

For Us but Not Ours

Exclusion from Humanitarian Aid in Yemen

As Yemen enters its sixth year of war, families continue to struggle to meet their most basic needs amidst the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. A prolonged conflict, economic crisis and global pandemic have left more than 80% of people in Yemen in need for some kind of humanitarian aid; however, many are still not able to access assistance. Multiple factors contribute to the exclusion of several groups and individuals from basic services as well as humanitarian assistance. IDPs, people with disabilities, Muhamasheen, older people and women are among those at highest risk of exclusion. It is expected that continued bureaucratic restrictions imposed by authorities and a humanitarian response in 2021 which is currently less than fifty percent funded mean that more people will not be able to receive adequate assistance and groups at risk of exclusion will be further pushed to the margins if immediate measures are not put in place to reduce exclusion and improve access.

INTRODUCTION

The conflict in Yemen has resulted in the worst humanitarian crisis in the world, with more than 24.3 million people in need and 3.6 million displaced. The conflict, economic crisis and COVID-19 pandemic have ravaged the country. Many Yemenis have suffered prior to the war from weak infrastructure, poverty and, thus limited access to basic services. Additionally, funding has not kept pace with the scale of the crisis, and bureaucratic and administrative restrictions imposed on humanitarian actors have further impeded meaningful access of communities to adequate and timely aid.

An analysis by the Protection Cluster in Yemen in 2019 showed that the effectiveness of the humanitarian response and meaningful access for all were undermined by the limited understanding among humanitarian actors (e.g. INGOs and UN agencies) of groups at risk of exclusion and of factors contributing to their exclusion. The initial analysis further concluded that patterns of exclusion in Yemen, though similar in some aspects, are dynamic, complex and cannot be explained along with singular explanations.

A research study conducted jointly by the Protection Cluster and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) in 2020,¹ as part of their efforts to improve accountability to affected populations, showed that ***IDPs, Muhamasheen, people with disabilities, older people and women are among the groups at highest risk of exclusion in Yemen.*** In line with the analysis conducted in 2019, the study indicates that factors contributing to the exclusion of those groups are similar in certain ways and range from structural and historical factors to more recent conflict-induced factors; however, the scale and degree of their impact, and the coping mechanisms adopted to address them, vary by group and location.

Humanitarian actors and donors should put in place policies and operational measures to reduce the risk of exclusion of groups and individuals from assistance. In the face of a protracted humanitarian crisis and decreasing funding, this becomes increasingly important. The Participation Revolution² under the 'Grand Bargain' commitments cannot come to fruition unless less visible groups are included in the humanitarian response.

The Protection Cluster and DRC have consolidated a list of recommendations, directed to support the humanitarian community operating in Yemen to uphold those commitments.

The following report outlines the various populations at risk of exclusion, factors of exclusion and the coping mechanisms used to overcome these barriers to assistance.

¹ Protection Cluster in Yemen and DRC, "Exclusion from Humanitarian Aid in Yemen: The Perceptions of Groups at Risk". 2020.

² "Grand Bargain (GB) workstream 6 views systematic accountability and inclusion as essential to meeting organizational and collective standards and commitments, including the IASC CAAP and the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS)", IASC.

Finally, four key recommendations are made to enhance inclusion in Yemen's humanitarian response.

1. GROUPS AT RISK OF EXCLUSION

Based on responses provided by Key Informants (KI's) (204), the study concludes that IDPs, Muhamasheen, people with disabilities, older people and women are among the groups at highest risk of exclusion from humanitarian assistance.³ The perceptions of those groups measured through individual surveys conducted with 1338 individuals and 272 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) confirm the observations and claims of the KI's.⁴ Indeed, the majority of the participants in the survey expressed that they felt excluded from humanitarian assistance and other services. The findings show that the impact of exclusion was aggravated when the individual belonged simultaneously to more than one of the aforementioned groups, e.g. IDP woman with disability, IDP woman from the Muhamasheen community etc. Indeed, the layers and complexity of patterns of exclusion faced by individuals render rigid categorization of groups almost impossible, and rather call for a more intersectional approach. Age, gender and disability constitute important elements within the different groups, although they are listed below as stand-alone groups for easy reference.

i) Internally Displaced People

More than three-quarters of the IDP⁵ respondents felt that they were excluded from humanitarian assistance and services, and reported that they could not access assistance. More than 90% of them believed that aid was not provided on an equal and fair basis.

