why do you think this? What do you need to do to help ensure that the physical benefits or changes are maintained?**

- **How is the community, church or other group you are working with, developing the skills to keep changing and growing after the project is finished? What evidence do you have for this? What other things does the project need to do to help ensure this happens?**

Use case studies or stories to support your ideas where you think it is helpful to do so.

The physical benefits were immediate, tangible, and impacting. Multiple beneficiaries reported only eating one meal per day on average before the project, but being able to consistently eat three meals a day for the duration of the project. Although this change may not be permanent, the project served to fill a critical gap by helping provide food and household hygiene supplies while the beneficiaries searched for other solutions. Yes, they still need help as job opportunities in the midst of the war are few and far between. However, the project helped get them one step closer to feeding their families until the end of the war and the economy improves. An additional sustainable impact was the hygiene awareness program through the instructional materials included in each hygiene kit complemented by personal hygiene awareness sessions focused on proper hand-washing and stopping the spread of disease, especially cholera. Cholera and dengue fever are major problems in Yemen right now, and the project was able to focus on helping beneficiaries develop the knowledge, attitude, and practices to prevent their spread. The impact of this one aspect of the project could itself last for years and years into the future and prevent numerous sicknesses. Because of the deteriorating health situation around the country in general, our project teams found a high level of motivation amongst the beneficiaries surrounding hygiene awareness.

Section G Lessons Learnt (maximum one page)

This section is about the things you have learnt from your work in the last year. You may need to spend time in reflection with the project team to be able to answer these questions:

- **What are the key ideas or lessons that are useful for your organisation and that you could share with your Supporting Partner?**
- **Is there anything you need to do or do differently as a result of the lessons you have learned?**
- **Has there been an evaluation or review that has resulted in changes to the way to project operates? What are those changes?**

Our lessons learnt include the following:

- Good cooperation and coordination between all stakeholders related to the project is crucial, in as much as it is possible and within our power. This starts from the very beginning phases of the project and continues through the very end, and includes liaising with the government, the volunteers, the vendors, and of course the beneficiaries themselves. A positive example of this was our project site in Al-Mukalla, and it helped create a relationship of respect and appreciation among all. We tried this in Ibb as well but seemed to face unexplainable opposition that may be more political or religious in nature.
- When verbal statements are made by authorities, it is important to get them in writing, if at all possible. MOPIC, the Houthi Executive Unit, and the governor of Ibb all made promises and concrete statements of our NGOs clearance from all problems and full re-instatement, however these ended up just being their version of "playing the game," and they quickly backed down or denied these promises subsequently. We do not know if it would have been possible to obtain, but getting something in writing may have helped.
- In war-time situations, over-estimate in the planning and budgeting phase how long it will take to carry out what otherwise would be simple project activities.
- Always deal with beneficiaries with dignity. This word came up over and over again in our conversations with beneficiaries and how they felt dignity in their relationship with us, but how lacking that feeling was when they interacted with or heard about other NGO projects.

Section H Proposed Changes to the Project (maximum half page)

Are there any changes to the plan that are needed? You should have already included these in your annual plan, but you might be able to explain them here. If there are additional changes to the plan as a result of thinking about the project for this report, write them here. Substantial changes to the plan may require a new action plan for the year; discuss this with your Supporting Partner's program staff.

No proposed changes as the project is closed, and the NGO's branch in Yemen is closed as well.

Section I Application of Conditions/Recommendations (maximum half page)

Where applicable please explain how you have responded to or complied with any conditions or recommendations made by the Supporting Partner agreed at the time of project approval or subsequently.

This was a pilot project that TearFund UK undertook with a small budget and very limited scope. TF only wanted to contribute toward the WASH component of the original project proposal and recommended the addition of a bridge assessment at the end of the initial round of two-month distributions to prepare for subsequent project phases to get appropriate funding as well as to target the locations/groups/sectors with the greatest need. Therefore we added this recommendation to the project plan and began the process of designing the survey and training our team. However, as indicated above, the Houthi authorities intervened and prevented us from doing any activities in the country besides finishing our planned distributions, and expressly warned us about trying to carry out any surveys. Therefore, this element of the project had to be cancelled unfortunately. There were no other conditions made by the Supporting Partner at the time of project approval. Some recommendations were made following the Partner Capacity Assessment, however the challenges we faced in Yemen prevented us from making substantial progress on those recommendations before the organization was shut down.

Section J Case Studies and Stories of Change

Please provide one or two case studies or stories from your project that best demonstrate the changes that are occurring as a result of your work in communities and/or churches. Provide photos where possible.

From our Ibb Registration Coordinator:

"We stood in front of a small, dilapidated house. We knocked on the door and waited for a while for anyone to come, and when the door finally opened, we found who turned out to be the woman of the house – a girl in her early twenties carrying a child on her shoulder who looked like he was sick. She fed him a piece of bread to quiet him down, but his crying barely abated. She welcomed us and invited us to enter the house. I sat on the ground, which was bare except for some scattered pieces of old blankets. Everything in the house suggested extreme poverty, and from where we were sitting we could see the kitchen, which was virtually devoid of any basic food or supplies except for some vegetable scraps and a few cans. We did not see any rice or flour. She told us that her husband worked as a teacher, but he had not received a salary from the government for months. She had no work and could not read or write. She told me that she was really struggling under the weight of her son's illness, which was some sort of atrophy in the brain, and that they of course did not have the money to get him treatment and she had no one who could help. While we were talking, a knock came at the door. An angry man began shouting at her husband to give him money and we found out that this man is the neighbourhood grocer. He was demanding her husband's debt payments that had not been paid in months because of the suspension of government salaries. We recorded the family's information in the survey and left. When the time came for the delivery of food baskets, we called the woman to come receive her basket, and she was so happy

that her eyes filled with tears of joy. When she asked us where this gift came from at this difficult time, I told her that it is a gift from the Lord and that the Lord hears them and He sees them and He is with them. I told her that it was the Lord who led us to them in order to help them. The young woman thanked the Lord and told me that she feels joy and that there is something like hope and light now around them and in their home.”

Water filters ready to distribute



Hygiene awareness training



Food & hygiene baskets with recipients

Section K Financial Report (see separate Excel spreadsheet)

Financial Report Attached