Sharing to Survive: The Role of Social Networks during the Yemen Crisis

Feb. 10, 2022 | 8:00 - 9:00 AM ET
Welcome & Important Instructions

- Select English or Arabic: Everyone must select a language!

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- Mute yourself when not speaking
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- اختار اللغة العربية أو الإنجليزية: يجب على الجميع اختيار لغة!

- أملأ الاستطلاع الظاهر على الشاشة أمامك

"chat" عرف عن نفسك باستخدام أداة الدردشة

- ملاحظات تذكيرية:

  - يرجى عدم صوت الميكروفون إن لم تكن تتكلم
  - يرجى التواصل مع سوزان (Corena) أو أميلي (Emily) باستخدام الدردشة

  إذا واجهت أي مشاكل تقنية
Today’s Panel

**Dr. Jeeyon Kim**
Senior Researcher, Mercy Corps

**Emily Henderson**
Humanitarian Adviser, FCDO

**Yazeed al-Jeddawy**
Fellow, Yemen Peace Forum and Independent Research Consultant

**Moderator**

**Dr. Jessica Anderson**
Senior Conflict Advisor, USAID’s Center for Resilience
AGENDA

• Welcome
• Presentation
  • Sharing to Survive: Investigating the Role of Social Networks during the Yemen Crisis
• Panel discussion
  • Lessons for Yemen, aid community and push to localize response
• Audience Q&A
Sharing to Survive: Investigating the Role of Social Networks during the Yemen Crisis
Data and methods

**Research Questions:**

- How are households relying on informal social protection networks to cope and survive in the protracted crisis?
- How has the experience of conflict, resource depletion, and the COVID-19 pandemic affected these networks?
- How is external assistance affecting informal social protection networks?
During the humanitarian crisis, informal support networks are key to people’s ability to cope and survive…

- Informal social protection long predates current crisis and aid actors’ arrival.
- A variety of resources are mobilized through informal support networks critical in crisis -- remittances from diaspora is key.
- *Intangible* forms of support are also significant for households’ resilience in the crisis.
- The degree to which households and individuals are socially connected mediated by number of factors including age, gender, social class, livelihood.

*People have learned to survive on the bare minimum… The social support system is the only thing that is holding [the] people together.*

— Female NGO worker, Taiz
However, these networks are under immense pressure given new and recurring challenges.

- At outset of conflict, material resources liberally shared in absence of external assistance
- The war, accompanying economic disruptions, a cascade of shocks and stresses, and an unprecedented scale of humanitarian need have all strained the extent to which households are able to mobilize support through their networks
- COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying public health measures further strained households and their resources

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*I do not ask anything even from my own brothers... Everyone is barely able to take care of their own needs. Even if you ask for help from relatives, they can only give you a small amount of money that does not cover your needs. Therefore, it is better if you rely on yourself and God will assist you.*

— Female government employee, Taiz
External assistance can (inadvertently) strain informal support networks.

The international community does not know about the social puzzle that we live in. Therefore, they have a picture that Yemenis are simple and care about each other. They think that people will voluntarily help each other and that they will not discriminate against each other.

— Female Humanitarian Worker, Taiz

- Aid helps to reduce demand on household resources and facilitate resource-sharing
- Aid community is missing the opportunity to better integrate social networks into programming, due to:
  1) limited contextual understanding;
  2) narrow and opaque selection criteria;
  3) unclear parameters on aid sharing.
So what can the aid community do differently?

1. Measure and monitor informal social protection networks

2. Design programs and community engagement strategies in ways that support, and at the very least do not undermine, informal social protection networks

3. Seek out and invest in opportunities to meaningfully partner with informal social protection efforts
PANEL DISCUSSION
This series explores key elements of resilience in protracted crises. Recent discussions focused on these concepts:

- continuous context analysis,
- strengthening violence prevention,
- supporting local market and social systems, and
- the role of social networks.

These discussions focus on how USAID investments can be better designed and delivered to protect current and future well-being in recurrent and protracted crises.

Discussion series info page - link in chat box
Stay tuned for more discussions in this series in 2022!
Thank You!

 شكراً!