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منظمة شباب بلا حدود للتنمية
Youth Without Borders Organization for Development

List of Acronyms

SCI	Save the Children
YWBOD	Youth without Borders Organization for Development
CCs	Children Councils
CSOs	Civil society organizations
DfA	De facto authority
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
CBIs	Community-based initiatives
KIIs	Key informant interviews
FGD	Focus group discussion
GBV	Gender-based violence
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
INGO	International non-Government Organization
IRG	Internationally Recognized Government
MoE	Ministry of Education
OSESGY	Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for Yemen
SFD	Social Fund for Development
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

◆ **List of Acronyms**

UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive Summary

The ongoing conflict in Yemen, now in its ninth year, has created an unparalleled humanitarian crisis, with children bearing the brunt of its devastating consequences. Taiz, one of the most conflict-affected regions, exemplifies the compounded challenges faced by children across Yemen. This research offers a comprehensive analysis of the impact of the conflict on children's education, protection, and psychological well-being, with a focus on the districts of Al-Qahira, Salah, Saber Al-Mawadem, and Al-Ma'afer in Taiz.

Drawing from both quantitative (survey questionnaire) and qualitative (extensive desk research, key informant interviews (KIIs), and focus group discussions (FGDs)) the findings reveal how these aspects are not only critical to children's immediate survival and development but are deeply interconnected, recognizing them as interconnected pillars essential for safeguarding children's rights and securing their futures. The conflict has devastated educational systems, eroded child protection mechanisms, and left deep psychological scars, exacerbating vulnerabilities in an already fragile environment.

Understanding these issues in an integrated manner highlights the need for urgent, holistic interventions tailored to address both the short-term and long-term needs of children, particularly in gender-sensitive and conflict-affected contexts, to break the cycle of vulnerability and provide children with the tools to heal, learn, and thrive. This executive summary and recommendations emphasize a cohesive approach to addressing the educational, protective, and psychological needs of children in Taiz. By recognizing the interdependencies of these domains and adopting tailored, context-sensitive strategies, it is possible to foster recovery and resilience for Yemen's most vulnerable population.

Findings

1. Education

1,1. Collapse of Educational Infrastructure

1,1,1. Approximately 2,400 schools nationwide are either damaged, destroyed, or repurposed for military or displacement-related uses.

1,1,2. In Taiz, schools in conflict zones are inaccessible, forcing children into unsafe or makeshift learning environments. Noted by a KII informant, some children study under trees with no basic learning materials.

1,2. Displacement and Accessibility Challenges

1,2,1. Over 5,000 displaced children in Taiz camps remain out of school, lacking transportation or facilities. Explained by FGD participants, many displaced children are unable to enroll because their school documents were lost during the conflict.

Executive Summary

1,2,2. Distance to schools disproportionately affects girls, with families prioritizing safety over education, leading to higher female dropout rates.

1,3. Economic and Psychological Barriers

1,3,1. Remarked in quantitative and qualitative data, poverty forces families to withdraw children, especially boys, to engage in labor. Girls, meanwhile, face pressure to marry early.

1,3,2. Persistent trauma from conflict leaves children disengaged. In a FGD session, a teacher observed, "Many children are inattentive, reflecting fear and exhaustion from daily survival struggles."

1,3,3. Weak Payment and lack of Professional Development
Teachers face unpaid salaries, unsafe working conditions, and a lack of professional development, further diminishing the quality of education.

2. Protection

2,1. Exploitation of Children

2,1,1. According to the Desk Review, more than 3,400 Yemeni children have been forcibly recruited since 2015, many by Ansar Allah (Houthi) forces. Boys are often coerced into combat roles, while girls face sexual violence or are subjected to early marriage.

2,2. Gender-Specific Risks

2,2,1. Displaced children are particularly vulnerable to abuse in overcrowded camps or informal settlements, where safety and oversight are minimal.

2,2,2. Girls face systemic vulnerabilities, including sexual exploitation and forced marriage, exacerbated by displacement. Highlighted by a KII informant, "early marriage has become a survival strategy for many families."

2,2,3. Boys face pressure to contribute financially to families or join armed groups. This point along with the previous one are exacerbated by economic desperation and harmful coping mechanisms.

2,3. Ineffectiveness of Child Protection Systems

2,3,1. Informants universally reported the absence of formal child protection structures, leaving children to rely on inadequate family or community support. Admitted by a FGD respondent, "we lack any collective mechanisms to report abuse or exploitation."

3. Psychological Support

3,1. Widespread Psychological Trauma

3,1,1. Children exhibit signs of PTSD, anxiety, and depression, stemming from years of exposure to violence. Noted by a KII informant, "children frequently experience nightmares, bedwetting, and stuttering."

3,1,2. Informants emphasized how children mimic violence in their behavior: "War games in schoolyards reflect their normalized exposure to conflict," one respondent explained."

3,2. Neglect of Mental Health Services

3,2,1. Despite the scale of trauma, mental health services remain scarce and underfunded. While community and international initiatives, such as child-friendly spaces and art therapy sessions, have provided temporary relief, these programs lack sustainability. The absence of sustained psychological support initiatives leaves children and families to manage trauma on their own. Remarked by a FGD participant, "psychological sessions are rare and often stop after funding dries up."

3,3. Community Breakdown

3,3,1. Parental trauma further hinders children's recovery. A Key Informant observed, "parents themselves are struggling with trauma, leaving them unable to provide emotional stability for their children."

1,14. Develop initiatives that facilitate and encourage parental involvement in their children's education, potentially through community-based programs or school events.

1,15. Implement programs that offer financial support or flexible schooling options to students who need to work could help in reducing the educational disruption caused by economic pressures.

2. Protection and Psychological Support

2,1. Strengthen programs that equip families with the tools to support their children emotionally and psychologically. Training on communication strategies and emotional intelligence could be beneficial.

2,2. Expand community support activities and ensure they are inclusive and accessible to all children to help mitigate the adverse effects of conflict on children's psychological health.

2,3. Develop school-based counseling and peer support programs could provide critical outlets, especially for children who do not talk to anyone when upset.

2,4. Implement educational campaigns to raise awareness among children, families, and educators about the importance of mental health and the availability of resources.

2,5. Increase the availability and accessibility of child-friendly mental health services in schools and communities. This could involve training more child psychologists, providing mobile health units, and integrating mental health services with regular health check-ups.

2,6. Work with community leaders, schools, and healthcare professionals to reduce stigma associated with mental health issues. This can be achieved through workshops, community talks, and school programs that educate and open dialogue about mental health.

2,7. Address early marriage through awareness campaigns targeting families in rural and displaced communities. Collaboration with local religious leaders could be an effective strategy to discourage child marriages and advocate for children's rights.

2,8. Enhance coordination among civil society organizations, government bodies, and educational institutions to unify efforts for child protection.

Additional Recommendations

1. Advocate for stronger government policies prioritizing children's rights and well-being, including funding for education and mental health services.

2. Form community watch groups, including women and youth leaders, to monitor and report violations.

3. Partner with key stakeholders to develop child protection hotlines accessible even in remote areas.

4. Provide holistic interventions that address parental trauma alongside children's needs, ensuring stable family dynamics.

1. Introduction

1,1. Context Analysis

The conflict in Yemen, which escalated in 2015, has had devastating effects on the country's social fabric, economy, and governance structures, especially affecting its youngest and most vulnerable citizens. The significant decline in economic conditions, widespread damage to civilian infrastructure, and the breakdown of essential services are major factors contributing to extensive vulnerabilities and needs across the country. In such a conflict-affected environment as Taiz, children are particularly vulnerable, facing disruptions in education, protection violations, and limitations on participation in governance processes. The rapid economic decline has fueled local grievances and rivalries. In particular, children bear psychological scars from years of violence and displacement.[1]

From March 2015 to March 2023, Mwatana for Human Rights recorded 875 indiscriminate ground attacks, which led to the deaths of 799 civilians, including 128 women and 335 children.[2] Additionally, at least 1,743 more individuals were injured, comprising 307 women and 575 children. The Saudi/UAE-led Coalition and their allied forces were responsible for 144 of these attacks, while the DfA was accountable for 534 attacks, and the forces of Yemen's internationally recognized government were responsible for 115 attacks.[3]

Moreover, Mwatana recorded numerous instances of child recruitment by various conflict parties, who have utilized these children in security, logistical, or combat roles during military operations. Between March 2015 and March 2023, Mwatana documented a total of 2,615 cases involving the recruitment and use of 3,402 children, including girls.[4] The DfA armed group recruited at least 2,566 children, while the Saudi/UAE-led Coalition and their allied forces recruited and employed 284 children.[5] Additionally, Mwatana noted that Yemen's internationally recognized government forces recruited and utilized 552 children.[6] Conspicuously, International law explicitly prohibits the direct involvement of children in hostilities, establishing the minimum age for such participation at 18 years.

