DUTCH RELIEF ALLIANCE

INCLUSION INSIGHT PAPER

Inclusive Humanitarian Programming in Protracted Crisis Joint Responses

Quality Working Group – Inclusion sub-working group

14 January 2025

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Quality Working Group
Inclusion sub-working group[1]

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INTRODUCTION

Inclusive humanitarian action – striving to ensure that all individuals, regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances, have equitable access to assistance and support – is a cornerstone of effective relief efforts. Gender, age, and disability, along with the many other intersecting factors, shape individuals' experiences in crises and contribute to marginalised and at-risk groups being disproportionately affected and severely disadvantaged in humanitarian settings. To address these inequities, inclusive humanitarian action must adopt an intersectional lens, recognizing how overlapping social identities (e.g., race, gender, class, disability, sexuality) intersect to create unique challenges in humanitarian crisis settings.

Inclusion of marginalised people is a topic of relevance for the Dutch Relief Alliance, as remarked in the 2022 – 2026 Strategy. The strategy states that *Affected people need to be even more involved in the design and planning process and all stages of the programme cycle by making better use of the multiyear funding modality.* Within the joint responses we will further boost inclusion of disadvantaged groups such as women, children and differently abled people. The Multi-Annual Plan for 2022 – 2026 clearly outlines practical actions. These include identifying inclusion-related training needs and consulting people with disabilities in all phases of the programme cycle. Other actions are to adopt sex, age and disability disaggregated data (SADDD) in a joint response, and to use disaggregated data in analysis, reporting and evaluations. The need for adopting an inclusive approach and framework, together with the sharing of knowledge on inclusion, is also stressed.

This paper is designed to serve as a key resource for humanitarian practitioners engaged in the implementation of Protracted Crisis Joint Responses (PCJRs) funded through the Dutch Relief Alliance. Key approaches, measures and actions to enhance the meaningful participation and inclusion of marginalised groups in humanitarian action get special focus. The document reflects an overview of must-do actions to ensure an inclusive humanitarian response, providing examples of key concepts and building blocks from various joint responses. Each action is accompanied by practical examples of how inclusion is embedded in the 2024 – 2026 PCJRs.[2] A brief reflection and conclusion articulates where the alliance stands with regards to inclusion, based on insights from PCJR proposals. A detailed case study from the Yemen joint response follows (Annex I), which reflects the building blocks as described in this paper. The paper concludes with a glossary of key concepts (Annex II) and a list of tools, guidelines and trainings on inclusion (Annex III) that can inspire and further strengthen inclusive humanitarian programming within the PCJRs. This paper focuses on inclusion; for a deep dive into gender programming, please refer to gender insight paper.[3]

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2. For the purposes of this, all Protracted Crisis Joint Response 2024 – 2026 proposal documents have been analysed, with emphasis on the relevant inclusion sections, but also through using key words (such as "inclusion", "marginalised", etc.) to identify examples in other sections of the documents. The selection included examples found in the proposals, but it was not feasible to highlight every example from every joint response.

3. Dutch Relief Alliance: Gender Programming in the Dutch Relief Alliance, Quality Working Group, 2023.

SIX BUILDING BLOCKS TO ENHANCE INCLUSION IN HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMMES

Inclusion is an operational necessity for effective humanitarian response. Failure to adequately consider and address the needs of marginalised people can exacerbate vulnerabilities, perpetuate cycles of exclusion and undermine the overall efficacy of humanitarian interventions. By contrast, inclusive humanitarian action fosters resilience, strengthens community cohesion and contributes to the long-term recovery and development of affected populations.

Based on a review of existing practitioner guidelines[4] and learning exchanges among joint response partners from various countries, this review identifies six must-actions which can be seen as building blocks to enhance inclusion in humanitarian programming:

1	Apply the twin-track approach

2	Collaborate with specialised organisations

3	Strengthen capacities

4	Promote meaningful participation

5	Monitor for inclusion

6	Identify and remove barriers

4. WO=MEN Dutch Gender Platform, Raise the Ambition: Accelerate the Gender Transformative Potential of Humanitarian Action, 2022

1. Apply the twin-track approach

Informed by needs assessments and gender- or inclusion-related rapid analysis, design and implementation of Protracted Crisis Joint Responses should apply a twin-track approach to adequately include marginalised people in the humanitarian response[5]. In practice, this requires including marginalised people across all sectors of intervention, while also working directly with and empowering marginalised individuals.

- **Mainstreaming track:** organisations should proactively include all marginalised groups in all of their humanitarian activities. This requires context-specific actions to ensure that the concerns of all affected populations are integral to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, plans and programming in all spheres.[6]

- **Specific track (also known as targeted action):** organisations should address individuals' specific needs to assure their access to humanitarian assistance and to support their wider empowerment. This can also be done in partnership with specialised organisations and constituent-led organisations. This track requires addressing inequalities through focused action to overcome the specific barriers and vulnerabilities, with special attention on women, children, older persons and people with disabilities in all their diversity, among other marginalised groups.[7]

5.   Lough, O., Barbelet, V. and Njeri, S., Inclusion and exclusion in humanitarian action: findings from a three-year study, 2022.

