

ENHANCING INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATION FOR HUMANITARIAN DEVELOPMENT: YEMEN AS A CASE STUDY

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Abstract.

This study investigates the improvement of inter-organizational collaboration for humanitarian development, with a particular emphasis on cash programming initiatives in Yemen. The study aims to boost the effectiveness and durability of these activities by addressing barriers to efficient collaboration between humanitarian organizations and government authorities. It assesses targeting tactics to guarantee that help reaches the neediest populations and examines how economic and political factors influence program execution. The study used a qualitative research design, relying on secondary data from publications, reports, surveys, and humanitarian databases to evaluate the effectiveness of cash transfer programs. Case studies of existing financial assistance programs in Yemen are also investigated to discover successful models and implementation issues. The findings show that, while cash-based assistance has greatly improved the living conditions of Yemen's most vulnerable inhabitants, structural difficulties such as fragmented coordination, political instability, and economic volatility limit its efficacy. The study emphasizes the necessity of inter-organizational collaboration, the implementation of unified social registration systems, and the use of intersectional targeting strategies to improve program inclusion and efficiency. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of enhanced governance and accountability structures to ensure the long-term impact of cash-based programming programs. The study suggests that improving inter-organizational collaboration, developing new targeting strategies, and addressing governance deficiencies are critical to increasing the resilience and sustainability of humanitarian operations in Yemen. Future studies should focus on assessing the long-term effects of cash-based programs, as well as investigating the role of digital alternatives in increasing assistance distribution transparency and efficiency. This study adds to the greater discussion on humanitarian relief by giving actionable ideas for improving cash programming in conflict-affected areas.

Keywords:

Enhancing; Inter-organizational collaboration; Humanitarian development; Yemen.

1. Introduction

Social assistance or safety net programs are governmental efforts designed to offer financial and material aid to individuals and families encountering economic challenges. The overarching objectives are to diminish poverty, mitigate inequality, and uphold fundamental living standards for vulnerable groups. These initiatives provide various forms of assistance, including cash transfers, food aid, housing subsidies, healthcare benefits, and educational

support. The primary aim is to shield individuals from severe poverty, assist in fulfilling their basic requirements, and advance social welfare and economic stability (Zhao & Wang, 2021).

Yemen's history of cash assistance dates back to the 1960s, with government programs beginning in the 1990s and humanitarian organizations significantly scaling cash aid after the conflict began. In 2016, Yemen had the highest global percentage of aid distributed as cash, underscoring the viability of this approach. Funding for social assistance comes from a mix of humanitarian organizations, development-focused groups, and government bodies, with traditional Yemeni institutions also contributing. Over the years, these programs have evolved, particularly between 1990 and 2015, responding to events such as the 2011 protests that exacerbated vulnerabilities. While the system remains underdeveloped, efforts to provide unconditional cash transfers to the poorest households have become an integral component (Ruta Nimkar, n.d.).

Despite its achievements, Yemen's social safety net faces significant obstacles that hinder the effectiveness of its programs. Issues such as political instability, economic crises, security challenges, and inefficiencies in program implementation continue to disrupt the delivery of aid (Brune et al., 2022). Challenges persist, including gaps in coverage, insufficient targeting, and a focus on long-term prospects that often overlooks immediate aid for impoverished and vulnerable populations (Al-Iryani et al, 2017; Tumusiime, 2013).

International organizations play a critical role in supporting Yemen's aid programs. Groups like the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Bank, and UNICEF provide essential resources, including financial aid, food security initiatives, and educational support for children. These interventions aim not only to address immediate needs but also to enhance community resilience over time. A broader focus on multifaceted support and targeted assistance to the most affected areas has emerged as a priority, underscoring the need for both short-term relief and long-term capacity-building efforts to strengthen Yemen's social safety net (Carter & Harvey, 2023).

According to OCHA (2024), humanitarian, social protection, and development groups are increasingly using cash and vouchers to help people in Yemen. For example, from January to September 2023, these groups provided significant cash and voucher assistance to vulnerable populations, aiding 2.52 million people with \$139 million in cash aid. The Food Security and Agriculture Cluster emerged as a key player, reaching the largest number of beneficiaries through these programs. Additionally, multi-purpose cash assistance supported 256,000 people with \$23.88 million distributed over several rounds. Meanwhile, social protection and development organizations reached an impressive 10.27 million individuals, disbursing \$128 million in aid.