79% of women felt excluded, a slightly higher percentage compared to men (73%). The difference is more flagrant between IDPs living in sites and those living in host communities. Nearly 90% of IDPs in sites expressed that they felt excluded from humanitarian assistance and services, while less than half of those residing in host communities felt that way. This shows that the feeling of exclusion from humanitarian assistance is very much intertwined with the feeling of marginalization from society in general. IDPs in sites are often easier to recognize as displaced, i.e. outsiders, and to physically distinguish or locate. 'Being an IDP' as a reason of exclusion is also mentioned more among IDPs in IDP sites, compared to those in host communities. It is also worth noting that in many instances IDPs in sites come from al Muhamasheen community, which exposes them to further exclusion from the

³ Among the other groups also mentioned by key informants, but to a lesser extent: children and religious minorities. The PC and DRC decided not to include Migrants and Refugees in this study while they are definitely among the groups at high risk of exclusion, because accessing those groups was not possible during the timeframe of data collection.

⁴ For further details on the methodology, refer to the research study.

⁵ 3.65 million people have been displaced in Yemen since the beginning of the war in 2015, and more than 80% of them have been in displacement for more than a year (DTM).

society around them. In the southern governorates, being from the 'North' exposes many IDPs to a wide array of challenges to access services and assistance.

Being displaced was the reason for exclusion mentioned by 66% of IDP men and 54% of IDP women. Female IDP respondents (20%) cited "being a woman" as the primary reason behind their exclusion.

Findings show that the feeling of exclusion and the inability to access assistance increases among IDPs who have a lower level of education and those who do not have access to income.

Displacement, especially protracted displacement, exacerbates existing vulnerabilities, and also weakens established positive coping mechanisms. This exposes many groups who were already at the margins to further exclusion as their experiences become multifold. In addition, displacement often breaks individuals' social support systems. In fact, 74% of IDP respondents believed that the community around them does not respond to their complaints, a figure that drastically increases to 96% among displaced women.

Requirements for enrolment in schools resulted in the exclusion of many IDP children from education services.

ii) Muhamasheen

The "Muhamasheen" in Yemen have been suffering from discrimination for centuries, which led to their systematic and prolonged exclusion from society as well as essential services. While there are no official updated figures on the population of Muhamasheen, it is estimated that they constitute about 10% of the total population.⁶ They are referred to colloquially with the pejorative name "Akhdam" (servants). The social structure in the Yemeni society, which depends to a large extent on the origin (i.e. tribe), contributes to the perpetual exclusion of the Muhamasheen who are from outside the tribal structures.

70% of Muhamasheen respondents feel excluded, out of which 41% believe that the main reason behind their exclusion is that they belong to the Muhamasheen community. Another 20% explained that their exclusion was caused by their lack of support networks within government departments and aid organizations. The Muhamasheen communities who live on the fringes of society, often times in makeshift shelters and dwellings of wood or zinc, are often those at the highest risk of exclusion. Similar to IDPs, these makeshift settlements are easily identifiable as Muhamasheen and have been historically pushed outside of society. The lack of legal papers, including birth certificates and identification documents, for many of this group contributes further to their exclusion. Nearly 40% of women Muhamasheen respondents have never attended school.