6.   IASC, Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action, 2024

7.   IASC, Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action, 2024

2. Collaborate with specialised organisations

'Specialised organisations' comprise a range of actors such as constituent-led organisations and include organisations who primarily focus on empowering and advancing the rights of specific marginalised groups. In the latter case, these organisations can also be represented by the group they seek to support, such as Organisations of People with Disabilities (OPDs), Older People Associations (OPAs), and Women-led and Women's Rights Organisations. **Ultimately, specialised and constituent-led organisations are at the core of humanitarian responses.** Therefore, international and mainstream local humanitarian organisations and specialised and constituent-led organisations should collaborate and work to complement one another. Recognising the expertise of specialised organisations is important, as is supporting mutual capacity strengthening efforts and understanding and addressing barriers to mutual collaboration (see "strengthen capacities" section).

Planned initiatives in joint responses on collaborating with specialized institutions to enhance inclusion, retrieved from 2024-26 narrative proposals

Sudan Protracted Crisis Joint Response

As part of joint activities, joint response partners will explore the possibility of engaging an *advisory group* from civil society organisations and/or representatives with relevant expertise on gender equality, age and disability inclusion. This advisory group will be engaged in annual Real Time Review processes and annual learning events, to provide necessary technical support and guidance to joint response partners. For preparation of annual learning events, the working group will also lead efforts to ensure engagement of stakeholders, including programme participants and/or representatives of diverse groups (with attention to gender, age and disability). Different actions will be planned to ensure their voice and experience informs the joint response programme implementation. The working group will work closely with state-level programme working groups to discuss issues raised through feedback mechanisms, coordinate to avoid overlap, identify complementarity, deal with critical issues and provide feedback on programme quality, as well as provide technical support and share learnings/best practices. It will also enable joint monitoring visits (peer review).

Ethiopia Protracted Crisis Joint Response

Partners will seek to meaningfully engage with special needs persons (i.e. *Organisations of Persons with Disability (OPD) and Older People Associations (OPA))* to take active part in the humanitarian response. Key activities will include training of OPD and OPA to conduct disability audits on humanitarian actors (iNGOs and government agencies).

3. Strengthen capacities

To enhance inclusive humanitarian response, supporting initiatives for collaboration and mutual capacity strengthening among all actors involved is critical. This entails facilitating collaboration and coordination among mainstream humanitarian actors, specialised organisations and constituent-led organisations.[8] Mutual capacity strengthening benefits diverse groups of stakeholders by increasing the participation of marginalised people in all facets of humanitarian response.[9] Such actions will on the one hand, enhance cooperation and help build, trust and openness for joint learning. On the other hand, they may facilitate greater understanding of the rights and entitlements of marginalised people, and the impact of exclusion on marginalised persons. Likewise, these can increase awareness of common principles and facilitate the implementation of practical context-appropriate approaches that promote inclusion and reduce barriers to inclusion in humanitarian response.[10] Marginalised groups should be informed about their rights and entitlements with regards to humanitarian assistance. They can then be involved in designing and delivering information about their rights and entitlements to other humanitarian actors.[11] In addition, humanitarian actors must structurally dedicate (internal) capacity on inclusion during all phases of the humanitarian response.

Planned initiatives in joint responses on strengthening capacities to enhance inclusion, retrieved from 2024-26 narrative proposals

Syria Protracted Crisis Joint Response in Government-Controlled Areas (GCA)

One partner will provide **training to partner organisations in the Syria joint response on disability inclusion (for children).** The same partner will conduct capacity strengthening activities in communities to promote inclusion and equality. Activities will include workshops for community leaders and influencers to promote gender and age inclusivity at the grassroots level; equipping community members with tools and knowledge to support marginalised groups; digital inclusion of women, elderly and people with disabilities with knowledge and skills to access information; the promotion of child rights and the establishment of Community-Based Child Protection Committees and Child Clubs. Within schools, workshops will be offered to teachers focusing on inclusive education.

8. Ibid.
9. CBM International, Age and Disability Consortium, Humanitarian inclusion standards for older people and people with disabilities, 2018.
10. IASC, IASC Guidelines, Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, 2019
11. CBM International, Age and Disability Consortium, Humanitarian inclusion standards for older people and people with disabilities, 2018.

Syria Protracted Crisis Joint Response in Non-Government Controlled Areas (NGCA)
During 2023, a gender expert has been providing training to northwest Syria local partners on "gender-sensitive" programming. In 2024, capacity strengthening efforts with focus on gender equality and inclusion will support northeast Syria local partners. This will include trainings to undertake a needs assessment with attention to gender equality and inclusion, and a mapping of relevant specialised and constituent-led organisations, including women-led organisations and organisations related to people with disabilities.

