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Cash-for-Work Programs Empower Yemenis

Since March 2015, ongoing conflict in Yemen has left more than 22 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. The conflict has taken an economic toll on the country, as well—the majority of Yemen's 1.2 million civil servants have received little or no salary in the past year, while the price of basic commodities has increased, adversely affecting households' purchasing power and increasing food insecurity.

"Sometimes I would look for food from houses—we had nothing, only the little I would get from our little farm," said Samira, a Yemeni mother of ten children. She continued, "Two years ago I lost two of my children because I could not pay for their medicine and because I had no one to take them to the hospital. The destroyed and unpaved road was one of the reasons for the death of many…in the village."

With support from USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), a partner organization implemented a one-year livelihoods project in Yemen's Amran and Hajjah governorates. The partner provided short-term employment opportunities to the most vulnerable and food-insecure households through cash-for-work activities—including rehabilitation of irrigation and water systems, roads, and schools—to mitigate the economic effects of ongoing conflict in the country.

Samira worked on a USAID/OFDA-supported project to rehabilitate the road in her village. After receiving her first payment from the program, Samira reported, "I paid all my debts at the shop and was able to help my daughter. Now cars have easier access to the village, and all people are happy that the road is rehabilitated and the transport fees are now less than before."

"I am very happy that I was a part of putting a smile and bringing hope to the people of the village, myself, and my children," Samira concluded.

The USAID/OFDA partner supported approximately 10,700 people like Samira in Amran and Hajjah with cash-for-work assistance through the one-year project, which ended in September 2017.