⁶ UNICEF- IMSEA- Yemen

82% of respondents from this group said that their feeling of being excluded increased after the start of the war. Considered to be among the poorest groups of the Yemeni society, the Muhamasheen found themselves after the war forced to compete for already limited resources with other groups, most notably IDPs (who may or may not be other Muhamasheen). The situation of the Muhamasheen is compounded while in displacement, as their challenge in face of exclusion becomes multifaceted; i.e. female Muhamasheen, or elderly Muhamasheen. 19% of respondents from Muhamasheen group consider that they are excluded because they are IDPs. Displaced Muhamasheen are in fact the group least accepted by host communities across the different governorates.

About 74% of Muhamasheen respondents, most of whom are women, shared that the authorities and the local community do not take into account their complaints and feedback. While 92% think that they are in need of humanitarian aid, 76% believed that humanitarian assistance is not provided in a fair and equal manner. According to 56% of the key informants, the local authorities do not work to integrate this group to enable them to access humanitarian aid and services.

iii) Women and Girls

The findings of the study show that 78% of female respondents feel excluded compared to 63% of male respondents. In fact, gender is a key component influencing perceptions of exclusion across the various surveyed groups. Men (73%) and women (83%) think that the prevailing perceptions of gender in society contribute to the exclusion of women and girls. Participants in the FGDs attributed women's exclusion

Women and girls face risks of gender-based violence, including but not limited to, physical and emotional violence (incl. female genital mutilation), exploitation, denial of resources, and early forced marriage.¹

to restrictions related to social traditions and tribal customs prevalent especially in rural areas. For instance, findings indicate that it is more difficult for divorced women and widows to access aid and services in comparison to married or single women who live with their families. The percentage of divorced (82%) or widows (87%) who cannot access assistance is higher than that of married (75%) or single (70%) women. The difference between married women and other women is also evident in regards to perceptions of the causes of exclusion: the proportion of single, widowed and divorced women who believe that gender-based discrimination (i.e. being a woman) is the main driver behind their exclusion is double that of married women.

While both men and women believe that humanitarian aid is not distributed in a fair and equitable manner, non-inclusive methods of selection and distribution affect women disproportionately. Gender roles in Yemen dictate that women have little (or no) say in the management of income and/or utilization of assistance provided by humanitarian actors.⁷ In general, men are more heard within the society than women. 76% of women believe that their complaints are not considered or

⁷ This is indeed validated by the staggering percentages included in Post Distribution Monitoring reports of partners showing that more than 90% of female respondents say that men control the income within the household.

addressed, compared to 67% of men. According to the respondents, the most significant reason that prevents women and girls from seeking services, especially those related to gendered-based violence, is the fear of being identified and defamed for doing so (76%).

iv) People with Physical Disabilities

There is currently no reliable data on persons with disabilities in Yemen, including their number, but calculations based on global estimates of the World Health Organization suggest that 4.5 million individuals in Yemen have some kind of disability. Given the ongoing conflict, the actual number is likely to be higher.⁸ As elsewhere, people with disabilities (PwD) in Yemen face prejudice and stigma that prevent them from effectively integrating into society. Public facilities including schools are not equipped to ensure effective access for this group.

Nearly 73% of respondents from this group feel that they are excluded and are unable to access services, especially humanitarian aid. They indicated that the local community, local authorities and humanitarian organizations do not take into account their basic needs or listen to them. Many stated during the FGDs that they are unable to access humanitarian intervention programs, especially in rural and remote areas. Respondents report that organizations have less presence in rural and remote areas. And there are challenges, such as poor road conditions and costs of transportation which makes traveling to services for PwD particularly challenging.