Yemen Protracted Crisis Joint Response
In 2023, the Yemen joint response organised a two-day *gender workshop* with relevant partners. During this workshop, key concepts related to gender and inclusion were discussed as a starting point to reflect on strategies and approaches applied in the response. Based on the findings from this workshop and the needs identified by partners, capacity strengthening requirements were identified for the 2024 – 2026 Yemen joint response. These requirements encompass various topics, including gender and inclusion, sectoral gender and social assessment, and understanding social norms that hinder men, women, boys and girls from accessing services.

4.   Promote meaningful participation

To increase accountability to affected populations and promote inclusiveness, diverse voices need to be heard, especially those of marginalised groups. Participation of marginalised groups in all stages of the programme cycle is important to ensure that humanitarian assistance reflects the priorities and capacities of the people it aims to reach. To enhance participation, organisations should ensure that programme meetings and events are accessible to marginalised people.[12] At the same time, humanitarian organisations need to coordinate their processes with locally led initiatives to strengthen local efforts and align the assistance with local priorities.

Some of the key steps to promote meaningful participation are as follows:

- **Participatory and inclusive approaches to community engagement** are essential to ensuring that a diverse range of voices are present in the decision-making process. Particular efforts to ensure the inclusion of marginalised groups into decision-making processes should build on existing social networks and local structures, for example, inviting marginalised individuals into programme design committees, WASH committees or camp management committees.[13]

- **Inclusive feedback and complaint mechanisms** are critical. Feedback points should be accessible for people with physical impairments. Moreover, special considerations should be tailored to the differentiated needs, capacities and opportunities for people, in all their diversity, taking into account possible barriers to their meaningful participation. This requires understanding of existing social norms, power dynamics and gendered responsibilities that may generate barriers to participation. Also systems should be appropriate for people with low literacy skills, for those who speak a minority language and for those with limited resources, skills or ability to access or use modern technology.[14]

Planned initiatives in joint responses on promoting meaningful participation to enhance inclusion, retrieved from 2024-26 narrative proposals

Somalia Protracted Crisis Joint Response
A representation of people with disabilities will be included in the *Village Health Committees* and will be consulted on specific needs on health and nutrition services. Women's involvement will be strongly encouraged as part of the *Village Relief Committees, Protection Committees and WASH Committees*, thereby strengthening their capacity in leadership roles and thus ensuring more engagement in the decision-making process.

12. Lough, O., Barbelet, V. and Njeri, S., Inclusion and exclusion in humanitarian action: findings from a three-year study, p.51-54, 2022.
13. Ibid., p.52-53.
14. Ibid., p.51.

Democratic Republic of the Congo Protracted Crisis Joint Response

During implementation, *committees* are set up to contribute to monitoring beneficiaries and relaying certain information. The committees will consist of people from all segments of the population, including those who are often stigmatised, such as people with disabilities and chronic illnesses.

South Sudan Protracted Crisis Joint Response

Disability sensitisation will be conducted for both staff and community members to reduce attitudinal barriers and enhance the engagement of persons with disabilities in decision-making through *accountability to affected populations (AAP) committees.* One d*isability and inclusion focal point* will be selected per county/administrative area among the partners, responsible for promoting inclusion in programme activities and serving as a reference for others. The designated AAP focal points will continually analyse feedback and share reports with joint response partners, while also monitoring and addressing cases promptly.

5. Monitor on inclusion

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is critical to enhance inclusion during the humanitarian response. M&E approaches help to understand the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion within a crisis, as well as tracking whether inclusion is being effectively operationalised in the response.[15] The following list of instruments help to monitor the inclusion of marginalised people:

- **Participation in data collection:** stimulate qualitative and participatory techniques for data collection alongside quantitative indicators. This can help to better understand barriers to inclusion, as does storytelling about change in relation to inclusion of diverse population groups. Ensure communities are aware of their rights around assessment data, empower them to use the data themselves and involve them in the decision-making process that informs the programme; for example, deciding what information to share and with whom.

- **Generic needs assessments:** ensure that generic assessment methodologies take different experiences into account. Marginalised groups must take part in needs assessments in different ways. Equally important is involving organisations led by women, youth and persons with disabilities in needs assessments and to structurally allocate budget for these consultations. More targeted sampling approaches can be considered to ensure all different groups, including marginalised groups, are seen and heard. In addition, the design of assessment methodologies should build upon gender analysis. Tailored tools can be developed for data collection efforts with diverse target groups, particularly if a twin-track approach is desired for both mainstreaming inclusion considerations and also ensuring targeted actions to address barriers.