Nationwide, 20,7 million people need humanitarian assistance, with 12,1 million in acute need, including a significant number of children.[7] Four out of five children in Yemen require some form of humanitarian assistance. 400,000 children under five suffer from severe acute malnutrition, and more than 8,1 million need emergency education support.[8] In 2023, over 21,6 million people, including 11,1 million children, needed humanitarian assistance and protection, and approximately 4,5 million people were estimated to be internally displaced.[9]

1 https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-needs-overview-2024-january-2024-enar
2 Mwatana for Human Rights (2023). "Thousands of Victims Waiting for Justice and Redress." https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/thousands-victims-waiting-justice-and-redress-enar
3 Ibid
4 Mwatana for Human Rights (2023). "Thousands of Victims Waiting for Justice and Redress." https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/thousands-victims-waiting-justice-and-redress-enar
5 Ibid
6 Ibid
7 Save the Children (2022). "No Place is Safe in Yemen: The impact of seven years of conflict on children in Yemen." Child Rights Resource Centre.
https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/impact_conflict_children_Yemen_2022.pdf/
8 Save the Children (2022). "No Place is Safe in Yemen: The impact of seven years of conflict on children in Yemen." Child Rights Resource Centre.
https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/impact_conflict_children_Yemen_2022.pdf/
9 UNICEF Yemen Humanitarian Situation Report No. 4, January – December 2023. Yemen Humanitarian Situation Report No. 4, End of Year 2023 | UNICEF

While 8,6 million children—among them 2,7 million who were out of school—required educational support, such as reintegration into formal education, due to damage and disruptions to educational facilities and services caused by conflict.[10] Yemen's children bear the brunt of the conflict, and in Taiz, this is particularly pronounced.

Taiz is the most populous governorate in Yemen, with approximately 4 million residents, accounting for %12,2 of the country's total population.[11] Covering an area of 10,008 square kilometers, Taiz is divided into 23 districts. The coastal region of Taiz holds significant geopolitical importance, featuring the historic city and port of Al-Mokha and bordering the strategically vital Bab-el-Mandeb Strait. In each of the 23 districts of Taiz, power is divided among three entities: the IRG, which has full control over eight districts; the DfA (Ansar Allah), which governs four districts; and the joint forces allied with the government that oversee the coastal areas. Additionally, the IRG and DfA share varying degrees of control in seven districts. This intricate political situation is a result of the DfA's siege on the city, which has formed a semi-closed circle around it. The siege began in Al-Hawban area of At-Ta'iziyah district and expanded to the north and west of Taiz city, reaching Jabal Habashi and Maqbana districts to the west and Sabir Al-Mawadim district to the southeast. The IRG maintains control over the city center and the rural districts to the south, while the joint forces manage the western coastal regions up to Bab-el-Mandeb Strait.


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10 Ibid
11 "Siege of Taiz: A Humanitarian Crisis (2024)." American Center for Justice (ACJ). https://www.mopic-taiz.com/wp-content/uploads/08/2024/Siege-of-Taiz-A-Humanitarian-Crisis.pdf

The situation in Taiz, one of the conflict's hardest-hit areas, has been particularly dire, with widespread violence, displacement, and destruction of infrastructure exacerbating the challenges faced by children. Taiz governorate, home to an estimated 4 million people, representing ٪12,2 of the Yemeni population, has been severely impacted by the conflict, particularly due to a siege imposed by DfA.[12] The city of Taiz remained under siege for 9 year, with frequent shelling, sniper fire, and restricted movement due to road closures. The blockade and hostilities have exacerbated the already fragile state of education and protection services for children in Taiz.

[13]
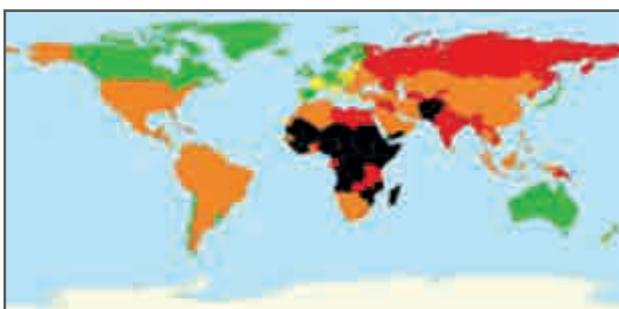
Realization of Children's Rights Index:

Black level: Very serious situation ■■■■■

The siege has also pushed many families to withdraw children from schools due to fear of violence. The inability to safely travel to school, combined with the destruction of educational facilities, has led to 2,2 million children being out of school in Yemen, with many of these concentrated in Taiz.[14] Moreover, thousands of children face significant risks such as child recruitment, forced labor, early marriage, and sexual violence. Nationwide, from March 2015 to November 2022, the UN has confirmed that over 11,000 children have been killed or severely injured.[15] More than 4,000 children have been recruited and used by armed groups, and there have been over 900 attacks on and military uses of educational and health facilities.[16] These actions severely obstruct children's fundamental rights to safe and adequate access to health care and education. Since these figures only reflect verified cases, the actual numbers are likely much higher.

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12 Siege of Taiz: A Humanitarian Crisis (2024). American Center for Justice (ACJ). https://www.mopic-taiz.com/wp-content/uploads/08/2024/Siege-of-Taiz-A-Humanitarian-Crisis.pdf
13 Taken from https://www.humanium.org/en/yemen/
14 Save the Children (2022). "No Place is Safe in Yemen: The impact of seven years of conflict on children in Yemen." Child Rights Resource Centre.
https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/impact_conflict_children_Yemen_2022.pdf/
15 UNICEF (8" .(2023 years of crushing conflict in Yemen leave more than 11 million children in need of humanitarian assistance."
https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/-8years-crushing-conflict-yemen-leave-more-11-million-children-need-humanitarian
16 Ibid

In 2023, the UN confirmed 809 serious violations affecting 666 children (546 boys and 120 girls)[17]. These violations included the recruitment and use of 173 children by the Yemen Armed Forces and affiliated armed forces and groups, the killing and maiming of 479, sexual violence against 37 ,24 attacks on schools and hospitals, the abduction of 4 children, and 92 instances of denied humanitarian access[18]. Thus, children's participation in decision-making processes, community life, or civic engagement is often limited due to these multifaceted forms of deprivation and violations. Studies emphasize the importance of engaging children in child-friendly spaces (CFS) to mitigate some of these impacts, but implementation remains challenging in war-torn areas like Taiz.

1,2. Research Significance

This research is of critical importance as it sheds light on the severe and multifaceted impacts of the ongoing conflict in Taiz on its most vulnerable inhabitants: children. While extensive research exists on the broader impacts of Yemen's conflict, there are significant gaps in localized data for Taiz. Most studies focus on nationwide trends, leaving a need for granular data that highlights district-level disparities and informs targeted interventions. By focusing on the interconnected aspects of education, protection, and psychological support, the research not only documents the current conditions but also emphasizes the urgent need for comprehensive interventions. The findings serve as a vital tool for policymakers, humanitarian organizations, and community leaders, providing them with the evidence needed to tailor their responses effectively. Moreover, this research contributes to the broader discourse on child rights and protection in conflict zones, advocating for a strategic focus on the holistic development and well-being of children. Through detailed analysis and actionable insights, this report aims to mobilize sustained and coordinated efforts to mitigate the effects of conflict on children and to ensure that their rights are preserved and promoted in the midst of turmoil.