Perhaps unsurprisingly the fear of exclusion of persons with physical disability increased after the war (82%). This is also due to the lack of specialized projects that work on integrating PwD. In Saada, for example, KI's confirmed that humanitarian organizations have not invested sufficiently in projects that contribute to supporting people with physical disabilities socially and economically despite the presence of large numbers of individuals with physical disabilities due to the wars that this governorate witnessed since 2004. Furthermore, 39% of PwD who are also displaced reported that they are excluded from assistance primarily because they are IDPs. This proportion is significantly higher among IDPs living in IDP sites.

v) Older People

52% of the Key Informants reported that older people constitute one of the main groups at risk of exclusion, especially those who also have mobility difficulties or disabilities. Nearly 90% of older people participating in the survey said that they felt excluded from humanitarian assistance, and 70% explained that the local community, local authorities and humanitarian organizations do not take into account their basic needs or listen to them. A large number of respondents attributed this to the fact that they are illiterate and subsequently feel that organizations do not listen to them when reporting their basic needs.

78% of respondents from this group reported that the humanitarian aid and services are insufficient and inadequate. In some of the FGDs, participants mentioned that healthcare is a priority, but it is not available as needed. Older women feel excluded more than men: all older women who participated in the survey shared that they feel

⁸ Amnesty International. "EXCLUDED. LIVING WITH DISABILITIES IN YEMEN'S".

excluded (100%) compared to 75% of men. This may be linked this to some of the traditions prevalent in the Yemeni society, as old men in many areas are respected and heard, as opposed to women of a similar age. Significantly large number of female respondents among older women consider that they are excluded mainly because they are women (85%).

2. FACTORS OF EXCLUSION

Factors contributing to the exclusion of the aforementioned groups vary and affect groups to differing degrees. The impact of each factor changes from one area to another, and according to age and gender. The study conducted by the Danish Refugee Council and Protection Cluster grouped these factors into 6 main elements:

- i) The lack of accountability of local authorities and traditional community representatives;
- ii) Poor communication with affected populations;
- iii) Inadequacy of humanitarian aid;
- iv) Conflict;
- v) Conditions of roads and remoteness; and finally;
- vi) Social norms, customs and structures.

i) Lack of Accountability of Local Authorities and Traditional Community Representatives

The most recurrent reason cited by FGDs leading to the exclusion of different groups from humanitarian assistance was the lack of accountability and transparency among local authorities (at the area level), and community representatives such as the 'Aqils.⁹ Years of conflict, and weakened support from the state, have decreased communities' trust in local authorities and representatives. Indeed, respondents from all surveyed groups (66%) said that the local authorities and representatives contributed in one way or another to their exclusion. Participants in FGDs explained that those representatives do not prioritize the best interest of the groups they are supposed to represent.

The study shows that communities perceived the role of the local authorities to have been limited to the provision of information about demographics, geographic locations and IDP flows. According to key informants, local authorities, do not actively contribute to the reduction of the risk of exclusion, nor do they have the capacity to do so. In fact, only 36% of respondents said that they would resort to local authorities and representatives in case they experience exclusion (29% of female respondents compared to 43% among male respondents).

Respondents believe that local representatives put their interest first, which also contributes to growing favoritism and nepotism in the processes of beneficiary identification and selection. 'Aqils are perceived to be actually responsible for diverting aid

When organizations seek the assistance of some 'Aqils, certain families receive the assistance twice and thrice.

⁹ Singular 'Aqil. The 'Aqil is a local dignitary residing in neighborhoods and villages.

to benefit favored individuals and groups and hence exacerbate the risk of exclusion of others.

ii) Poor Communication with Affected Populations

The study findings show that communication with affected populations does not meet expectations and groups especially those already facing exclusion are rarely informed about their rights and entitlements. 70% of respondents thought that groups at highest risk of exclusion are not informed about available services and are almost never consulted with regards to needs, project design and service delivery.