However, significant challenges hinder the optimal use of cash assistance in Yemen. A lack of coordination between humanitarian and government aid systems creates inefficiencies and gaps in assistance. Overlapping programs make it difficult to identify and prioritize the neediest individuals, leaving some without adequate support. This fragmentation also leads to resource misallocation, with some areas receiving excessive aid while others remain underserved. Moreover, the absence of unified planning undermines risk mitigation in Yemen's volatile economic and political environment, including issues such as currency fluctuations and ongoing conflict. Enhanced collaboration and strategic planning are essential to ensure that cash programs maximize their impact, efficiently allocate resources, and better address the complex challenges facing Yemen (Ruta Nimkar, n.d.).

In regard to institutional theory, established patterns of norms, laws, and behaviors influence the activities and structures of organizations in a particular setting. It stresses how external influences, like cultural norms, legal frameworks, and social expectations, affect

organizational behavior and decision-making. Understanding how these institutional factors operate allows scholars and practitioners to better examine organizational dynamics, such as how they obtain legitimacy, adapt to change, and interact with one another within respective areas (Lammers & Garcia, 2014).

The institutions, such as government entities and humanitarian groups, are critical in structuring actions in complex situations like Yemen, where inefficiencies in aid delivery are common. To promote inter-organizational collaboration in cash programs, institutional frameworks must be strengthened through clear communication, common goals, and the creation of defined protocols. Furthermore, fostering trust through regular stakeholder involvement and joint training can help align the goals of multiple groups, improving the effectiveness and efficiency of aid delivery under difficult circumstances (Lammers & Garcia, 2014).

This study focuses on addressing a significant gap in enhancing the effectiveness of cash programming initiatives in Yemen. By refining the mechanisms through which assistance is delivered, the research aims to ensure that aid reaches the most vulnerable populations. It also investigates the economic and political challenges that hinder the success of these initiatives, including issues such as currency devaluation and ongoing conflict. Furthermore, the study seeks to propose actionable measures to mitigate these challenges, thereby promoting the resilience and sustainability of cash programming efforts in Yemen.

The primary objective of this research is to improve the efficiency and resilience of cash programming initiatives designed for humanitarian development in Yemen. To achieve this, the study will identify and address barriers to effective coordination between humanitarian organizations and government agencies. It will also evaluate the targeting strategies employed to ensure aid reaches the most at-risk individuals and households. Additionally, the research will analyze how economic and political factors impact the implementation and outcomes of these initiatives and propose strategies to overcome these barriers, ensuring sustainable and impactful interventions.

As a type of social support, cash aid is defined as direct, regular, non-contributory payments given to qualified individuals. It is a distribution strategy. Yemen's financial aid delivery is beset by a number of challenges, such as insufficient experience and unreliable middlemen, inadequate infrastructure, cultural differences, and exorbitant interest rates (AboHulaika, 2016). Aid distribution is made more difficult by the ongoing violence, as local organizations such as the Yemen Relief and Reconstruction Foundation (YRRF) have to negotiate rival armed checkpoints in order to distribute aid (Kimball & Jumaan, 2020a). However, theft, corruption, and the use of aid as a weapon of war undermine these efforts' efficacy (Elayah & Fentiman, 2021). By placing a high value on stakeholder ownership, political neutrality, flexibility, and the significance of its interventions, the Yemen Social Fund for Development (SFD) has been successful in providing help despite these obstacles (Lamis Al-Iryani, 2013).

Nevertheless, numerous important factors have been found by research on the resilience and efficiency of financial programming. To increase the efficacy of cash transfer programs, coordination measures have been suggested, such as the creation of a National Vulnerability Insurance Fund (Ben & Margaret, 2022). It has been discovered that targeting techniques, such as taking climate risk into account when designing programs, improve the resilience of households receiving cash transfers (Asfaw, 2018). The success of cash transfer programs has been found to be hampered by political and economic obstacles, including inadequate funding and administrative problems (Ben & Margaret, 2022). But these initiatives can have a big impact on household resilience, especially when it comes to risk management,

connections to the community, and food security (Asfaw, 2018). Positive effects of early cash transfer programs have also been demonstrated.

According to Lotfi (2016) and (Akl et al., 2015) various models of coordination are identified, including the cluster approach and the 4Ws mapping tool, and they suggest that information and management/directive coordination can improve health system inputs and access to health services. Balcik et al. (2010) emphasizes the need for effective coordination practices. Nevertheless, there is little data to support the efficacy of these models. Lotfi (2016) emphasizes even more how crucial it is to contrast different coordination models' efficacy and efficiency.

Moreover, effective coordination is crucial for enhancing the efficiency and resilience of monetary programs. (Asfaw, 2018) emphasizes that well-designed program elements can significantly mitigate the effects of cash transfer programs on key economic indicators and productivity, both of which are essential for resilience development. De Janvry & Sadoulet (2006) and (Sadoulet & de Janvry, 2004) further highlight the importance of precise targeting and calibration procedures to improve the efficiency of conditional cash transfer programs. Also, (Roelen et al., 2017) underscores the value of incorporating "cash plus" components, such as cross-sectoral linkages and supplementary support, to optimize program outcomes. These findings collectively stress the need for collaboration and alignment among stakeholders to maximize the success of cash programming initiatives.

Based on Alfars et al. (2019), the use of social registry systems (SRS) in targeting beneficiaries for cash assistance was evaluated. They found that SRS, which maintains comprehensive databases of households and their socio-economic characteristics, can improve targeting accuracy and equity by providing a transparent and standardized method for identifying beneficiaries. However, challenges such as data accuracy and privacy concerns need to be addressed to ensure inclusivity and fairness.

Furthermore, studies by Anderson et al. (2020) and Kabeer et al. (2019) advocate for intersectional approaches to targeting in cash programming initiatives. They argue that considering intersecting dimensions of vulnerability, such as gender, age, disability, and ethnicity, is essential for addressing systemic inequalities and ensuring inclusivity. By adopting intersectional perspectives, targeting methods can better capture the diverse needs and experiences of crisis-affected populations, thereby promoting equity and social justice.

2. Research Method

The research focuses on coordination mechanisms, targeting tactics, and economic and political issues affecting cash programs. This review paper adopts a qualitative research design, examining secondary data from publications, reports, surveys, and humanitarian databases to analyze the efficacy of cash transfer programs. This literature study differs from systematic reviews in that it does not adhere to any set guidelines (Sony & Naik, 2020).

The research was manually conducted using databases such as Google Scholar, Springer, and DOAJ, with a focus on original papers. Keywords used in the study included enhancing, inter-organizational collaboration, humanitarian development, and Yemen. The eligibility criteria for selecting sources required full papers and relevant publications, which were scanned and analyzed thematically to identify critical patterns and themes. The title, abstract, and full-text articles were carefully reviewed to ensure their relevance for making necessary assessments and obtaining the final results for this review paper.

Furthermore, case studies of existing cash assistance programs were used to highlight successful models and identify shortcomings in implementation. This method provides a

thorough understanding of the effectiveness of cash transfer projects and the obstacles they encounter in complex settings.

3. Results and Discussion

The cash aid initiatives in Yemen have been cited as successful models for giving direct help to poor populations amidst persistent violence and economic hardships. These initiatives demonstrate the effectiveness of unconditional cash transfers in reducing poverty and meeting basic needs. However, the implementation of these programs has suffered from a number of flaws, including difficulties in effectively selecting clients, delays in grant disbursement, and a lack of coordination among various assistance organizations. Such problems impede the overall impact of financial assistance and highlight the need for enhanced operational strategies and monitoring methods to increase efficacy and target those most in need (Al-Iryani et al., 2013).

Nevertheless, the delivery of humanitarian aid in conflict-affected Yemen faces significant economic and political challenges. Key obstacles to humanitarian access include security threats, bureaucratic restrictions, and indirect constraints, all of which are heavily influenced by political issues (Moslehi et al., 2015). The looting of aid supplies has significantly impeded the ability of local NGOs to deliver aid effectively (Elayah & Fenttiman, 2021). However, the Yemen Relief and Reconstruction Foundation has managed to navigate these challenges through an informal network of local volunteers ((Kimball & Jumaan, 2020; Sowers & Weinthal, 2021).

Inter-organizational collaboration is critical for effective humanitarian aid delivery, enabling coordination at global, national, and local levels (Lee, 2020). In the humanitarian sector, such collaboration enhances the efficacy of public services and facilitates teamwork during emergencies (Fard & Papier, 2021). Effective coordination, supported by appropriate laws, administrative frameworks, and trust dynamics, is essential for delivering services like water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in post-disaster phases (Bellizzi et al., 2021; Fathalikhani et al., 2018). Despite the benefits, challenges such as varying motivations and organizational dynamics hinder collaboration (Moshtari & Gonçalves, 2012; Ngamassi et al., 2010).

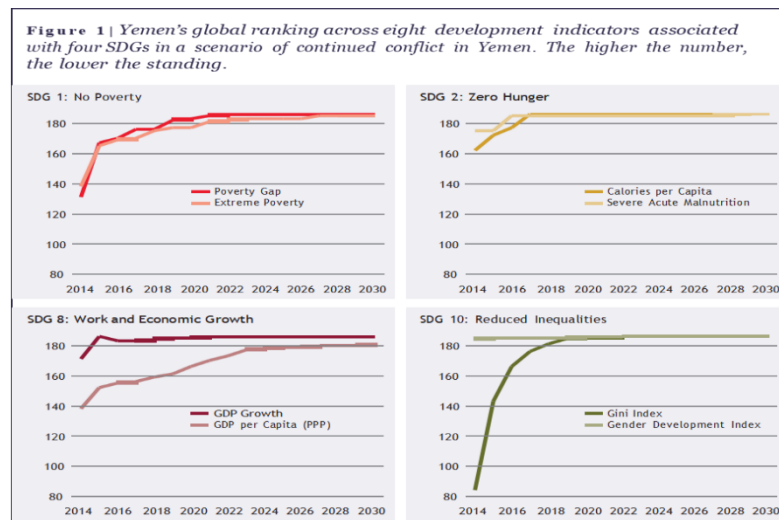
The implementation and outcomes of cash programming initiatives are profoundly affected by currency devaluation, conflict dynamics, and political instability. Cash transfers have been shown to mitigate the adverse nutritional impact of conflict on child malnutrition, with a significant reduction in weight-for-height z-scores observed (Ecker et al., 2024). Cash-plus programs in protracted crisis settings aim to improve livelihoods by providing cash alongside services and assets, although more evidence on outcomes and impacts is needed. These programs must address specific drivers of vulnerability, moving beyond individual interventions to tackle structural causes (Lind et al., 2023). Furthermore, the governance and social accountability of cash transfer programs are shaped by political economy factors, underscoring the importance of context-specific understandings (Nicola Jones et al., 2016).

While cash assistance is proposed as a superior alternative to food aid due to its efficiency and effectiveness in reaching vulnerable populations and reducing risks associated with looting and war economies (Elayah et al., 2022), concerns remain regarding accountability practices of local NGOs in Yemen. Improved fund management policies are necessary to ensure effective accountability (Abdullah Ahmed et al., 2022).

According to a report by the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (2021), from April 2019 to March 2021, the Yemen Country Office (YCO) spent roughly \$296.8 million on UNICEF projects. These funds were allocated to cash assistance and social support programs, health and nutrition services, and WASH activities. The YCO implemented the Harmonized

Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) system, which includes direct payments to suppliers, expenditure reimbursements, and advance payments to partners, ensuring resource efficiency and accountability.

Yemen’s economic challenges exacerbate the humanitarian crisis. The country faces the worst levels of poverty, significant gender development imbalances, and severe malnutrition, with the fewest calories per person and the second-largest decline in economic activity from 2014 to 2019, as shown in figure 1. Unemployment remains a pressing issue, particularly among youth, leading to heightened social unrest and instability. Economic indicators reflect growing budget deficits, excessive inflation, and increasing reliance on external aid. The World Bank reports highlight Yemen’s fluctuating GDP growth, negative growth rates, and deteriorating public finances due to ongoing conflict.



Source : By United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) , 2019

According to data in Figure (2) the governorates of Ma'rib, Al-Jawf, Sa'dah, Aden, and Al-Mahra have the largest percentage of non-functioning health facilities, while Marib, Al-Jawf, Al-Baida, and Sa'dah reported the lowest percentage of health facilities working at full capacity. The percentage of HF's without standard medical equipment is thought to be between 91% and 93%, and those that do have it are using antiquated technology. Additionally, 76% of Yemeni healthcare facilities and 87% of medical centers lack MIS22.

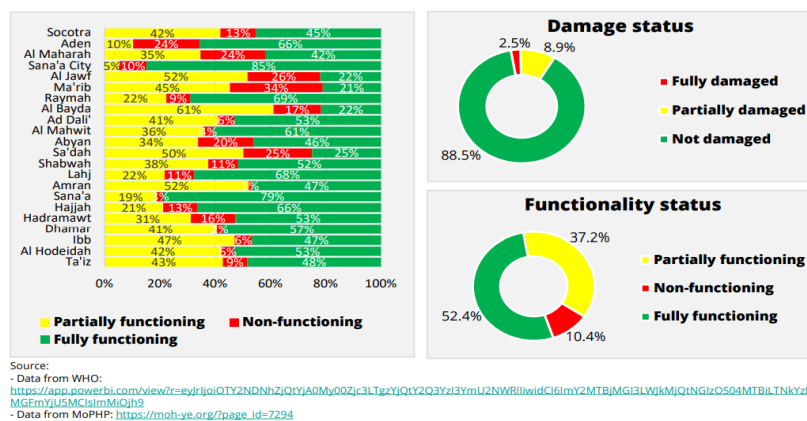


Figure 2: HF's functionality and damage status by governorate, 2022.

Humanitarian actors in Yemen use surveys and assessments to evaluate targeting strategies and coordination mechanisms, focusing on critical needs like food, water, shelter, healthcare, and protection. These assessments help prioritize interventions and allocate resources effectively, ensuring accountability to donors and affected populations. They also contribute to inter-cluster coordination, ensuring comprehensive and coordinated responses to the crisis. These activities are essential for ensuring aid reaches those most in need and improving intervention efficiency.

The World Food Programme (2022) of the Yemen Crisis II has revealed key findings on the humanitarian response in Yemen. The evaluation assessed the effectiveness of coordination, scope, methodology, community engagement, and aid worker perceptions. It found that the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs) were not effective in addressing needs assessment, strategic planning, advocacy, and monitoring. The evaluation also highlighted limited consultative processes with the affected population in aid strategy design and prioritization. The evaluation also highlighted the importance of understanding aid worker perspectives to improve intervention effectiveness. However, data limitations were identified, posing challenges in accessing complete datasets. These findings offer valuable insights for future interventions and coordination efforts.

Cash intervention	Refugee individuals reached	IDP individuals reached	USD in millions
MPCA	17,873	502,172	21.5
Case management cash	1,694	-	1.2
Emergency cash	2,272	36,655	1.6
Winterization cash	11,927	58,852	1.5
Cash for shelter	-	46,393	6.0
Assisted voluntary return cash	1,422	-	0.3
ID cash	-	3,077	0.09

Figure 3: (Achievements 2023 ; UNHCR Yemen - Cash Based Interventions 2024).

According to the UNHCR (2024), it employs various cash-based interventions to tackle socio-economic vulnerabilities and alleviate protection concerns, aiming to assist affected families in meeting basic needs and avoiding detrimental coping strategies. These interventions have proven effective in mitigating harmful practices such as reducing expenditures on essentials, skipping rent payments, accumulating debt, relocating to inferior shelters, preventing children from attending school, and resorting to begging.

Cash assistance has demonstrated a significant improvement in living conditions and a reduction in the adoption of harmful coping mechanisms. These interventions have reached a substantial number of individuals, including refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), offering support for case management, emergencies, winterization, shelter, and assisted voluntary return. With over 85% of recipients preferring cash assistance, it not only fosters a sense of normalcy, independence, and dignity but also stimulates the local economy by enabling families to patronize local businesses.

Moreover, cash interventions effectively address protection concerns, reach vulnerable individuals, facilitate access to documentation for vulnerable IDPs and IDP returnees, and are

supported by positive impacts observed in PDM exercises, indicating a decrease in harmful coping mechanisms.

The research emphasizes the importance of cash programs in Yemen's humanitarian landscape, describing it as a critical instrument for addressing vulnerabilities in conflict-affected areas. Cash interventions, such as multipurpose cash assistance and tailored programs, have been effective in lowering maladaptive coping patterns and improving community resilience.

However, a lack of cooperation between humanitarian and governmental agencies has resulted in inefficiencies and resource misallocation, compromising the program's overall effectiveness. Addressing these difficulties would necessitate a multidimensional approach, including more inter-organizational coordination, the creation of a single social registration system, and an emphasis on intersectional targeting tactics to assure inclusion. To maximize the impact of cash programming programs in Yemen, governance must be strengthened, accountability mechanisms improved, and a context-specific understanding of economic and political constraints adopted.

The study's findings underscore the transforming influence of cash-based aid on the lives of Yemen's poorest communities. However, systemic issues such as fragmented coordination, political instability, and economic volatility severely hinder the effectiveness of these programs. The study emphasizes the need of cross-organizational collaboration in improving the efficiency and resilience of cash programming efforts. Effective coordination mechanisms, supported by suitable laws, administrative frameworks, and trust dynamics, are critical for providing post-disaster services such as water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) (Bellizzi et al., 2021; Fathalikhani et al., 2018).

Currency devaluation, conflict dynamics, and political instability all have a significant impact on the execution and outcomes of cash transfer programs, according to the study. Cash transfers have been demonstrated to reduce the negative nutritional impact of conflict on child malnutrition, with a significant decrease in weight-for-height z-scores (Ecker et al., 2024). Cash-plus initiatives in protracted crisis settings seek to enhance livelihoods by providing cash in addition to services and assets, while additional information on outcomes and benefits is required. These initiatives must address particular determinants of vulnerability, going beyond individual interventions to address structural causes (Lind et al., 2023) .

Political economics aspects influence the governance and social accountability of cash transfer programs, emphasizing the significance of context-specific expertise (Nicola Jones et al., 2016). While cash assistance is proposed as a superior alternative to food aid due to its efficiency and effectiveness in reaching vulnerable populations and mitigating risks associated with looting and war economies (Elayah et al., 2022), concerns remain about the accountability practices of local NGOs in Yemen. Better money management policies are required to achieve effective accountability (Abdullah Ahmed et al., 2022).

The study underlines the significance of cash programs in Yemen's humanitarian landscape, citing them as an important tool for managing vulnerabilities in conflict-affected areas. Cash interventions, such as multifunctional cash assistance and personalized programs, have been shown to reduce maladaptive coping habits and increase community resilience. However, a lack of coordination between humanitarian and governmental institutions has resulted in inefficiencies and resource misallocation, jeopardizing the program's overall effectiveness. Addressing these issues will involve a multifaceted approach, including more inter-organizational collaboration, the establishment of a unified social registration system, and a focus on intersectional targeting methods to ensure inclusion. To optimize the impact of cash programming initiatives in Yemen, governance must be reinforced, accountability mechanisms enhanced, and a context-specific understanding of economic and political constraints embraced.

The findings reveal that, while cash-based assistance has transformed the lives of Yemen's poor communities, its effectiveness is limited by structural issues such as fragmented coordination, political instability, and economic volatility. To address these challenges, the report recommends improving inter-organizational collaboration, using new targeting frameworks such as social registration systems, and reducing governance and accountability gaps. By prioritizing these strategies, stakeholders may increase the resilience and sustainability of humanitarian operations, ensuring that aid reaches those in most need.

4. Conclusion

The findings show that, while cash-based assistance has had a transformative impact on the lives of Yemen's disadvantaged communities, systemic difficulties such as fragmented coordination, political instability, and economic volatility limit its effectiveness. To overcome these impediments, the paper suggests strengthening inter-organizational collaboration, implementing innovative targeting frameworks such as social registration systems, and closing governance and accountability gaps. By prioritizing these techniques, stakeholders may improve the resilience and sustainability of humanitarian operations, ensuring that relief reaches those who require it the most.

Future research should concentrate on building credible procedures for analyzing the long-term effects of cash-based programs on community resilience and economic stability. Furthermore, looking at the role of digital solutions, such as blockchain-based systems, in boosting transparency and efficiency in aid distribution could yield useful insights. Expanding research to compare Yemen's approach to other conflict-affected locations may also reveal excellent practices, providing scalable solutions for larger humanitarian situations.

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