

Yemen: an “Emergency Meets Rehabilitation” Programme to Help Populations Displaced by the Conflict in the North of the Country

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For the past year, Triangle G H has been working with people displaced by the conflict opposing Al-Houti rebels and the Yemenite government. Funded by the European Commission's Humanitarian department (ECHO), Triangle G H is running a programme combining emergency relief and rehabilitation.

It was during the summer of 2009 that the sixth conflict between Al Houti rebels and the government plunged the northern tip of Yemen into chaos, with warfare on the ground and in the skies. From August 2009 to February 2010, incessant air raids and shelling aimed at eradicating rebels forced thousands of civilians to flee the mountainous regions where they had once led modest farmer/breeder existences.

In 2009, after a decade-long presence in Yemen, Triangle G H was operating several rural development programmes in four regions of the country. Witnessing the massive flow of internally displaced people (IDP), the enormity of needs and the low amount of humanitarian actors in the country, Triangle G H decided, in the first weeks of October '09, to provide emergency relief to the displaced alongside the United Nations, a few local and international NGOs, and the European Commission. The 180,000 civilians from the north were pouring into three main refuge zones; at that point, only one zone offered constant and fairly safe humanitarian access.

Initial field assessments showed that the families' primary needs (shelter, water, food) were already, or about to be covered by other agencies. However the sanitary environment of camp 1, in Al Mazraq, was a considerable issue: the IDPs' proximity and the presence of livestock in hastily distributed tents required immediate management to avoid the proliferation of sanitary risk vectors, both at human and livestock levels. The high amount of small, family-owned herds (1 cow and 11 goats per family on average) represented a major health and economical challenge for the entire camp.

Triangle G H decided to intervene with a dual objective:

- Ensure the beneficiaries could keep their livestock, final element of their capital, by drastically decreasing livestock mortality (distribution of fodder and food supplements, regular veterinary care for the animals);
- Improve the camps' sanitary situation by allowing families to keep their herds close to their emergency refuges (canvas tents), but in separate shelters.

From the very first months of intervention, Triangle G H measured a spectacular drop in livestock mortality: during the first quarter of the conflict, 52% animals died or were lost against 19% during the second quarter, thanks to the programme, and 8% during the third quarter. This confirmed the suitability of our approach and strengthened the trust of our partners.

Today, the humanitarian situation of IDPs in Al Mazraq is fairly stable thanks to range of coordinated relief efforts. Since March, the inflow of people has ceased and some return movements have even been recorded. Nevertheless, it is essential to maintain the operation implemented in the three camps (21,000 people) and satellite sites (about 14,000 people) to protect the lives of these uprooted families and further improve certain services.

For this reason, ECHO is funding an extension of Triangle's programme in Al Mazraq area and developing it via creation/rehabilitation of wells in sites outside the camps, where a large number of IDPs have settled. This nine-month project includes:

- Constant distribution of food inputs for 12,500 animals (mainly goats and sheep, approximately one thousand cows) belonging to displaced families;
- Regular veterinary care for 20,000 animals, of which 7,500 belong to residents of the area;
- Construction/rehabilitation of 250 shelters for animals in the camps, to complete the operation implemented during previous programmes;
- Creation/rehabilitation of eight wells close to very small villages, around which many IDPs have settled.

This program allows Triangle to cover urgent needs, particularly in terms of access to potable water, prevent sanitary risks, and preserve the beneficiaries' future livelihoods by maintaining their livestock – the last elements of a patrimony that conflict and displacement have virtually annihilated.



*Displaced woman in Al Mazraq, Camp 1
Photo : Félicie Monneret / Triangle G H*



*Implementation of fodder
Photo : Amir Jenane / Triangle G H*



*Veterinary care in Al Mazraq
Photo : Amir Jenane / Triangle G H*