**Key focus:**

**School Rehabilitation**

**Situation Overview**

The response following the Al-Dhale crisis is ongoing with no reported incidents over the last month. The governorate is accessible and key emergency response include the following:

- 4 mobile clinics are providing integrated services in the four targeted districts of Dhale, Al-Hossain, Jehaaf, and Al-Azareq. These were assessed as having a relatively higher number of global acute malnutrition (GAM) cases of children in the rapid assessment from 18th - 20th March 2014.

- Support for WASH is also ongoing with repairs and maintenance to four wells, which will help address part of the challenging water situation in Al-Dhale.

Tension remains high in Amran. The cluster under UNICEF leadership is finalizing the revised contingency plans, including preparedness to address the impact of major military escalation by armed groups.

Furthermore, children continued to be victims of grave child rights violations during the first quarter of 2014, according to the UNICEF supported UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting of grave child rights violations. At least 75 incidents of grave violations affecting 62 children (50 boys and 12 girls) were reported and verified during the period, including 17 attacks on schools and hospitals; and at least 18 boys were documented as being used by parties to the conflict.

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**Highlights:**

- A polio campaign this month reached the highest ever numbers of children in the hard to access governorates of Sa’ada and Al Jawf.

- 63,875 conflict affected children are benefiting from improved physical environment of their schools under the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Accelerated Grant Programme.

- 16 rural villages with a population of 4,681 have been declared open defecation free (ODF) in 5 districts of Taiz Governorate.

Girls are able to study again in their school in Sa’ada. After the conflict there was nothing left, no walls, no doors, no windows.
In Mareb Governorate, the local community was involved in providing alternative spaces for students, so a parent volunteered his unfinished house.

Although Yemen has seen significant improvements in education access over recent decades, the country still faces serious challenges in education access and quality. As of 2013, more than 24 per cent of school-age children in Yemen are not enrolled in basic education and the gender parity is as low as 0.84. In terms of quality, Yemen ranked the lowest among the 36 countries that participated in the Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) in 2007.

These challenges have been further exacerbated by the impact of conflicts and social and political unrest since 2011. In terms of infrastructure, armed confrontations in many areas in Yemen have left about 596 schools completely or partially damaged; over 110 schools were occupied either by displaced families, gunmen or armed forces; and many other schools were looted.

Key focus:

School Rehabilitation

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Although the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Education Cluster member agencies made efforts to reduce the impact of the conflicts on education through providing temporary learning spaces, advocating to absorb IDP students in host community schools, and implementing simple rehabilitation in affected schools, over 150,000 children still lacked access to safe and suitable learning environments. Student absenteeism, especially among girls, increased as a result of unsafe and poor conditions of schools or having to attend classes in tents that were too hot for them.

With an accelerated grant programme from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), UNICEF and the Education in Emergency Committee (EiE) of MoE prioritized 139 affected schools in six governorates where children were either studying under unsafe conditions in unsuitable learning environments or traveling long distances to attend schools. Rehabilitation of these schools included restoration of walls and roofs, installation of windows and doors, renovation of latrines and isolating girls’ latrines from boys’.

Given the urgency of the needs in affected schools and the tight schedule of the GPE grant programme, rehabilitation work had to continue through the school year. In order not to negatively impact children’s schooling, UNICEF worked on three fronts to keep children going to schools; temporary or alternative learning spaces were provided in some schools such as in Sa’ada and Mareb; some schools made arrangements to close parts of the school and function in two shifts or to do the rehabilitation work outside of study hours and take a longer time to finish; and in some schools that were heavily damaged, coordination with neighbouring schools was made to accommodate the students in an afternoon shift, as in the district of Arhab.

As of end of April, 124 of the 139 schools have been completed and handed over to the Education Offices, while the rest are expected to be completed within the coming month. A total of 63,875 children (41 per cent girls) are benefiting from improvements in the physical environment of the conflict affected schools in Lahj, Aden, Abyan, Sana’a, Mareb and Sa’ada Governorates.

Through engaging local authorities, local communities and parents’ councils in discussing and finding alternative places for children to learn, UNICEF has been promoting the value of education and the need to protect schools during armed conflicts. Advocacy is continuing with MoE to take a more proactive role to prevent attacks on schools.
Education:
45 latrines have been constructed in 13 schools, with a further 30 being maintained in 5 schools in 4 target districts in Taiz to improve student retention, especially for girls.

18,000 children are now benefitting from the rehabilitation of 30 schools in southern governorates supported by the Government of Japan.

Health:
An estimated 4,764,506 children (97% of target) under the age of 5 were reached with oral polio vaccine across the country.

In Sa’ada Governorate, which has been affected by armed conflict and remains difficult to access, 157,922 children (92 per cent of target) were vaccinated, while in Al Jawf, 76,953 children (92 per cent of the target) were vaccinated, which are the highest ever reported figures in both governorates.

WASH:
Over 6,000 families were provided with monthly hygiene kits in Amran, Hajja and Sa’ada, while over 8,000 kits were provided to students at school.

3,493 IDPs now have a safe daily water supply after a water network including 13 water points was completed in Harad district.

Water quality is being monitored in 21 villages in Hodeidah with the results shared with hygiene promoters to increase promotion of the safe water chain.

8 open wells are being rehabilitated in 8 villages in Hajjah to protect the water from contamination and improve access to safe drinking water. Water management committees have been formed and the members will be trained in basic management.

Nutrition:
Approximately 1,000 health workers and volunteers have been trained on the integrated community management of acute malnutrition package, centrally, in Ibb and in Taiz.

22,302 children under 5 were screened for malnutrition; 6,879 through health facilities and 15,423 through community volunteers. 1,366 children were also screened by community volunteers in affected areas of Sana’a and Amran despite the ongoing conflict.

154 community leaders have also received training and workshops on communication for development and the community approach to addressing malnutrition in Hodeidah.

Marginalized groups known as Muhamasheen are now being provided with integrated health and nutrition services by the health office in Al Dhale as well as mobile clinics in affected districts of both Al Dhale and Aden.

Interagency Collaboration
Preliminary results from the second SMART survey in Hodeidah reveal a significant improvement in global acute malnutrition rate.
A second SMART survey has also been launched in the lowlands, mountains and hills of Taiz and Hajjah.

A child protection / gender based violence coordination and referral mechanism is being set up to strengthen services in the north and will be initiated in Haradh and Sa’ada.
Child Protection:

50,925 people (including 15,099 girls and 25,675 boys) received mine risk education under the leadership of YEMAC and in partnership with wide range of local NGOs and MoSAL in Hajjah and Governorates. In addition, staff and volunteers were trained by YEMAC and Intersos in Abyan and Hajjah on how to deliver messages to community on protection from risks.

5,255 children (1,953 girls, 3,302 boys) received psychosocial support services through community and school based child friendly spaces (CFss) in the governorates of Abyan, Sa‘ada, and Sana’a organized by DRC, MoSAL and Mercy Corps. A total of 558 community members, including 186 girls and 179 boys), received awareness raising sessions on a variety of child protection issues such as child marriage, trafficking and violence against children by MoSAL in Sa‘ada Governorate. 24 community volunteers were also trained by Intersos on CPiE, psychosocial support and how to run the child friendly spaces, detect the vulnerable children and refer them to the suitable services.

28 unaccompanied migrant children, all boys, were assisted with safe voluntary return to Ethiopia in April thanks to a joint collaborative effort between UNICEF, DRC and IOM.

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