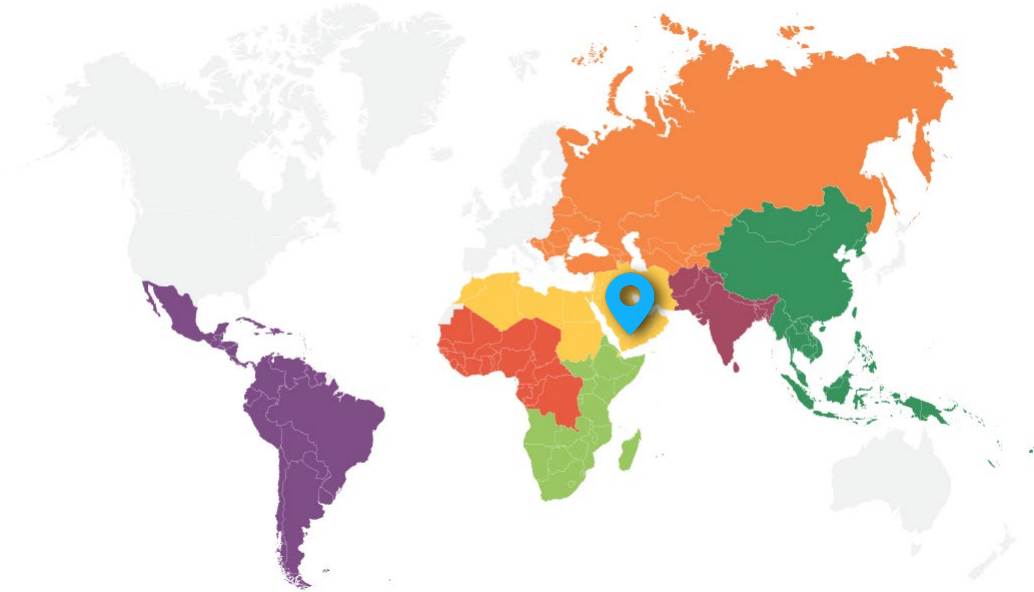


Explosive Ordnance Risk Education for Persons with Hearing Impairments in Yemen



Yemen



The conflict in Yemen has led to widespread contamination by landmines and explosive remnants, posing significant risks to children, especially those with disabilities. Recognizing the need for tailored Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE), UNICEF Yemen launched a targeted programme for children with hearing impairments across eight governorates. In partnership with the Yemeni Executive Mine Action Center (YEMAC) and the Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Deaf, the programme developed sign language-adapted EORE materials and trained Trainers of Trainers (ToTs). From 2019 to 2023, the initiative reached over 31,000 individuals through inter-personal sessions. Approximately 1.5 million people have been reached through mass messaging, including through TV and street posters. Subject to funding, UNICEF aims to expand the programme to include all children with disabilities, and to reach more governorates.

Background

Since the onset of the conflict in Yemen, the landscape has become perilous, with Explosive Ordnance (EOs) contaminating 20 out of 22 governorates. The statistics paint a grim picture — a child is killed or maimed every day by EOs (Civilian Impact Monitoring Project, UNHCR, 2023). Children with disabilities face even greater dangers. Since Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) campaigns were not adapted for children with disabilities, they lack access to critical information that could protect them from these hidden threats. Recognizing this gap, UNICEF has taken steps to ensure that EORE reaches all children, starting with a targeted programme in 2019 to reach children with hearing impairments.

Strategy and implementation

In partnership with the Yemeni Executive Mine Action Center (YEMAC) and the Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Deaf (hereafter; the Association), from 2019 to 2023, UNICEF implemented an EORE programme targeting children with hearing impairments across eight governorates. The overall cost of the programme was around USD 30 to 40K.

Through consultations with stakeholders, and through surveys, disability disaggregated data, including identification of locations with large numbers of persons with hearing impairments, was collected.

The Association assigned sign language experts and young adolescents with hearing impairments to develop EORE messages and materials adapted for persons with hearing impairments. The Association also helped design a training manual and select and train ToTs. The trainings were cascaded by the ToTs in line with the manual.



A street poster shares life-saving messages on how to recognize and stay safe from explosive ordnance - with illustrations and sign language.

The face-to-face EORE sessions provided in sign language were attended by children with hearing impairments. The children were usually accompanied by their relatives and friends, which helped integrate them into the broader campaign and fostered interaction between those with and without disabilities.

Hadeel, a 16-year-old student with hearing impairment, learned about the dangers associated with EOs and how to communicate these dangers through sign language.

“Through various illustrative tools translated into sign language, we raise awareness about the dangers of explosive remnants of war.” “I am very happy that I received awareness. It enhanced my knowledge and showed me how to avoid risks.”



Hadeel (16) raises awareness about explosive ordnance for students with hearing impairments.

The face-to-face sessions were complemented by media campaigns targeting entire communities across the 8 governorates, ensuring inclusivity reaching children with hearing impairments as well as other children.

Progress and results

As a result of the programme, there is an adapted training manual for ToTs and EORE materials in sign language. The comprehensive outreach has reached over 31,000 individuals, empowering children with disabilities to become advocates for safety within their communities. The programme demonstrates that when children with disabilities are meaningfully included, they can actively lead and drive change rather than remain passive recipients of information.

The programme may also have contributed to prevent incidents of children with hearing impairments maimed or killed by EO. However, further analysis and research is needed to determine the impact of the programme on injury prevention among children with hearing impairments.

Lessons learned

A thorough review of activities conducted under the programme, as well as surveys to assess its effectiveness, has not been conducted.

The partnership between UNICEF and YEMAC includes targets to reach children with disabilities. The reporting tools do not include details on whether the beneficiaries were with hearing impairments. Nevertheless, the Association reports to UNICEF on the number of beneficiaries reached who have hearing impairments.

The Association, under MoSAL, is the main source of information when it comes to EO incidents impacting those with hearing impairments. The Yemen MRM is another source of information. However, the MRM team does not consistently capture details on whether victims of EO were with hearing impairments.

Way forward and potential application

The exclusion of children with disabilities from traditional risk education contributes to their heightened vulnerability. There is a pressing need to expand EORE programmes beyond reaching children with hearing impairments in 8 governorates to reach all children, including those with different types of disabilities, and to other governorates contaminated by EO.

UNICEF Yemen plans to expand the EORE programme beyond persons with hearing impairments. However, these are on hold due to the financial situation.

Related links

[“Empowering Change: Children with disabilities join UNICEF to raise awareness on Explosive Ordnance Risk Education in Yemen.”](#)

[“Resilience in the face of adversity: A Landmine survivor’s steps to making a difference.”](#)

[“Aswan: the Cinderella of Yemen: In Yemen, nearly 1.2 million children live in 31 active conflict zones in areas witnessing heavy, war-related violence.”](#)

This case study has been developed as a part of [“Disability Inclusion in Action: Lessons Learned and Good Practices from Disability Inclusive Humanitarian Initiatives”](#)

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