1,3. Research Objectives

The research report aims to:

• Examine the economic, social, and cultural factors affecting children's rights and well-being.

• Assess the impact of the conflict on children's education in Taiz, focusing on access, quality, and dropout rates.

• Investigate the protection challenges faced by children, including safety concerns and the availability of child protection services.

• Evaluate the psychological well-being of children and the accessibility of mental health support in conflict-affected areas.

• Provide actionable recommendations for policymakers, NGOs, and other stakeholders to mitigate these impacts.

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17 Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General. n2409507.pdf (un.org)
18 Ibid

1,4. Research Questions

• How has the conflict affected children's access to education in Taiz?

• What role do schools play in fostering social peace and resilience, and what opportunities exist for scaling up such efforts?

• What are the key protection risks faced by children in the target context?

• How do economic and cultural factors contribute to the protection risks faced by children, including child labor, early marriage, and exposure to violence?

• To what extent do children have access to psychological support services?

• What strategies can effectively address these challenges and improve children's well-being?

1,5. Key Concepts and Variables

The research framework categorizes the key concepts and variables as follows:

1,5,1. Education:

o Status of Education: Enrollment rates, school infrastructure, and status of teaching (teachers' availability and professionality.

o Economic Barriers: Child labor, cost of education, and family income levels.

o Gender Disparities: Differences in access and participation between boys and girls.

o Role of Schools: Contribution to social cohesion and community resilience.

1,5,2. Protection:

o Status of Protection Services: Availability and accessibility of formal mechanisms to prevent abuse, exploitation, and violence.

o Children's Access to Protection: Barriers related to geography, culture, and infrastructure.

o Human Rights Violations: Child recruitment, early marriage, and GBV.

1,5,3. Psychological Well-being:

o Mental Health Challenges: Prevalence of anxiety, PTSD, and depression among children.

o Support Services: Availability and quality of psychological counseling and trauma-informed programs.

1,6. Structure of the Report

This report is structured as follows:

• Introduction: This section sets the stage for the report by outlining the scope of the research and its significance. It provides an overview of the ongoing conflict in Taiz and its impact on children, underscoring the need for a focused study on education, protection, and psychological support. The introduction also details the research framework used to gather and analyze data, emphasizing the mixed-methods approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative to ensure a well-rounded understanding of the issues at hand.

- **Literature Review:** Synthesizes existing research and highlights gaps in knowledge.
- **Research Methodology:** Describes the mixed-methods approach used to collect and analyze data.
- **Results and Discussion:** Presents and interprets the results of the study, categorized into education, protection, and psychological support in the context of existing literature and highlights implications for policy and practice.
- **Conclusion and Recommendations:** Summarizes key insights and offers practical solutions.
- **References and Appendices:** Provides supporting documents and data.

2. Research Methodology

The methodology adopted for this research combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges affecting children's education, protection, and psychological well-being in Taiz. This mixed-methods approach ensured the collection of robust and diverse data, capturing both measurable trends and in-depth narratives from various stakeholders and community members.

2,1. Research Design

The research utilized a mixed-methods design, integrating quantitative and qualitative research methods to address the complex and multidimensional nature of the research questions. This approach was chosen to:

1. Quantify the scale and prevalence of challenges through survey data.

2. Explore nuanced insights and contextual factors through qualitative methods such as key informant interviews and focus group discussions.

3. Synthesize findings from existing literature to enrich the analysis and provide a broader context.

2,2. Data Collection Methods

2,2,1. Quantitative Data Collection

The quantitative component of the research involved administering a structured survey to children across four districts: Al-Qahera, Salah, Saber Al-Mawadem, and Al-Ma'afer. Key aspects of the quantitative methodology include:

• **Survey Administration:** A total of 454 Kobo survey questionnaires were collected by CCs members. Each district was represented by six CCs members, resulting in a total of 24 children who were instrumental in gathering data. The child researchers were trained in advance, supervised and mentored to monitor the quality and reliability of field research work.

• **Sample Composition:** The sample population comprised children aged 14-12 ,11-8, and 17-15, ensuring representation across key developmental stages.
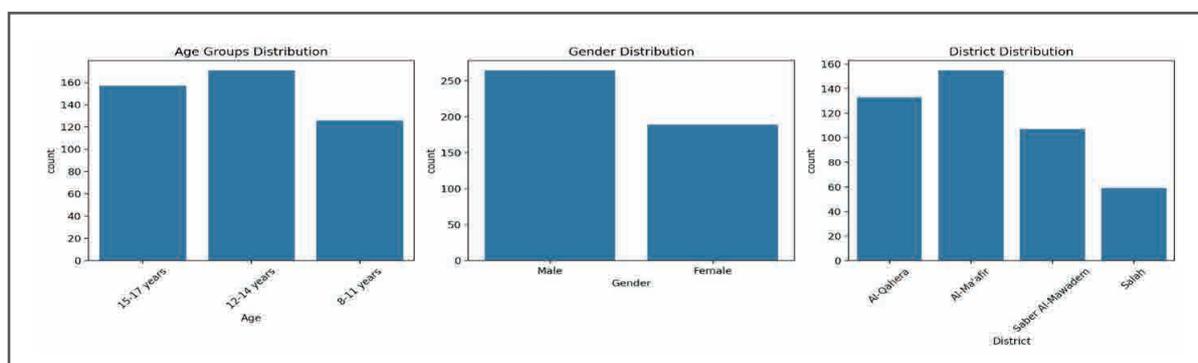
● The survey also accounted for diversity in gender (boys and girls) and included children from marginalized and vulnerable groups, such as:

o Displaced Children: Those forced to flee their homes due to conflict.

o Children with Disabilities: Ensuring representation of their unique challenges.

o Marginalized Communities: Including those from socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

● Survey Instrument: The questionnaire was designed to capture both numerical data and personal experiences. It included:

o Closed-Ended Questions: Focused on measurable indicators such as school attendance, access to protection services, and psychological well-being.

o Open-Ended Questions: Provided children the opportunity to express their perspectives, challenges, and coping mechanisms in their own words.

2,2,2. Qualitative Data Collection

The qualitative component aimed to complement the quantitative data by providing deeper insights into the lived experiences of children and stakeholders. Three primary methods were employed:

2,2,2,1. Desk Review

The research involved an extensive desk review of multiple reports, studies, and policy documents related to children's rights, education, and protection in Yemen. This secondary data provided critical context, identified trends, and highlighted existing gaps in the literature.

2,2,2,2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

A total of **25 KIIs** were conducted with a diverse range of stakeholders to capture varying perspectives and expertise. KIIs followed a semi-structured format, allowing flexibility to explore emerging themes while maintaining a focus on core research questions. Interviews with high-level personnel who are at leading and decision-making positions in various sectors (government, civil society, and private sector) are held at the governorate and district levels, to learn about their opinions regarding children needs, challenges, their programming, strategies, directions and their recommendations for the future.

The list of the KIIs includes members from the following entities: Heads of local councils in the target districts, Executive office of the Ministry of Education in Taiz, Executive office of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour in Taiz, Executive office of the Ministry of Health in Taiz, and their districts-affiliated offices, INGOs and CSOs working in the field of children, national human rights agencies, Schools' principals, Hospitals' personnel, Academicians and researchers, mental health specialists, etc.

2,2,2,3. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Four FGDs were conducted, one in each district, involving community members. FGDs served as a platform to:

● Facilitate open dialogue about collective challenges and coping strategies.

● Explore district-specific variations in experiences and needs.

Discussions were guided by a structured framework to ensure comprehensive coverage of topics such as education access, protection risks, and psychological well-being.

2,3. Data analysis

2,3,1. Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis aimed to systematically examine the survey data collected by CCs members, providing measurable insights into the challenges affecting children's education, protection, and psychological well-being across the four districts of Taiz. This portion of analysis underwent several processes and techniques:

● **Data Preparation and Cleaning**

Before conducting the analysis, the survey data underwent a thorough cleaning and preparation process to ensure accuracy and consistency:

o **Data Validation:** Survey responses were reviewed to identify incomplete or inconsistent entries. Missing responses were either excluded from specific analyses or treated using statistical imputation methods to preserve data integrity.

o **Data Categorization:** Open-ended responses were categorized into thematic interpretation to allow integration with qualitative analysis. Themes such as "economic barriers," "safety concerns," and "psychological distress" were identified for further exploration.