70% of respondents thought that groups at risk of exclusion are not informed about available services.

iii) Inadequacy of Humanitarian Aid

More than three-quarters of respondents consider that humanitarian agencies are unable to determine their actual needs and respond accordingly with adequate services. **Only 1% of the KIs stated that the available humanitarian services are adequate to the actual needs.**

Many respondents and participants in the FGDs explained that they were excluded from assistance, most notably food assistance, and they cannot identify the reason behind their exclusion. Those include individuals whose assistance was unexpectedly discontinued, as well as those who have never received it. Older people mentioned the inadequacy of healthcare services, and PwD said that the assistance is inaccessible for them. The study showed that communities believe that aid workers do not have the right skill set to address factors of exclusion. **Lack of trained female employees is another contributing factor to exclusion.**

iv) Conflict

The conflict and its impact have generally strengthened the barriers faced by groups at risk of exclusion to access assistance. 86% of respondents believe that the war has directly exacerbated their exclusion from services and humanitarian assistance. Although, the majority of the factors of exclusion existed prior to the war, the latter exacerbated risks of exclusion and amplified vulnerabilities. For instance, 85% of the Muhamasheen and 81% of PwD think that they have been further excluded as a result of the war.

The proliferation of armed groups and their presence on the ground constitute an obstacle to access assistance according to 63% of men and 48% of women. In the FGDs, participants explained that this reflects to gender roles and the fact that men have more mobility than women, which increases the probability of encountering or interacting with armed men. The war increased women's perception of exclusion, as stated by 87% of the respondents.

The feeling of insecurity is exacerbated in areas near active frontlines and where mines and remnants of war are found.

iv) Roads and Remoteness

The remoteness of some areas and the conditions of roads have a negative impact on different groups' access to humanitarian assistance. All groups at risk of exclusion mentioned the conditions of roads and remoteness especially in mountainous areas as impediments to access. The absence of transportation means (especially inadequately-equipped ones to meet specific needs of certain populations) constitutes a challenge for older people and people with disabilities.

Long distances to reach assistance for people in remote areas are considered a challenge, especially for women and girls. The latter already face restrictions on their mobility as a result of gender norms, and restrictions on their use of public transport in some area further deepens their exclusion.

vi) Social Norms, Customs and Structures

Social norms and structures impose a wide array of challenges obstructing different groups' access to humanitarian assistance, especially that aid has not always been at all times adequately tailored to accommodate context and cultural sensitivities.

Women and members of the Muhamasheen community can be considered the two groups mostly affected by social norms and prevalent social structures.

In fact, the factors of their exclusion are rather structural and to a large extent intrinsic to the conservative nature of the society and the rigid social stratification.

The majority of female as well as male respondents believe that the dominant perceptions of gender and associated roles deny women equal access to humanitarian assistance and services. They also limit the ability of women to express their needs, as their voices are often not heard within the society. Humanitarian agencies' consultation of women and girls are often misperceived and rejected in some communities and areas. Dependency in humanitarian action on 'Aqils, Sheikhs and Imams contributes usually to increased exclusion of women.

Muhamasheen face exclusion and are not given equal say in matters that affect communities as a whole. The non-tribal origin of this group places them at the bottom of the social pyramid¹⁰ in the Yemeni society. More than half of the respondents from this group believe that overcoming tribal traditions and class-based discrimination will contribute to reducing their risk of exclusion.

3. COPING STRATEGIES

The study presents some of the main coping strategies mentioned by respondents from the different groups. The coping strategies are adopted to mitigate the risk of exclusion and its impact on the individuals.

i) Raising complaints

The majority of respondents said that they preferred raising complaints during face to face meetings. In areas under the de facto authorities, interviewees

¹⁰ Where Hashemites and tribes are positioned at higher level.

mentioned that they would mostly raise complaints to the local authorities; while in areas under the Internationally Recognized Government of Yemen, they mentioned that they complain to Aqils and local organizations. Complaints are about the quality, quantity and inadequacy of aid; however, complaints are mostly raised when individuals are completely excluded from assistance. Many groups feel that registration is the most critical phase in regards to exclusion from assistance. Groups at risk of exclusion, especially non-displaced individuals, expressed their dissatisfaction with registration processes that eventually lead to their exclusion.