- **Disaggregated data collection:** the Dutch Relief Alliance mandates the collection of data on gender, age and disability. For disability data collection, the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning (WGQ) must be used. Enumerators must be trained in using this method to ensure that disability disaggregated data are collected and analysed in the same way within all programmes of the alliance and that the results are used to their full potential. Data collection efforts must integrate considerations of gender and age, among other factors, and enumerators must be trained to facilitate safe referrals in the event of disclosure of gender-based violence. Disaggregated data can be used to track who is included and who is excluded from the humanitarian services provided.

- **Rapid gender analysis (RGA):** an RGA is used to analyse the different needs, experiences and capacities of all people during a humanitarian crisis. An RGA can be designed to provide insights with an intersectional lens. This analysis can provide timely and critical information to inform the response and gather information about different needs, risks, capacities, priorities and coping strategies of people affected, while generating information on power dynamics. An RGA prioritises hearing from people of different age, sex and diversity groups, and may inform design, guide implementation and inform learnings and evaluation.

- **Gender with age marker (GAM):** a gender marker is used as a learning tool to self-assess programme quality throughout the joint response. A GAM measures the integration of gender into programming along the Gender Continuum from unaware to transformative. The gender marker enables partners to track, improve on and support more effective gender

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15. Lough, O., Barbelet, V. and Njeri, S., Inclusion and exclusion in humanitarian action: findings from a three-year study, p.33-39, 2022.

integrated programming. It can be used in various stages of the programme management cycle to inform design, implementation, monitoring, learning and evaluation. A GAM can also be used to strengthen accountability systems, as it can facilitate reflections that lead to recommendations and programme adaptations. In the 2024 – 2026 joint responses, the use of a gender marker is mandatory.

● **Evidence-based policy and advocacy:** This action uses data on inclusion to inform key stakeholders, including donors, about the existing opportunities to promote and barriers that hamper inclusive humanitarian action. Evidence should be used to inform and adapt policies and funding mechanisms for a more inclusive humanitarian response.

Planned initiatives in joint responses on monitoring to enhance inclusion, retrieved from 2024-26 narrative proposals

Sudan Protracted Crisis Joint Response
Joint response partners will aim to offer barrier-free access to services, tailored to individual needs, informed through data and information collected and analysed on the challenges that people with a disability may face. This **data-driven approach** will enable joint response partners to better understand and eliminate these barriers. Partners will be supported to strengthen capacities for the use and application of the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning (WGQ) during screening at the service points, in order to identify persons with various types of disability, prioritise needs and identify barriers for access to assistance for the most at-risk groups. These measures will help to ensure that persons with a disability are meaningfully engaged in decision-making, such as through established community committees, and to ensure their inclusion in the programme as participants.

Somalia Protracted Crisis Joint Response
During the design workshop, all partners were trained on the *ECHO GAM* and inclusion of persons with disabilities. Partners completed the ECHO GAM as part of their proposals. Throughout the programme cycle, this will be regularly reflected upon jointly.

Yemen Protracted Crisis Joint Response
Throughout the coordination meetings, partners will collaboratively decide on strategic moments to utilise/revise the programme response efforts using the *GAM* during monitoring. This will enable them to assess what is functioning effectively and what may require adjustment within the programme.

Afghanistan Protracted Crisis Joint Response
The partners in Afghanistan will carry out a participatory needs assessment through consultations with representatives of different groups of affected people (women, children, elderly, disabled, displaced and ethnic minorities) to identify their priorities/preferences and feedback. Also, some partners will use self-assessments and peer-to-peer reviews as tools for inclusion. Individuals with disabilities will be engaged to evaluate their own needs and provide feedback on the programme's effectiveness. This participatory approach will foster ownership and empowerment among people with disabilities, leading to more sustainable and inclusive outcomes. In addition, *a gender equality and social inclusion assessment* will be conducted to analyse how different genders are impacted by the humanitarian situation (exclusion drivers, social, economic, geographic profiles, power and incentive structures, risks and entry points for and means of promoting inclusion). The assessment also helps to identify the most marginalised and impacted groups and any barriers for access to service and participation. Informed by this analysis, partners will adopt the implementation modality and approaches.

6. Identify and remove barriers

In line with a twin-track approach, removing barriers is extremely important for facilitating inclusion and promoting meaningful participation. Barriers may be related to attitudes, communication, accessibility and politics/institutions. Barriers must first be identified through an assessment done in collaboration with marginalised people and their representative organisations before steps to remove them can be taken. Below are examples of what can be done to remove identified barriers.[16]

- **Attitudinal barriers:** raise awareness among programme staff of the rights and capacities of marginalised people, emphasising the need to respect, value and acknowledge the dignity of all people equally, which will contribute to addressing negative stereotypes. Organise participatory community meetings to overcome stigma and discrimination against marginalised people that may hinder their access to humanitarian support. Use and support people who are role models among marginalised groups to provide positive examples and challenge negative perceptions.