● **Descriptive Statistical Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used to provide an overview of key variables, summarizing the state of education, protection, and psychological support across the four districts:

o Frequencies and Percentages: The percentage of children attending school was calculated for each district and age group to identify disparities. For example, preliminary analysis revealed that 60% of children aged 8–11 attended school regularly in Al–Ma'afer, compared to only 35% in Salah.

o Demographic Breakdown: Analysis by gender showed that girls were less likely to attend school compared to boys, particularly in rural districts like Saber Al–Mawadem. This highlighted gender-based disparities in education access. Children with disabilities and those from marginalized communities were identified as the least likely to access education, with dropout rates exceeding 50% in certain areas.

o Geographic Trends: Descriptive statistics revealed stark differences between urban and rural districts. For instance:

• Al–Qahera showed higher rates of school enrollment but also higher safety concerns.

• Rural districts like Saber Al–Mawadem exhibited significantly lower access to psychological support services.

A detailed example of findings:

"Of the 454 surveyed children, 40% reported that economic barriers, such as the inability to afford school supplies, were the primary reason for absenteeism. Safety concerns were cited by 25%, particularly among girls in Al–Qahera."

• **Cross-Tabulation Analysis**

Cross-tabulations were performed to explore relationships between demographic variables (age, gender, district) and key indicators such as school attendance, protection risks, and psychological distress. Key insights include:

1. Gender and School Attendance:

o Girls were 1,5 times more likely than boys to drop out of school due to safety concerns. This trend was most pronounced in Al–Qahera and Salah, where 60% of girls aged 12–14 reported feeling unsafe commuting to school.

o Boys, on the other hand, were more likely to leave school for economic reasons, with over 70% of surveyed boys in Saber Al–Mawadem citing the need to work as a barrier to education.

2. Age and Psychological Distress:

o Older children **(15-17 years)** exhibited higher levels of psychological distress compared to younger age groups. Symptoms of anxiety and depression were most prevalent among children in conflict–affected districts like Al–Qahera, where 50% of respondents reported experiencing frequent fear or sadness.

o Younger children (11–8 years) were more likely to express confusion and dependency, reflecting their heightened vulnerability to trauma.

3. District Comparisons:

o Cross-tabulations highlighted district-specific challenges. For instance:

• **Salah:** Safety concerns and proximity to conflict zones were the primary deterrents for both education and protection services.

• **Al-Qahera:** Economic barriers (e.g., child labor) were the most significant factor limiting school attendance.

• **Saber Al-Mawadem:** Distance to schools and lack of transportation emerged as the key barriers.

2,4. Ethical Considerations

1. Informed Consent: Participation was voluntary, with consent obtained from children and their guardians before the survey.

2. Confidentiality: Personal data was anonymized to protect the identities of respondents.

3. Child-Centric Approach: The research design and methodology prioritized the safety and comfort of children, ensuring the questions were age-appropriate and non-intrusive.

2,5. Limitations

While the study provides valuable insights, some limitations should be noted:

1. Geographical Constraints: Due to ongoing conflict, some areas were inaccessible, potentially limiting the representativeness of the data.

2. Self-Reporting Bias: Responses may be influenced by children's perceptions and experiences, which could vary based on external factors.

This robust methodology ensures that the findings presented in this report are both credible and reflective of the real challenges faced by children in Taiz.

3. Results and Discussion

This section presents the detailed findings derived from the survey data and literature review. The results are categorized into three key areas: education impact, protection challenges, and psychological support. Each category is supported by quantitative insights, qualitative narratives, and visual representations to provide a holistic view of the challenges faced by children in Taiz.

3,1. Education Impact

Access to education in Taiz has been severely disrupted by the ongoing conflict, leaving children in the districts of Al-Qahera, Salah, Saber Al-Mawadem, and Al-Ma'afer facing significant barriers. These barriers are multifaceted, arising from a combination of infrastructural damage, socio-economic challenges, safety concerns, and systemic inequities. This section provides a detailed examination of the educational crisis in Taiz, supported by insights from quantitative data, desk reviews, and qualitative findings from KIIs and FGDs.

"Allowing children to leave education has long-term effects on society. Ignorance breeds a generation that is unaware, uneducated, and susceptible to violence and recruitment by armed groups, leading to an environment that is exposed to all types of risks."

Confidential interview, Coordinator of the Education Cluster in Taiz and the West Coast, male, November 10, 2024.

1. Access to Schools

Approximately 84% of surveyed children reported attending school, though attendance rates varied significantly across districts. Children in conflict-affected districts struggle to maintain consistent education due to external and systemic challenges.

1,1. Al-Qahera (92%) and Salah (88%) reported higher attendance rates due to better infrastructure.

Education Access Across Districts
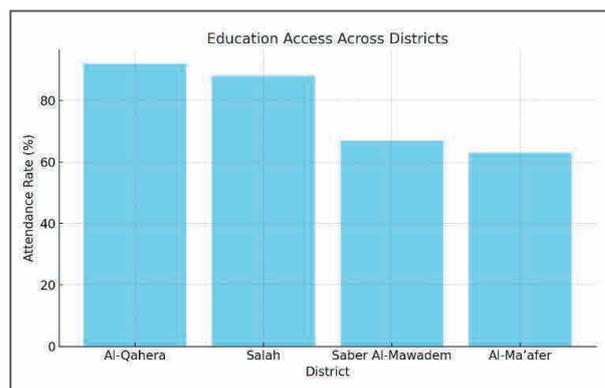
1,2. Saber Al–Mawadem (69٪) and Al–Ma'afer (63٪) had the lowest attendance rates due to active conflict zones and poor road access.

The bar chart above displays the percentage of children who regularly attend school in each district. As illustrated, urban districts (Al–Qahera and Salah) show a slightly higher percentage of regular attendance compared to the rural districts (Saber Al–Mawadem and Al–Ma'afir), which may be reflective of better accessibility or resources.
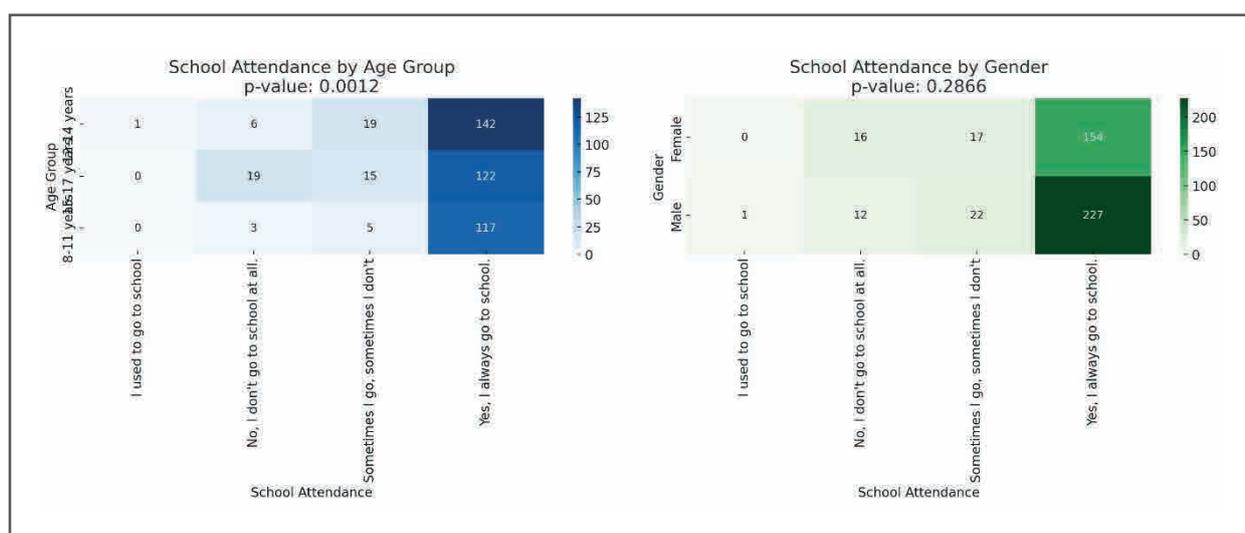
o **Age–Specific Patterns in School Attendance:**

As indicated in the figure above, the chi–squared test between age groups and school attendance shows a statistically significant association (p–value = 0,0012). This suggests that school attendance varies significantly across different age groups, indicating tailored intervention strategies may be necessary to address the specific needs and challenges faced by each age group.

o **Gender Differences in School Attendance:**

In the same figure above, the analysis between gender and school attendance shows no statistically significant difference (p–value = 0,2866). This implies that gender, by itself, does not significantly affect school attendance rates, suggesting that interventions may not need to be gender–specific regarding attendance but could focus more on other aspects where gender differences might exist.

