



## WASH FOR WOMEN IN YEMEN



REACHING PEOPLE IN NEED

## WASH in Yemen

Yemen is one of the most water scarce countries in the world and with dwindling freshwater resources due to unregulated & excessive pumping of groundwater Yemen is widely expected by experts to run of water in around 20 years. This demand is driven by several reasons including high consumption, mismanagement of resources and rapid population growth of the country (11 to 23 million) which is expected to double in 2037 to 48 million. Prior to the 2011 political crisis, surveys assessed that 4.5 million children were living in homes that do not have access to an improved water source and that more than 5.5 million children have no proper sanitation while approximately 50% of children under 5 in Yemen suffer from chronic malnutrition.

### Challenges

- The continued political and armed crises led to the displacement of over 400,000 persons in the past 3 years
- Absence of government policies that promote and invest in the Water, sanitation and hygiene sectors
- The spread of water-borne diseases such as acute diarrhea, Cholera and Malaria in recent crises
- Weak government and civil society capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies
- Inability to reach groundwater resources and the constant conflict on these very resources



With its harsh desert environment and lack of cohesive authorities Al-Jawf governorate in the Northeast region of Yemen poses a distinct challenge to service providers public and private alike, as such it is given that services in the governorate are limited and that the movement of WASH (amongst others) development in the region is minimal at best. The governorate covers a vast area and its nature is not unlike its neighboring governorates with which it shares several characteristics (arid environment, plenty of unharnessed resources, tribal nature, political identity and the continues of conflicts). For these reasons and with a significant amount of hostility to outside influence, the governorate is considered one of the most dangerous areas in Yemen for NGOs and charities alike. During initial visits to the governorate, Islamic Help UK – Yemen Program came across several cases to establish a clear path for the interventions that it was to carry out. As children and women were likely the most affected segment of the population it was natural for the IHUK staff to come across them and hear their stories. One of these children was Fateha who attended one of the schools in Al-Matoon district at Al-Jawf governorate that were assessed for a possible intervention by IHUK.



The story of Fateha (and many other children like her) is one of resilience, despite the fact that her school had no functioning toilet or washbasin she was in attendance whenever she was able to do so. Not only was her community lacking in sanitation but in safe water sources; in most days she had to walk 5-8km from her home alongside her female relatives to fetch drinking water for the household. Due to issues regarding sanitation and WASH facilities in their schools, several female students had medical issues which was confirmed by the health unit in the district who informed the organization that many girls and women were facing serious health issues due to unsafe water resources and lack of proper sanitation.

Following numerous visits and assessments, Islamic Help UK - Yemen Program was able to intervene in the WASH sector in area through rehabilitating several water projects which have been damaged by the continuous conflicts; this action was set to give women and their families accessible, safe and improved water sources, moreover Islamic Help UK - Yemen Program constructed and rehabilitated several WASH facilities at several schools and health centers and connected the water sources to several schools including Fateha's school.

Today Fateha is attending school daily and is in good health due to the improved WASH facilities in her community and school.



In the 12 months following the beginning of the project in Al-Jawf, Islamic Help UK was not only successful in completing the intervention in an area where failures were familiar, but it made inroads into the heart of the social fabric of the areas of intervention and a symbol of hope for those with limited means. As with Fateh in the story the children who attended schools with newly functioning WASH facilities were now able to use their facilities without resorting to dangerous practices. Not only were the children using their newly constructed/rehabilitated facilities but their mothers also received basic hygiene kits, hygiene sessions and water treatments trainings and were also the beneficiaries of rehabilitated water networks that provided families with a much needed improved water source.