- **Communication barriers:** use a variety of communication methods to ensure that all information about the programme is accessible to everyone. Facilitate two-way communication by both sending and receiving information effectively. Distribute information through specialised organisations, community leaders, service providers and caregivers. Provide accessible spaces for all individuals, for example, those with hearing or intellectual challenges, so that everyone can participate and be heard.

- **Accessibility barriers:** conduct an accessibility audit to identify physical obstacles that hinder people accessing locations where humanitarian support is provided. Involve members of the target group themselves and their specialised organisations in conducting the audit so they can help to identify appropriate solutions to removing the identified barriers.

- *Political/institutional barriers:* **mobilise and support** specialised organisations to develop messaging and advocate for removing discriminatory laws and regulations that hinder access to humanitarian support.

Planned initiatives in joint responses on removing barriers to facilitate inclusion, retrieved from 2024-26 narrative proposals

Syria Protracted Crisis Joint Response in Government-Controlled Areas

Female businesses will be targeted with **skills development,** but also with support to address underlying gender barriers, including participation in market decisions, accessing supplies among others that offer women owners unfair competition. The limited participation of women in the agricultural sector has been identified as a challenge caused by **cultural barriers,** property and land ownership issues, and a prevailing practice

16. DCDD, Quic

of women engaging in unpaid labour. In response, the joint response will actively aim to involve female farmers to overcome these challenges and improve their livelihood options. Female participation in climate-smart agriculture trainings will be encouraged, thus increasing women's interest in agriculture, and attempting a small start at breaking down the cultural stereotypes of farming being a typical male-dominated activity. Furthermore, **awareness sessions** will be provided to female-headed households and within the broader community to increase the support from the local community to support women's to access income-earning opportunities.

South Sudan Protracted Crisis Joint Response
A gender safety audit will identify potential protection risks associated with programme implementation and inform interventions, addressing the distinct needs, roles, relationships, protection risks and power dynamics among different gender and age groups. The findings will be used to enhance activities while advocating for the protection of staff, programme participants and programme assets.

REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Inclusive humanitarian action – emphasising the importance of equitable access to assistance for all, irrespective of backgrounds or circumstances – stands as an essential pillar for the effective and sustainable provision of humanitarian aid. The Dutch Relief Alliance has demonstrated a clear commitment to inclusion, as evidenced by its 2022 – 2026 Strategy, Multi-Annual Plan and numerous actions to enhance inclusion in the 2024 – 2026 joint response proposals.

The Dutch Relief Alliance has made significant strides in reaching and engaging various marginalised groups such as children, women, people with disabilities, older persons and those with chronic illnesses. Yet more can be done: a greater intersectional approach to inclusion should be further emphasised in future steps. To date, the inclusion-focused sections of the joint response proposals have predominantly centred around gender and disability, reflecting a somewhat fragmented understanding and approach to inclusion. This may limit inclusion efforts to addressing *specific needs* of isolated marginalised groups rather than promoting their *equal participation* in humanitarian programming.

Moreover, the alliance must more deeply analyse and understand the barriers to and enablers of inclusive humanitarian response for marginalised groups. While the alliance has taken steps to make disaggregated data collection mandatory, the emphasis seems to predominantly revolve around increasing the numbers of certain marginalised groups in humanitarian programming. This approach risks oversimplifying the complex cultural processes through which specific marginalised groups are excluded from humanitarian aid. To address this, disaggregated data should be complemented with comprehensive barrier analyses and needs assessments. These analyses can help identify and address factors that contribute to negative attitudes and exclusion, and actively promote inclusion. For example, the gender with age marker (GAM) should be fully leveraged through collaborative efforts among joint response partners.

In conclusion, the alliance's commitment to inclusion is evidenced across numerous examples in this insight paper. However, opportunities to advance inclusion in the humanitarian response efforts remain and should be undertaken. For example, an important step would be to adopt an intersectional approach to inclusion. Moreover, inclusive outcomes would be strengthened by fostering greater collaboration among partners, specialised organisations and constituent-led organisations. This could facilitate critical analysis and understanding of the sociocultural dynamics that lead to exclusion, so that necessary adaptations could be made to increase the interventions' effectiveness and impact. Such an inclusive approach could meet the diverse needs of affected populations, while respecting the humanitarian principle of leaving no one behind.

ANNEX I: CASE STUDY ON INCLUSION OF THE MUHAMASHEEN IN YEMEN[17]

Muhamasheen in Yemen

Yemen is currently facing one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, with an estimated 80 % of the population, or 21.6 million people, requiring some form of humanitarian or protection assistance[18]. Among the vulnerable populations in Yemen are the Muhamasheen, an ethnic group that has long experienced systematic discrimination and marginalisation.