Although raising complaints is frequently mentioned, 72% of respondents believe that their complaints are never taken into account let alone addressed (this percentage increases among women to 76%). Making a complaint is also not always perceived as safe. Groups at risk of exclusion expressed their fear of retaliation (47%), in case they complain. This percentage is significantly high among IDPs (63%). The fear of being subject to death threats, detention and accusation of incitement following filing a complaint is remarkably high among the Muhamasheen, (74%) compared to the rest of the groups.

ii) Selection of representatives

Selecting community representatives to speak on behalf of the community and put forward its needs, concerns and complaints echoes a long-standing system in the Yemeni society whereby the Sheikh, 'Aqil or Imam are seen as representatives of the tribe, community, neighborhood etc. When in displacement, Yemenis also prefer being represented through the medium of the community leader. Respondents from different groups mention the 'Aqil as a key representative of the community, although the stark majority believes that 'Aqils contribute to their exclusion, and do not represent their best interest with integrity. 'Aqils have been repeatedly accused throughout the data collection of diverting aid, and favoring their relatives.

iii) Accepting unsafe jobs

Many respondents reported having to accept inadequate working conditions and unsafe jobs as a result of their exclusion from humanitarian assistance. Recruitment with armed groups is frequently mentioned by men who have lost their jobs as a result of the war. In some areas, such as the West Coast of Yemen, many employees of the public sector reported not receiving a salary (or receiving half a salary). They explain that joining the ranks of a military group was the most accessible opportunity to secure income. On the other hand, women have to accept certain jobs in unsafe areas or under unsafe conditions where they experience sexual harassment and exploitation. Some women mentioned the risks experienced while cleaning strangers' houses, and stressed the fact that not receiving assistance pushed them to accept certain jobs, despite the risks.

Female respondents relate their general safety and security concerns to the lack of safe spaces in the community (81%) in addition to experiencing harassment upon movement (66%), which directly affects safe and effective access.

iv) Moving closer to services

Some IDPs mentioned changing their residence and moving closer to services and humanitarian assistance as a mean to cope with exclusion. This mobility is nonetheless not an option for many, especially older people, women and girls, and people with disabilities. Non-displaced Muhamasheen also explained that moving closer to assistance would not necessarily guarantee them access as their exclusion is based on the fact that they are from this group. All groups stated that humanitarian actors are not doing enough to reach them.

v) Reducing expenses

Reducing expenses is the most adopted coping mechanisms among surveyed groups. 95% of respondents said that they had to reduce their household expenses, often leaving essential needs unmet. All groups (85% of respondents) shared their experiences of selling property or possessions to help secure basic needs.

vi) Begging and child labor

Begging and child labor are common in cities and towns. Depending on restaurants' charitable gestures is highly reported by families in big cities like Aden. Women usually are the ones visiting or staying in front of restaurants to receive food. ***More than half of the respondents from each group reported that they beg or send their children to beg on the streets.*** The deteriorating situation pushed many families to engage their children in labor. Many children in Yemen work in Qat Markets, which exposes them to harassment, abuse and exploitation.

The more corrective coping strategies such as raising complaint, moving residence or choosing a representative to speak on the community's behalf are generally more accessible to and appropriate for men, rather than women; while the latter equally (if not more) engage in negative coping strategies.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The situation of groups at risk of exclusion is very precarious, with families in Yemen increasingly struggling to secure basic needs. Groups at risk of exclusion from humanitarian assistance are already among the most vulnerable. Their exclusion often predated the conflict; however, the war, displacement, and depletion of resources have exacerbated their exclusion and amplified the effect of it on their living conditions and capacities to cope. ***The findings of the study show that contrary to some allegations and misconceptions, humanitarian actors are still well-perceived among those groups,*** which provide them with an opportunity to improve their accountability to affected populations and reduce exclusion. Yet, the perception that humanitarian actors have not done enough so far is widely spread.

