

Promoting community assets and improving resilience in Yemen

The ongoing fighting in Yemen has led to thousands of deaths and the destruction of vital infrastructures like water systems, sewage systems, schools, health facilities and roads. The rough rural roads of Taizz governorate have caused countless hardships for the residents. The roads are often impassable and have caused enormous tragic accidents, which led to a significant loss of lives. For many years, locals had no choice but to transport food and other essential items by donkeys or their backs. Moreover, residents used to carry patients and pregnant women in need of urgent medical care atop the coffins of the dead in case they didn't survive the long road to the nearest health facility.

Nashwan, 40 years old, is a father of six children. He lives in Jabal Habashi, which is one of the poorest regions in Taizz governorate. Two years ago, Nashwan had a heartbreaking accident because of the rough road. "I was going to buy some needs with some of my neighbors," he says, "but the car flipped over. All the passengers died and I was the only survivor."



Image 1 – Nashwan, 40 years old, is a father of six children

"One pregnant woman tragically died on the way to the clinic. Many babies develop cerebral atrophy due to obstructive birth," says 25-years-old Fatima. Fatima lives in Jabal Habshi with her divorced mother and six brothers. As the eldest sibling, she became responsible for providing food and other needs for her family. She works in farming.

Close to six years of war and now the COVID-19 pandemic, life became even harder in rural Yemen. Unpaved roads restrict access to vital services, as well as education, employment opportunities and food supplies. Due to the lack of regular salaries and upsurging prices of foodstuff and transportation costs, many families have been forced to eliminate nutritious fruits, vegetables and meat from their diets. "If we were lucky enough to secure our meals, we would

eat one type of food because we are unable to buy different types of food because of the increasing prices,” says Fatima.



Image 2 – Fatima and other villagers rehabilitating the road to their village

Aldheneeb village of As silw district in Taizz governorate suffered from a poor sewage system that infected residents with cholera, malaria and other water-borne diseases. Residents were accustomed to seeing stagnant sewage in front of their homes, and insects, flies and mosquitoes also spread abundantly in the village. “It got to a point where locals were afraid to go out,” says 47-years-old Abdullah. “They were afraid of stagnant sewage water affecting their children, farms and livestock.”

With funding from the World Food Programme (WFP), CARE intervened in Taizz governorate with a Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) project to addresses immediate food needs through cash for work. The project promotes the construction and rehabilitation of key community assets and improves food security and resilience.

Through the project, locals of Jabal Habashi rehabilitated the road to their village and made much-needed income to buy essentials for their families. Also, the villagers of Aldheneeb village were supported by the project to rehabilitate the sewage system in their village.

“Every aspect of our lives that requires transportation, particularly helping patients reach urgent health care, is now much easier,” says Fatima. “As our challenges were eased, we became less anxious and even started to enjoy our free time.”

“Sewage system is an extremely important component of urban infrastructure that helps keep the urban environment clean and safe,” says Abdullah. “Locals of Aldheneeb village started filtering



sewage water and using it to grow some fruits. Our village is beautiful and clean now," he concludes.

Using the money, they received from the rehabilitation work, project participants were able to buy food, medicine and other essentials. Residents of the targeted villages hope that CARE continues to support the rehabilitation of vital community assets.