The "Al-Muhamasheen", who adopted for themselves this name meaning "the marginalised ones'', have long been called by the derogatory label "Akhdam" (servants) by other Yemeni groups.[19] Generally considered the lowest social class in Yemen, the Muhamasheen number about 3.5 million, constituting approximately 12 % of the Yemeni population, according to the United Nations.[20]

The origins of the Muhamasheen people in Yemen are unclear. Some believe that the Muhamasheen descended from the Abyssinian soldiers who occupied Yemen in the sixth century, while others believe that they originated in the coastal plain of the Red Sea in Yemen.[21] In a society whose social structure is partly based on lineage, the Muhamasheen's ambiguous origins from outside the known Yemeni tribal structure lead to lineage-based discrimination. This discrimination intersects with racial-ethnic discrimination, as most Muhamasheen people have dark skin.[22]

The Muhamasheen mostly live in poor conditions in slum areas and on the outskirts of cities and are often confined to menial low-paid livelihoods such as garbage collection and cleaning.[23] They suffer from high rates of unemployment and generally live in poverty, lacking access to economic opportunities and education, and to basic services such as water and sanitation.

In general, the Muhamasheen are excluded from public sector jobs, except in waste departments as street cleaners, where they often work as day labourers without employment contracts. As for private businesses, they are usually confined to low-quality and socially stigmatised jobs, such as polishing and washing cars, and collecting plastics and scrap materials.[24]

The Dutch Relief Alliance Role through the Yemen Joint Response

The Dutch Relief Alliance has been actively working towards the integration of the Muhamasheen in Yemen. The alliance's efforts are focused on providing multisectoral and integrated lifesaving humanitarian support to people in need, prioritising the most vulnerable populations. The Yemen joint response has been providing assistance to the Muhamasheen since 2019 through a consortium of seven Dutch iNGOs and nine national/ local NGO partners.

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17. This case study has been developed by Huda Taher during her internship at the alliance based on interviews with Ahmed Albiaty (Health officer at CARE, Aden, Yemen) and Abdullah Lutf (FSL programme leader at Oxfam, Taiz, Yemen).

18. UNFPA (2023), Yemen.
Available at: https://www.unfpa.org/yemen

19. Minority Rights Group (2018). Muhamasheen in Yemen.
Available at: https://minorityrights.org/communities/muhamasheen/

20. ACTED, IOM, NRC (2022), Yemen Muhamasheen Community Profile.
Available at: https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/2022-yemen-muhamasheen-community-profile-survey-conducted-muhamasheen-populations-irg-controlled-areas-yemen-2022

21. INSAF (2019), Minorities in Yemen.
Available at: https://insaf-ye.org/publications-and-research/the-book-of-minorities-in-yemen-reality-and-challenges

22. Sana'a Center (2019), The Historic and Systematic Marginalization of Yemen's Muhamasheen Community.
Available at: https://sanaacenter.org/files/Muhamasheen_en.pdf

23. Minority Rights Group (2018). Muhamasheen in Yemen.
Available at: https://minorityrights.org/communities/muhamasheen/

24. Sana'a Center (2019), The Historic and Systematic Marginalization of Yemen's Muhamasheen Community.
Available at: https://sanaacenter.org/files/Muhamasheen_en.pdf

The Yemen joint response's inclusive approach, with a focus on the marginalised Muhamasheen community, serves as a model for addressing the needs of vulnerable populations in crisis situations. By working with local partners, the Yemen joint response has been able to reach and provide critical support to the Muhamasheen, contributing to their inclusion and improving their access to economic opportunities and essential services.

Inclusion of the Muhamasheen

In conflict-ridden regions, vulnerable groups like the Muhamasheen often bear the brunt of hardships. Representatives from CARE and Oxfam share insights into the assistance provided to the Muhamasheen community and the collaborative efforts within the Yemen joint response to support the inclusion of this marginalised group, thereby addressing their unique challenges.

Support and Assistance for the Muhamasheen

CARE has been working with the Yemen joint response partnership since its 2019 inception, providing comprehensive support to vulnerable groups, including marginalised and displaced communities, in three ways:

- **Health Services:** CARE's health initiatives include consultations, diagnoses and treatment of diseases in camps and other targeted areas. Reproductive health services and postnatal care are also provided to pregnant and lactating women to greatly increase their chances for safe childbirth and neonatal survival.
- **Water and Sanitation:** Addressing sanitation issues, CARE supplies safe water and constructs toilets in marginalised communities, improving overall hygiene and living conditions.
- **Financial Assistance and Cash-for-Work:** These interventions provide economic support to marginalised groups, helping to sustain their livelihoods.

In Taiz Governorate, the Muhamasheen received two types of support from Oxfam:

- **Training in the establishment and management of small businesses,** along with technical training in livestock health and nutrition, and beekeeping and honey production, and;
- **Small grants to establish their small businesses and restore their livelihoods.** Employment opportunities were also provided through cash-for-work projects in 2022 and 2023. Prior to this, in 2020-2021, a project funded by the Dutch Relief Alliance provided cash grants and improved stove services and energy systems.