2. Education Barriers

As per the dataset, both quantitative and qualitative, the barriers to children's access to education can be grouped under three critical categories: Economic Hardships, Safety-related Concerns, and Lack of Resources, demonstrated in detail below.

2,1. Economic Hardships

The economic instability in Yemen, exacerbated by ongoing conflict and blockades, has had a severe impact on the affordability and accessibility of education. As the Yemeni economy continues to collapse, most families are finding it increasingly difficult to provide basic educational necessities for their children, such as tuition fees, school supplies, and uniforms. By July 2021, over 2 million school-age children in Yemen were out of school due to poverty, conflict, and a lack of educational opportunities, and the situation has deteriorated since then.[19]

39 percent of the school-aged population in the country are not attending school.[20] Those fortunate enough have enrolled their children in private schools, where they face high tuition and fees. This troubling figure raises serious concerns about the well-being and future of these children, as well as the overall prospects for the nation, since education is crucial for recovery. Yemen's challenging economic conditions, a major contributor to the educational crisis, have also increased risks to children's safety, pushing parents and caregivers to adopt harmful coping mechanisms like child labor and early marriage.[21] They are caught between the desire for a brighter future for their children and the urgent need to address their current circumstances.[22] As one interviewee expressed "The biggest challenge facing children in their pursuit of education is their inability to learn due to the poor economic conditions of their families."[23] Addressing these economic barriers is crucial for ensuring consistent school attendance and reducing dropout rates. Those boys and girls deprived of education are more likely to remain trapped in a cycle of poverty and unrealized potential throughout their lives, facing a higher risk of violence, child labor, and early marriage.[24]

19 Moneer H. Saif (2023). "A Lifeline in Yemen: Private Sector Support to Education in a Time of Crisis." Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). A Lifeline in Yemen: Private Sector Support to Education in a Time of Crisis | INEE
20 Save the Children (2024). Hanging in the Balance: Yemeni Children's Struggle for Education. https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/-2024Yemen-9-Years-Conflict-Anniversary-Report.pdf/
21 Ibid
22 Ibid
23 Confidential interview, Quasi-governmental entity, Empowerment Program Officer, Taiz, male, Nov. 2024 ,7.
24 Yemen conflict's eight-year mark - how life in the war-torn country has been unfolding | CARE International UK

According to the quantitative data, economic factors play a significant role, with a noticeable number of students reporting that economic necessities, such as having to work, impede their educational pursuits. ٪31,6 of children indicated that their families could not afford the costs associated with education. The figure below presents a detailed breakdown and visualization of the economic hardships as barriers to education, categorized by district:
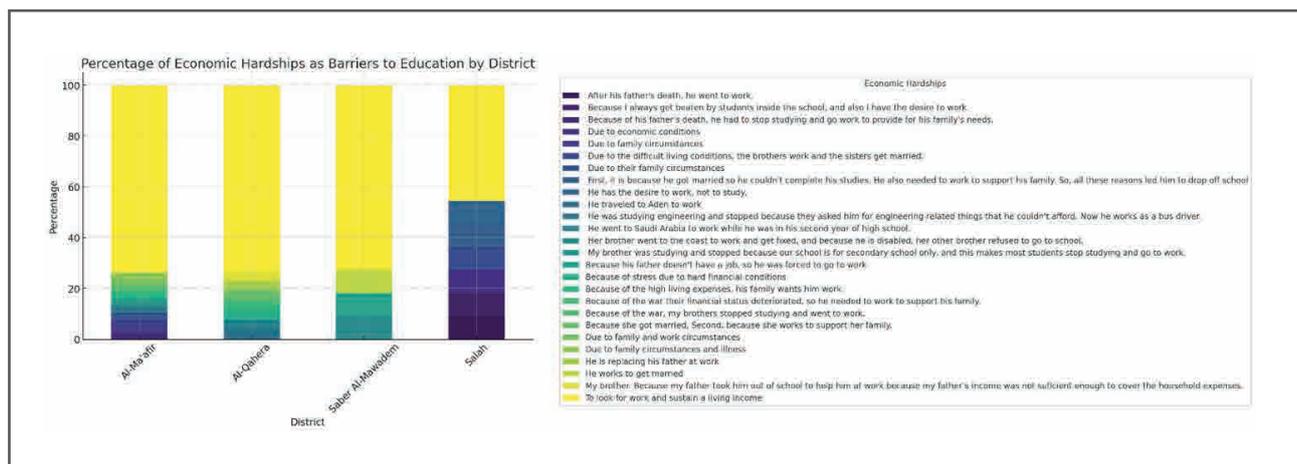
As the figure above shows, each bar represents a district, and it's color-coded to show the proportion of different economic hardship reasons mentioned by students. Here are some highlights from the data:

• **To look for work and sustain a living income** is the predominant reason across most districts, with significant percentages in:

▪ **Al-Ma'afir:** ~٪73,68
▪ **Al-Qahera:** ~٪73,08
▪ **Saber Al-Mawadem:** ~٪72,73
▪ **Salah:** ~٪45,45

• **Because of his father's death, he had to stop studying and go work to provide for his family's needs** ranging from ٪0 in some districts up to ٪9,09 in Salah.

▪ The district **Salah** shows more diverse reasons compared to other districts, which might indicate varied economic and social conditions affecting education.

The visualization above provides a comprehensive view of how economic hardships impact educational opportunities across districts, highlighting specific challenges that could be addressed through targeted interventions. According to a monthly forecast by the Security Council, the struggle with food insecurity has compelled 30 percent of girls in Yemen to marry before turning 18, and the current number of out-of-school children, which is 4,5 million, is expected to increase as they are required to leave school to support their families.[25]

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25 https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/09-2024/yemen70-.php

Most of the respondents in KIIs and FGDs describe a distressing scenario where parents must choose between feeding their children and sending them to school, with many opting to prioritize immediate survival needs over educational aspirations. This decision, though heart-wrenching, reflects the stark realities faced by many families in conflict-affected areas like Taiz, where the economic impact of ongoing hostilities severely limits their options. A key informant stated, "the economic situation has had a profound impact, leading many students to drop out of school because their parents can no longer afford expenses such as clothing and school supplies."[26]

The dataset provides a thorough analysis addressing the origins and causes of economic insecurity affecting educational environments across the districts. There are factors contributing to economic insecurity among families.

■ **Unemployment Rates:** Economic data from the regions show that high unemployment rates in districts like Salah and Al-Ma'afir have a direct impact on families' ability to support their children's education. Many responses mention parents prioritizing work over education for their children due to the necessity of meeting basic living expenses. The impact of unemployment on children's education is profound, as it leads to financial strain on families, resulting in the inability to afford school fees, supplies, and other educational necessities. This situation, as per an informant, "forces children to drop out of school prematurely, limiting their access to quality education and hindering their future opportunities."[27]

■ **Household Income:** Low household income is a recurrent theme across all districts, with many families struggling to afford basic educational materials. This issue is particularly acute in rural areas where economic opportunities are more limited. Nearly all the respondents in the KIIs and FGDs reiterated that this issue is critically significant, "many students have dropped out of school to work and support their families financially...The situation is interconnected; since the war has begun, prices has been rising, and people's purchasing power decreased, consequently affecting student enrollment."[28]

■ **Lack of Support Programs:** There is a notable lack of effective governmental or non-governmental support programs that could alleviate these economic pressures. Responses call for more scholarships, subsidized schooling, and financial aid programs to support educational pursuits.

