

Securing basic medical care

Strengthening the health system in Yemen

Since the outbreak of the Yemeni civil war in 2015, the health system has broken down. However, even before the war started, almost all health facilities offered low-quality services, with unskilled staff and a poor infrastructure. Total health expenditure in Yemen is among the lowest in the region. Currently less than half of health facilities are functional. Salaries are not paid regularly. Therefore, the majority of Yemen's rural population has very limited access to formal health services. Limited confidence, no health awareness and the payment of user-fees additionally prevent people to use the services.

German Development Cooperation has supported the Yemeni health system since more than 20 years and continues to work with health authorities in the governorates to keep coherence and quality in the delivery of basic service.

Objective

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH supports Yemen since 2013. The project assists on regional level by providing basic health services to the population in selected governorates. It contributes to improve the quality of delivered services in health facilities, supports communities through the work of volunteers in remote areas and strengthens the capacity of governorate health authorities to manage the health-system.

Approach

The project supports the health offices of the governorates Sana'a, Al-Mahweet, Hajjah and Ibb. To this end, the project offers trainings, materials and equipment and small financial subsidies for health facilities, community health workers and health offices.

A national recognized quality improvement programme (QIP) combines in a step by step approach a series of trainings and the delivery of subsequently needed equipment. After successfully completing the programme the health facilities are receiving a quality certificate.

With the current war, the project focused on trainings especially in the areas of reproductive health, hygiene and infection control,

Context

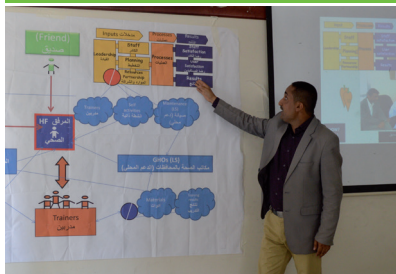
Health indicators have severely deteriorated in the last years. Essential health services are lacking. In addition, the already overstrained health system has to deal with the onset of epidemic diseases like the newly appearing cholera and diphtheria outbreaks. Currently, the health system is dependent on international assistance and humanitarian actors. Though support from outside is indispensable to assure a minimum of health care in Yemen, it seriously contributes to the fragmentation of a coherent national health system.



Vaccination in a well functioning first line health unit.

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Healthplaning at governorates



to combat cholera and to run the abovementioned QIP approach in difficult circumstances.

In addition, it supports a network of community health volunteers working in remote villages to stop a cholera outbreak. Outreach services and cholera-awareness campaigns in the surrounding villages are the main instruments.

The project cooperates with UNICEF and WHO as well as with local non-governmental organizations.



Female Nurse explains methods of anticonception

Results

- Up to now 142 governorate health facilities have been quality-certified since the start of the project and 40 facilities run by private midwives have been involved in a process of quality improvement. Currently, about 90 health facilities are engaged in the QIP programme. Other donors, such as the European Union and UNICEF, have adopted the project's concept or have benefited from the network of QIP trained facilitators and the standard quality guidelines.
- Because of the above, the health system has shown a quite good resilience with more than 90 percent of supported health facilities in the project areas continuing after the beginning of the war to offer basic services, especially for women and children.
- In addition, 180 volunteers in 122 communities ensure low-threshold access to modern contraceptives and information in health education including nutrition and first aid services.
- In cooperation with WHO and UNICEF cholera awareness, prevention and treatment trainings are provided. Outreach activities and the distribution of special hygiene material may have greatly contributed to stop further transmission of the disease.

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