Challenges Faced by the Muhamasheen

The Muhamasheen face particular challenges in conflict areas. They are often the first to be displaced due to their extreme social and economic marginalization. As a historically oppressed group, they typically suffer from poor living conditions in informal settlements, and these locations are often the first to become uninhabitable. The Muhamasheen also have problems accessing government services and humanitarian aid due to their displacement and lack of official status, as most of them do not have identification cards required to get assistance.

The significant needs and poverty of this population only exacerbate their difficulty in getting humanitarian aid, which is already in short supply when compared to the needs of the overall population in a conflict area. Illiteracy is one of the biggest barriers of the Muhamasheen in accessing social assistance such as trainings, for example. A lack of societal acceptance and conflicts over water sources are other major challenges the community faces.

Addressing Challenges

To overcome these issues, -CARE collaborates with local authorities to obtain confirmed lists of potential beneficiaries to ensure that marginalized groups, such as the Muhamasheen, are included in humanitarian efforts. Efforts have also been made to raise the community's awareness of the importance of obtaining identification documents, with local partners facilitating the process. Oxfam addresses

these challenges by collaborating with a local organisation that trains individuals who are illiterate using signs with symbols and other methods. Social cohesion and peace promotion sessions foster acceptance and integration of the Muhamasheen into the broader community. Community committees help resolve conflicts over resources.

Involvement in Programme Design and Decision-Making
The Muhamasheen community is actively involved in the design and decision-making processes of the Yemen joint response programmes. Before launching any project, CARE conducts reviews with community leaders, including representatives from the marginalised groups. These representatives provide valuable insights into their priorities and needs, which are then incorporated into project designs. Community committees that include Muhamasheen representatives are established to facilitate project implementation and coordination.

Oxfam integrates marginalised community members into all project stages, conducting studies to identify their needs and potential. The Muhamasheen participate in community mobilisation meetings, and are a part of community committees responsible for selecting beneficiaries. They also participate in monitoring and evaluation through feedback mechanisms.

Successful Inclusion Practices
One notable success is the deployment of mobile health units to remote areas to ensure that marginalised communities receive essential health services. For instance, in the Qa'atabah District of Al-Dhale Governorate, CARE constructed toilets and septic tanks in Muhamasheen areas lacking sanitation infrastructure, significantly improving hygiene and preventing diseases.

In 2023, 22 families from the Muhamasheen community benefitted from Oxfam livelihood support and training, receiving cash grants to establish successful projects. Additionally, 85 families participated in a cash-for-work project, with some receiving assistance for rehabilitating war-torn community assets. Muhamasheen individuals are also active in community committees.

Collaboration with Local Leaders
Local leaders from the Muhamasheen community are integral into all stages of CARE's projects. They review previous projects, participate in discussions about upcoming ones and are involved in implementation and monitoring. This ensures that their perspectives and needs are adequately addressed, enhancing the effectiveness of interventions.

Oxfam collaborates with local leaders through Executive and Oversight Committees. Executive Committees register beneficiaries based on project criteria, ensuring fair and transparent selection processes. Oversight Committees, comprising representatives of the marginalised, convey concerns and suggestions, monitor beneficiary registration and oversee activity implementation.

Measuring Effectiveness
CARE measures the effectiveness of its efforts through continuous monitoring, regular meetings and evaluations. By ensuring the inclusion of vulnerable groups at all stages, CARE aims to achieve equitable benefits for all. Follow-ups and post-implementation evaluations assess whether the services met community expectations and needs.

Oxfam employs rigorous monitoring and evaluation processes, including an independent evaluation team. Indicators such as fair and equitable assistance delivery, timeliness and adherence to the principle of "do no harm" guide the evaluation. Oxfam also assesses the project's impact on improving living conditions.

Conclusion
CARE and Oxfam provide invaluable, multifaceted support to the Muhamasheen community. Through collaborative efforts, inclusive strategies and continuous evaluation, significant strides are being made to empower this marginalised group and improve their living conditions in Yemen's challenging environment.