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26 Confidential interview, school vice-principal, Al-Ma'afir district – Taiz, male, October 29, 2024.
27 Confidential interview, Deputy Director General and Director of the Associations and Federations Department, Social Affairs and Labor Office, Taiz, male, Nov. 10, 2024.
28 Confidential interview, Director of the Education Office, Saber Al-Mawadem district- Taiz, male, Nov. 4, 2024.

In Taiz, the interplay between economic instability and the ongoing conflict has deeply impacted both school attendance and the quality of education, creating significant barriers for students' academic advancement. This leads to environments where learning is not only challenged by the lack of materials but also by the psychological impacts of the ongoing conflict, which affect both students and teachers alike. The Desk Review Report highlights that "the pervasive economic issues have not only reduced school attendance but have also degraded the educational environment, making it difficult for children to engage and succeed academically." [29]

2,2.Damaged Infrastructure and Lack of Resources

2,2,1. Infrastructure

According to American Center for Justice (ACJ), the average number of students in technical and vocational institutes plummeted from 10,300 to 2,136, indicating a loss of 8,137 students due to the siege 32.[30] Besides, the war has caused damages amounting to 81,262,135$ in the education sector, including the destruction of buildings and educational materials.[31] According to research conducted globally by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), nations with higher levels of education tend to enjoy greater social and political stability, while, conversely, the opposite is also evident.[32] Another key finding of the research is that enhancements in peace indicators lead to increased investment in education.[33] Nations that allocate more resources to education tend to experience greater levels of peace.

29 Save the Children (2024). Hanging in the Balance: Yemeni Children's Struggle for Education.
https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/-2024Yemen-9-Years-Conflict-Anniversary-Report.pdf/
30 Siege of Taiz: A Humanitarian Crisis (2024). American Center for Justice (ACJ). https://www.mopic-taiz.com/wp-content/uploads/08/2024/Siege-of-Taiz-A-Humanitarian-Crisis.pdf
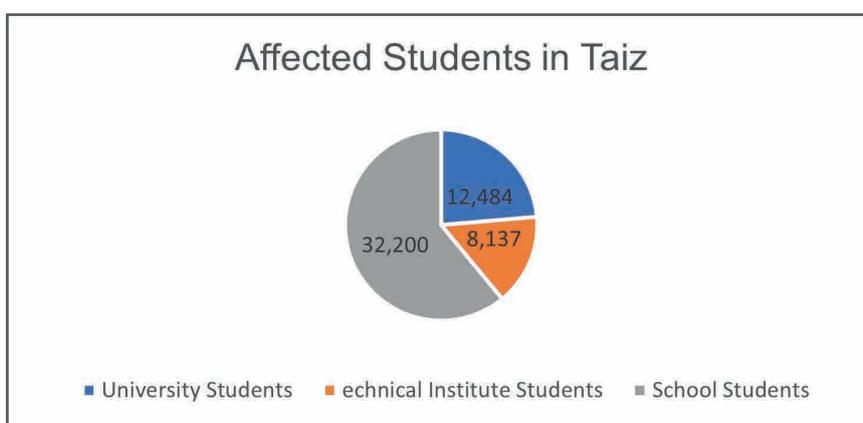31 Ibid
32 "Education: A Path to a Peaceful Future" (2024). Global Partnership for Education. https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/education-path-peaceful-future
33 Ibid

منظمة شباب بلا حدود للتنمية
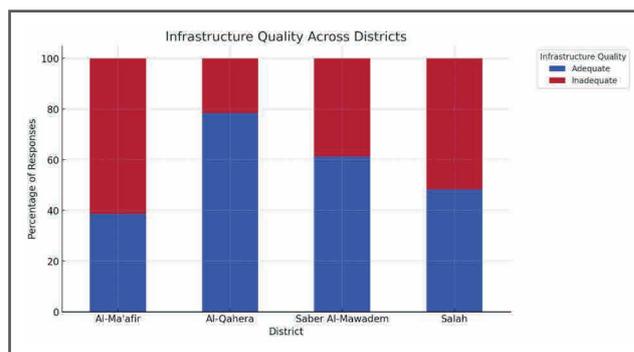Youth Without Borders Organization for Development

Throughout Yemen, more than 2,400 schools are either partially or fully damaged, or are being used for purposes other than education.[34] In Taiz, almost a third of the 376 documented airstrikes on educational facilities across Yemen have occurred.[35] Schools have been destroyed, leaving children without safe places to learn. 293 people have died, and 248 have been injured as a direct result of these attacks.[36] These deliberate attacks on education facilities violate international humanitarian law and result in long-term disruptions to children's education. This also entails that children have limited or no access to safe learning environments.

[37]

Affected Students in Taiz

- University Students
- echnical Institute Students
- School Students

12,484
8,137
32,200

Based on the quantitative data, the bar chart below illustrates the perception of infrastructure quality across the four districts: Al-Qahera, Salah, Saber Al-Mawadem, and Al-Ma'afir.

- **Al-Qahera** shows a higher perception of adequate infrastructure, with about ٪78,5 of responses indicating satisfactory conditions.

- **Al-Ma'afir** contrasts sharply, with only ٪38,7 of responses viewing infrastructure as adequate, and a significant ٪61,3 finding it inadequate.

Infrastructure Quality Across Districts

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34 OCHA (2024). "Yemen Humanitarian Update: Issue 6, August/September 2024."
https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-update-issue-6-augustseptember-2024-enar
35 Save the Children (2022). "No Place is Safe in Yemen: The impact of seven years of conflict on children in Yemen." Child Rights Resource Centre.
https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/impact_conflict_children_Yemen_2022.pdf/
36 Save the Children (2022). "No Place is Safe in Yemen: The impact of seven years of conflict on children in Yemen." Child Rights Resource Centre.
https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/impact_conflict_children_Yemen_2022.pdf/
37 The pie chart is formulated as per the data inferred from "Siege of Taiz: A Humanitarian Crisis (2024)." American Center for Justice (ACJ).
https://www.mopic-taiz.com/wp-content/uploads/08/2024/Siege-of-Taiz-A-Humanitarian-Crisis.pdf

● Saber Al-Mawadem and Salah have more balanced views, but both show substantial concerns, with about ٪38,7 and ٪51,7 respectively considering their infrastructure inadequate.

Reiterated in many KIIs and FGDs, respondents further illustrate the devastation, stating that most schools have had their contents looted, damaged, or burned, and many have been partially destroyed, resulting in an inadequate setting for students.
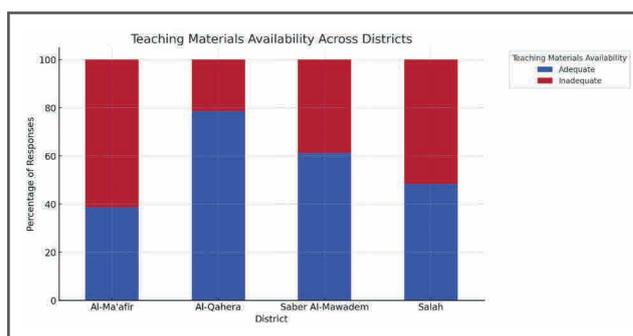
2,2,2. Lack of Resources and Impact on Education Quality

The analysis on the quality of education was based on the responses to various questions related to educational facilities, teacher interactions, and other supportive resources. Across all districts, there were significant responses indicating concerns and suggestions for improving the educational environment, such as making teaching nice, helping families financially so children do not have to work, and improving teacher–student communication.

2,2,2,1. Learning Materials

Many schools have been damaged or destroyed, and those that remain operational often lack basic resources such as books, trained teachers, and safe learning environments. Schools that remain operational often lack the necessary resources to accommodate all students, leading to overcrowding and inadequate facilities. "The lack of educational resources exacerbates the situation, as textbooks, teaching materials, and facilities are either insufficient or non-existent. This has led to a reliance on informal education settings or unregulated tutoring, which often lack quality assurance," expressed an informant.[38]

Based on the Quantitative data, the bar chart provides insights into how students perceive the availability of teaching materials across Al-Qahera, Salah, Saber Al-Mawadem, and Al-Ma'afir.