Humanitarian actors and donors should more than ever, invest in building the trust of communities, and work towards reducing exclusion of the most vulnerable.

Deepening the exclusion of the most vulnerable and not improving meaningful access to basic assistance, will have detrimental repercussions on those groups and the society as a whole.

Based on the findings of this study, five main recommendations are suggested

i) Humanitarian Policy Change and Program Design

- Humanitarian actors should commit to improving meaningful access to assistance and basic services for all groups at risk of exclusion. This commitment should be upheld throughout the humanitarian project cycle, most notably from the very beginning of the design phase. They should not focus only on improving their access to communities, but should also work on improving individuals and groups' access to assistance and services.
- Donors should make funding available for improving inclusion of groups at risk of exclusion in humanitarian responses, and for the building of the capacity of staff.
- Donors should be more accepting of community-based approaches and activities, and be willing to fund them. The success of community-based approaches is often linked to multi-year and flexible funding.
- Humanitarian actors should allocate dedicated budgets in their programs to promote and enhance the inclusion of those at risk of exclusion. This requires special skills and knowledge of safe inclusion methods.¹¹
- Humanitarian actors should ensure that monitoring and evaluation activities assess the accessibility of the provided services. Learning should be a continuous exercise throughout the project cycle.
- Humanitarian actors should continuously identify and analyze factors contributing to the exclusion of different groups and individuals, as well as coping strategies.
- Humanitarian actors (including organizations and clusters) should analyze the risk of exclusion, and the possibility of its occurrence especially during the registration (or beneficiary selection) phase, as it is very critical. Lists should be regularly updated, and actors should maintain some flexibility in updating and changing the lists to reduce the risk of exclusion.
- Humanitarian actors should identify innovative and comprehensive methods to assess needs, especially in areas where not all assessment methods are permitted. Hybrid and mixed methodologies are key to capture the complexity of needs in Yemen. Key informant interviews can be very valuable to identify and locate groups at high risk of exclusion. Especially where direct community assessments are not possible.
- Humanitarian actors in general should accept referrals, and referral pathways should be established to reduce the exclusion of some groups and individuals from assistance.
- Humanitarian actors should retain some flexibility to include the individuals that are excluded at registration phase in the programs.

¹¹ Referring to and consulting with the Inclusion Task Force in Yemen is always encouraged.

ii) Rights Education and Capacity Building

- Humanitarian actors should invest in raising awareness among groups at risk of exclusion around their rights and entitlements, as well as availability of services and ways to access them. Awareness raising methods and materials should target all groups across age, gender, location, disability, and ethnicity. Mixed modalities must be adopted to consider the diversity of the individuals.
- Humanitarian actors should train staff on key concepts and skills to work with specific groups such as people with disabilities and older people.
- Humanitarian actors should support local authorities and representatives through building their capacity and knowledge around humanitarian action and principles. Humanitarian actors should continuously engage local authorities and representatives to ensure effective accountability to affected populations.

iii) Working with community structures, representatives and local authorities

- Humanitarian actors should increasingly adopt community-based approaches and work through community-based structures. They should also put in place monitoring and accountability mechanisms that ensures those structures contribute to the inclusion of groups and individuals at risk of exclusion. The risk of abusing the authority by those structures must be closely monitored.
- Humanitarian actors should not solely rely on existing representation structures, and ensure such structures are chosen based on a consultative and inclusive process.

iv) Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms

- Humanitarian actors should establish meaningful and accessible feedback and complaint mechanisms. The latter should be made known to all groups, and should be designed and established on the basis of a consultative process with the communities.
- Humanitarian actors should establish and maintain direct and effective communication with groups at risk of exclusion; they should also conduct local analyses to understand what other groups might also face exclusion.

For any questions or comments on the study, please contact:
mohammed.allaw@drc.ngo and yasmin.chawaf@intersos.org

Produced by:



Funded by:



In collaboration with:

