

# UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION REPORT 2009

## YEMEN

### **PRESERVING THE PRIVACY OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN SA'ADA'S OVERCROWDED IDP CAMPS**

UNICEF conducted a rapid assessment of the humanitarian needs faced by the internally displaced persons (IDPs) dwelling at the camps dotted around Sa'ada city, in northern Yemen. Renewed fighting between the Government and a rebel force, called the Faithful Youth, has resulted in growing numbers of families fleeing the conflict and seeking refuge in the camps managed by the Yemeni Red Crescent Society.

Humanitarian needs have increased due to the influx of large numbers of newly displaced families sharing the same limited resources in overcrowded camps. In Al-Anad camp, 475 families, consisting of 3,250 people, were occupying 570 tents. In Sam camp, 130 families, consisting of 700 people, were occupying 138 tents.

UNICEF's rapid assessment highlighted the need for more appropriate and convenient sanitation facilities, especially for women and children. It was found that the number of latrines available in Sa'ada's two main IDP camps was insufficient and that their location did not preserve the privacy of women and children. The absence of some form of lighting, which submerged the camps in total darkness as soon as the sun sets, the lack of safety as well as local traditions prevented women from using the latrines at night. Young children, however, unable to wait until the next morning, had to go in the open behind their tents. This situation created a lot of suffering and sanitation problems.

UNICEF in collaboration with the Yemeni Red Crescent Society supported the construction in the two camps of 32 latrines and 5 laundering basins for the exclusive use of women and children. The new facilities were built close enough to the tents to ensure the necessary privacy and guarantee the safety of both women and children. The old existing latrines were reserved for men and sufficed to meet the needs of the male population.

The new latrines were constructed with the help of skilled and unskilled IDP workers, providing them with an opportunity to generate some income for their families. This work was accompanied by hygiene promotion activities to improve the cleanliness of the camps and personal hygiene.

UNICEF also provided warm clothing and blankets for children to face the cold winter nights. This intervention provided women and their children with all-time access to latrines, promoted personal hygiene and improved children's conditions.