● **Al-Qahera** appears to be well-equipped, with about %78.5 of students indicating that teaching materials are adequate.

● **Al-Ma'afir** shows significant gaps, with ٪61,3 of responses indicating inadequate availability of teaching materials. This is supported by an informant, "in Al-Ma'afir district, many schools were closed due to being located in conflict zones, and some were repurposed as military barracks. To this day, some schools have not returned to the Education Office. Students were transferred to unqualified schools or taught outdoors, and many teachers have either fled or left teaching to seek other employment due to economic conditions."[39] This indicates the direct, yet harder, consequence of the war on Al-Ma'afir district.

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38 Confidential interview, Head of the Sociology Department at Taiz University, Taiz, female, Nov. 2024 ,14.
39 Confidential interview, Social Affairs and Labor Office Director, Al-Ma'afir district–Taiz, female, Oct. 2024 ,29.

- **Saber Al-Mawadem and Salah** are more evenly split but still show a notable portion of students facing a lack of essential learning resources.

An important point to highlight here is that the lack of financial resources not only affects students' attendance but also the availability and quality of educational materials, which are crucial for effective learning and teaching, "many schools struggle to provide essential learning resources, which in turn affects the quality of education that students receive, leading to a cycle of educational decline that is difficult to reverse."[40] Highlighting the direct consequences, one informant points out "teachers struggle to engage students without the necessary tools, leading to a decrease in teaching quality and student interest.[41]"

The lack of adequate teaching materials has not only hindered the ability of teachers to deliver comprehensive instruction but also affected their motivation and job satisfaction.[42] Additionally, the absence of modern educational resources hinders student learning. One respondent remarked, "textbooks are outdated and insufficient, and children often rely on untrained volunteer teachers who struggle to deliver quality education.[43]" "A student requires at least twenty books throughout the academic year, but what we receive does not exceed 200,000 books. This means we can only provide books for about 10,000 students, leaving the majority without textbooks," added an informant.[44]

2,2,2,2. Untamed Teaching Quality

The below bar chart presents the perception of teacher qualifications across the districts of Al-Qahera, Salah, Saber Al-Mawadem, and Al-Ma'afir.

- **Al-Qahera** has the highest percentage of students (approximately %78,5) who perceive their teachers as qualified, suggesting effective teacher recruitment and training processes.
- **Al-Ma'afir** reflects significant challenges, with %61,3 of students perceiving their teachers as unqualified, indicating potential issues with teacher training or recruitment.
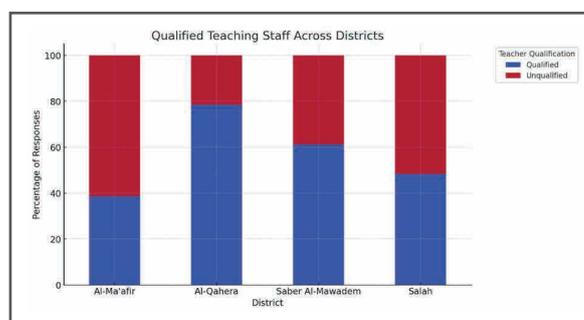
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40 Confidential interview, School Principal, Salah district-Taiz, female, Oct. 2024, 30.
41 Confidential interview, Local Council General Secretary, Al-Qahira district-Taiz, male, Nov. 2024, 4.
42 Confidential interview, INGO, Child Protection Programs Manager, male, Nov. 2024, 10.
43 Confidential interview, CSO, Executive Director and Psychologist, female, Oct. 2024, 28.
44 Confidential interview, Local Council Director General, Salah district-Taiz, male, Nov. 2024, 7.

- **Saber Al-Mawadem and Salah** show more balanced perceptions, yet both highlight notable concerns regarding teacher qualifications.

The quantitative analyses provide a comprehensive view of the state of educational resources across the four districts, identifying key areas where intervention is required:

- **Infrastructure improvements** are crucial, especially in Al–Ma'afir.

- **Enhancing the availability of teaching materials** in Al–Ma'afir and Salah can significantly impact learning outcomes.

- **Strengthening teacher qualifications** in districts where perceptions of unqualified teachers are prevalent will help improve educational quality.

The figure below displays analysis of further responses related to questions on the quality of educational resources.

The figure above offers insights into the quality of education from different perspectives:

- **Impact of War on Schools:**

As already demonstrated above in section (2,2,1), the pie chart above shows how the ongoing conflict has affected school infrastructure and operations. This includes damages to school buildings, interruptions in schooling, and potentially the need to relocate or close schools temporarily.
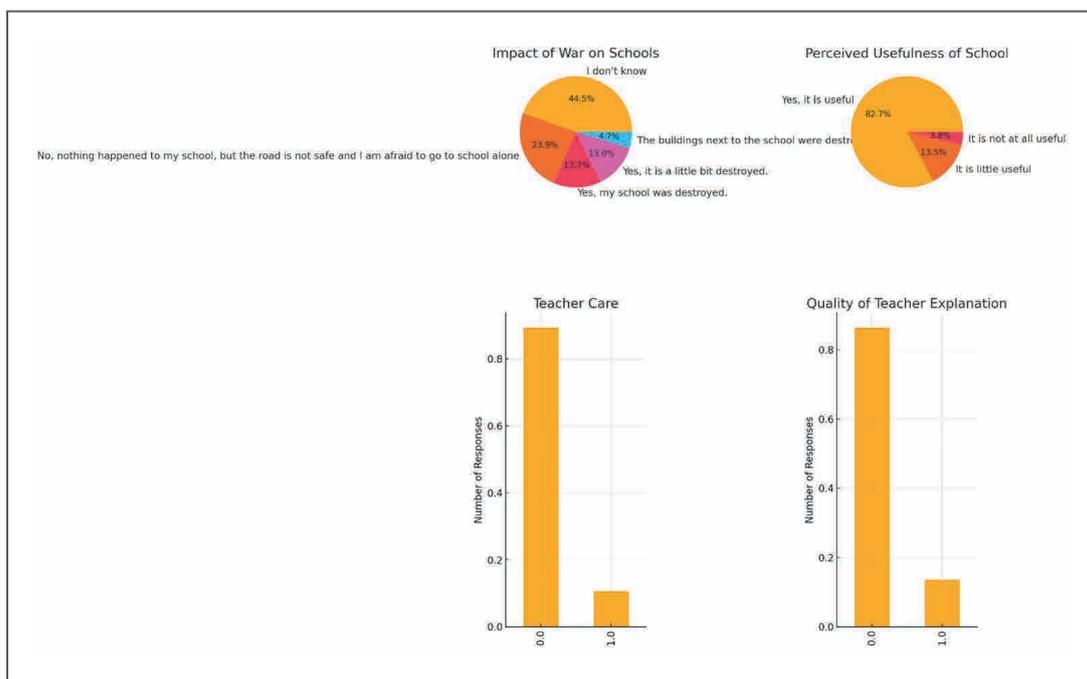
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40 Confidential interview, School Principal, Salah district-Taiz, female, Oct. 2024 ,30.
41 Confidential interview, Local Council General Secretary, Al-Qahira district-Taiz, male, Nov. 2024 ,4.
42 Confidential interview, INGO, Child Protection Programs Manager, male, Nov. 2024 ,10.
43 Confidential interview, CSO, Executive Director and Psychologist, female, Oct. 2024 ,28.
44 Confidential interview, Local Council Director General, Salah district-Taiz, male, Nov. 2024 ,7.