ANNEX II: CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

Diversity
Diversity is any human dimension or social category that differentiates people and groups of people from each other, including but not limited to "gender, class, and race, including caste, age, ethnicity, experience of being colonised, language, ancestry, sexuality, gender identity, religion, ability, culture and geographic location, as well as status as a migrant, indigenous person, transgender person, refugee or internally displaced person, or a person living with HIV/AIDS, in conflict or under foreign occupation".[25]

Intersectionality
The term "intersectionality" has been used to understand people's experiences at the intersection of a number of simultaneous oppressions including [but not limited to] race, class, caste, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, nationality, immigration status, geographical location, religion and so on.[26] The disadvantages, risk-exposure and heightened impact of crisis caused by gender inequality can be further compounded by other factors of intersectionality, including, but not limited to, disability, age, sexuality, religion, caste and geographical location (rural/urban).[27] Intersectionality therefore offers a deeper understanding about complexities, reframing our understanding of marginalisation. In its essence, it is a way of thinking about identity and its relationship to power. In practice, an intersectional lens can help identify structural barriers that may otherwise appear invisible.[28]

Inclusion
The concept of inclusion, viewed through an intersectional lens, acknowledges the necessity of addressing the needs of marginalised groups, which include women, children, older persons and people with disabilities, in all their diversity. These groups, among others, often face unique challenges, are disproportionately affected, and severely disadvantaged within humanitarian contexts. Inclusion as an approach aims to uphold the pledge to leave no one behind.[29]

Human Rights Approach
A human rights approach is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on intersectional human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights.[30] A human rights approach not only holds society accountable for lowering such barriers, but also recognises the capacity of marginalised people to actively contribute as active participants, also in humanitarian response. As the humanitarian principles argue for needs-based and discrimination-free humanitarian responses, inclusion remains a challenge due to the limited capacity of humanitarian actors and little awareness about how inclusive principles can be effectively translated into practice.

25. Kagal, N., & Latchford, L., Towards an intersectional praxis in international development: what can the sector learn from Black feminists located in the global North? Gender and Development, 2020, 28(1), 11–30.
26. UNWOMEN, The Value of Intersectionality In Understanding Violence Against Women and Girls, 2019.
27. IASC, Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action, 2024.
28. WO=MEN Dutch Gender Platform, Raise the Ambition: Accelerate the Gender Transformative Potential of Humanitarian Action, 2022
29. UNPRPD and UNWomen, Intersectionality resource guide and toolkit, 2021.
30. UNSDG, Human Rights-Based Approach.

ANNEX III: INCLUSION RESOURCES

Papers, Studies and Guidelines

- CBM International, Age and Disability Consortium, Humanitarian inclusion standards for older people and people with disabilities, 2018.
- Dutch Relief Alliance: Gender programming in the Dutch Relief Alliance, Quality Working Group, 2023.
- Humanitarian Inclusion standards: Humanitarian inclusion standards for older people and people with disabilities - World | ReliefWeb
- Inclusion and Exclusion in Humanitarian Action: Inclusion and exclusion in humanitarian action: findings from a three-year study | ODI: Think change
- IASC Guidelines: IASC Guidelines, Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, 2019 | IASC (interagencystandingcommittee.org)
- IASC Gender Equality and The Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action: (ENDORSED) IASC Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action.pdf (interagencystandingcommittee.org)
- Intersectionality resource guide: Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit: An Intersectional Approach to Leave No One Behind - World | ReliefWeb
- Kagal, N., & Latchford, L., Towards an intersectional praxis in international development: what can the sector learn from Black feminists located in the global North? Gender and Development, 2020, 28(1), 11–30
- Lough, O., Barbelet, V. and Njeri, S., Inclusion and exclusion in humanitarian action: findings from a three-year study
- Quick guide on inclusion in Humanitarian Aid: https://www.dcdd.nl/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Humanitarian-Quick-Guide-July-2021-DCDD-2.pdf
- UNWOMEN, The Value of Intersectionality In Understanding Violence Against Women and Girls, 2019
- WO=MEN Dutch Gender Platform, Raise the Ambition: Accelerate the Gender Transformative Potential of Humanitarian Action, 2022

Trainings and Tools

- DCDD quick guide: https://www.dcdd.nl/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Humanitarian-Quick-Guide-July-2021-DCDD-2.pdf
- UNPRPD and UNWomen, Intersectionality resource guide and toolkit, 2021.
- UNSDG, Human Rights-Based Approach
- Sphere handbook: https://www.spherestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/Sphere-Handbook-2018-EN.pdf
- CBM Inclusion resources: MEDBOX | Toolbox CBM Inclusive Project Cycle Management Training
- IDA training package: Training Package: Introduction to Disability-Inclusive Humanitarian Action | International Disability Alliance
- IASC Gender with Aged Marker (GAM): https://www.iascgenderwithagemarker.com/en/home/
- CARE Rapid Gender Analysis (RGA): https://insights.careinternational.org.uk/in-practice/rapid-gender-analysis?highlight=YToxOntpOjA7czozOiJyZ2EiO30=
- WG Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS): https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/question-sets/wg-short-set-on-functioning-wg-ss/ / WGQ for children under age of 5: https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/question-sets/wg-unicef-child-functioning-module-cfm/
- Free online Kaya training on inclusion: Catalogue (kayaconnect.org), such as: Summary of Basic Principles of Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Response (kayaconnect.org)
- War Child Gender & Inclusion Mainstreaming Resource Kit: in case you are unable to access the tool or would like additional details, please reach out to Ahmad.Faraz@warchild.net