The shortage of teachers in Yemen, especially in rural areas and IDP camps, remains a challenge for those who must travel long distances to reach schools, adding to their financial burden. Difficult terrain spanning over 6 km, along with overcrowded classrooms and a lack of teachers, obstructs children's transition from non-formal to formal education.[45]

- **Perceived Usefulness of School:**

The majority of students find school useful, indicating a positive perception towards their educational environment despite the conflict. This suggests that maintaining school operations is crucial for their psychological and educational development. It can be inferred that the issue of student disengagement and dropout rates in education is exacerbated by the absence of stimulating learning environments and the lack of quality education. The challenges faced by teachers and the uninspiring educational setting contribute to diminishing students' motivation and interest in pursuing their academic journey. As highlighted by an informant, "there is also a danger in the lack of an attractive educational environment for children, which leads to boredom. Even those who attend school may not wish to continue due to the poor quality of education. The challenges and circumstances faced by teachers have diminished students' motivation toward education.[46]"

- **Teacher Care:**

The bar chart indicates varied responses about whether teachers care for the students. A significant number of students feel that teachers do not care enough, which might be impacting their educational experience and satisfaction. There are of course important factors that impact teachers-students interaction. As indicated by an interviewee, "we must not be satisfied with repairing and furnishing schools, but we need to provide staff and rehabilitate staff within the schools. Most of the staff in schools are suffering themselves, and they need psychological, economic and capacity support in the first place. That is to reflect positively on their interactions with children.[47]"

- **Quality of Teacher Explanation:**

The values "0,0" and "1,0" displayed in the visual figure above interpret as follows. The former corresponds to situations where the quality of teacher explanations and the teacher care need improvement, while the latter corresponds to situations where the quality of teacher explanations and the teacher care are considered satisfactory.

45 UNICEF (2024). "Humanitarian Situation Report No. 1 – 2 January to 30 June 2024."
https://www.unicef.org/media/161521/file/Yemen-Humanitarian-SitRep-No.-30-02June2024-.pdf.pdf
46 Confidential interview, school vice-principal, Al-Ma'afir district - Taiz, male, October 29, 2024.
47 Confidential interview, President of the Juvenile Court, Taiz, female, Nov. 13, 2024.

Responses are mixed regarding the ability of teachers to explain lessons well. This points to a potential area for improvement in teacher training, especially in methods of delivering complex material effectively in conflict-affected areas.

The impact of low-quality teaching staff on children's education is highlighted in the data, both quantitative and qualitative, as detrimental. Substandard teaching hinders students' academic progress,

The impact of low-quality teaching staff on children's education is highlighted in the data, both quantitative and qualitative, as detrimental. Substandard teaching hinders students' academic progress, diminishes their motivation, and impedes their overall educational development. "Most of the currently employed teachers are nearing retirement age, with many having worked for 30 to 35 years and no longer able to contribute effectively. This affects both the psychological well-being of children and the quality of education in schools."[48] Going in tune with this, a respondent in FGD stated that "it is well-known that many of the schools have teachers who are nearing retirement age and lack the motivation to give their best, partly because they have surpassed the legal teaching age and also due to the lack of financial support that would encourage them to dedicate themselves to this role."[49] Further demonstrated by an interviewee, "The total number of teachers, supervisors, and administrators in Taiz is around 33,800. Of these, 15,000 teachers have left the profession, and there are slightly over 9,000 teachers actively working in the field, alongside 5,090 volunteer teachers who receive no support from any entity. Among the 9,000 active teachers, 5,000 are approaching retirement, which will create a significant gap in the quality of education and the teaching workforce."[50]

The issue of school dropout goes beyond economic or family circumstances, often stemming from intrinsic challenges within the educational system itself. As noted by an interviewee, the absence of engaging and inspiring teachers can turn education into a burdensome obligation for students, detracting from its potential to ignite curiosity and passion for learning, "sometimes the dropout is not for economic or family reasons, but for reasons related to the school itself. Lack of a teacher who attracts the child and makes him/her interested in education. Education, instead of being a message that attracts children, has become a daunting task for the child or an additional burden on the family."[51]

48 Confidential interview, Center for Strategic Studies to Support Women and Children, Head of the center, Al-Qahira district-Taiz, female, 14 Nov. 2024.
49 FGD, Al-Qahera district-Taiz, 18 Nov. 2024.
50 Confidential interview, Coordinator of the Education Cluster in Taiz and the West Coast, male, 10 November 2024.
51 Confidential interview, President of the Juvenile Court, Taiz, female, 13 Nov. 2024.

There are several other reasons that contribute to the low standard teaching than the issue of professional capabilities that teachers lack. One reason stated by respondents is that the quality of teaching is influenced by the displacement of qualified teachers due to conflict and economic hardships. This has created a shortage of experienced educators, impacting the overall quality of education in the region, "many experienced teachers and educators, who were trained in traditional curricula and teaching methods, have become displaced. This loss has forced some schools to hire unqualified individuals, including high school graduates, as teachers. While these individuals may have a good understanding of the subjects, they lack the training necessary to effectively teach the current, more complex curriculum."[52]

Additionally, insufficient salaries exacerbate the financial crisis faced by teachers, prompting some to seek alternative employment opportunities, further depleting the pool of qualified teaching staff. As noted by an interviewee, "when a teacher receives a salary of 100,000 riyals, it is currently not enough to last for even two or three days, impairing their ability to teach, engage in discussions, and use educational resources, which diminishes their desire to educate."[53] Particularly in Salah district, highlighting the current condition, "many schools are empty, where we rely on approximately ٪60 of volunteer teachers who are currently without any financial incentives and cannot sustain this situation. Volunteers often come to work with us for a year to gain experience before moving on to private schools."[54] In a report by the UNICEF, two-thirds of Yemeni teachers had not received regular salary payments for four years.[55] This places approximately four million more children at risk of interrupted education or dropping out, as unpaid teachers leave their teaching posts to seek alternative means of supporting their families.[56]

Inadequate financial incentives and the allure of conflict-related benefits have led some teachers in Taiz to join the conflict, diverting their focus from teaching. This phenomenon not only diminishes the quality of education but also deprives students of essential guidance and mentorship, "the involvement of teachers in conflict-related activities detracts from their primary role as educators, contributing to the overall decline in teaching standards in the region."[57]

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52 Confidential interview, Director of the Education Office, Saber Al-Mawadem district-Taiz, male, Nov. 2024, 4.
53 Ibid.
54 Confidential interview, Local Council Director General, Salah district-Taiz, male, Nov. 2024, 7.
55 United Nations Human Rights Council, "Situation of human rights in Yemen, including violations and abuses since September 2014," A/HRC/45/CRP.7, September 2020, 29, para. 294.
56 https://www.unicef.org/mena/press-releases/number-children-facing-education-disruption-yemen-could-rise-6-million-unicef-warns
57 FGD, Salah district- Taiz, Nov. 2024, 7.

Another issue is that the shortage of teachers relative to the high student population density in classrooms has resulted in the recruitment of volunteer teachers who lack formal training and financial compensation. "This reliance on untrained educators compromises the delivery of quality education and hinders students' academic progress,"[58] stated by an informant. The absence of proper teacher–student ratios and the prevalence of underqualified teaching staff create significant challenges in maintaining educational standards and fostering a conducive learning environment in Taiz.

The shortage of adequately trained teaching professionals limits the capacity to deliver high-quality education and impede students' learning outcomes. One informant attributes this problem to a critical reason, "the insufficient production of trained educators by the College of Education at Taiz University has perpetuated the reliance on underqualified teachers in schools."[59] Yet, while NGOs' support is worth mentioning; it is not sustainable. As indicated by an interviewee, "UNICEF has been covering around 1,500 volunteer teachers in Al-Shamayatayn, Al-Ma'fer, and Al-Masrakh, but has now submitted a memo indicating that it will gradually withdraw this support throughout the year. This means that by the second half of the 2025/2024 academic year, there will be a substantial gap in education, with many schools at risk of closure due to the lack of teaching staff, incentives, and support for education. This could lead to an extraordinary disaster in the education sector."[60] Therefore, the lack of necessary resources in schools further hampers teachers' ability to innovate and employ effective teaching strategies, hindering the overall educational experience for students in Taiz.

The shortage of teachers in Yemen, especially in rural areas and IDP camps, remains a challenge for those who must travel long distances to reach schools, adding to their financial burden. Difficult terrain spanning over 6 km, along with overcrowded classrooms and a lack of teachers, obstructs children's transition from non-formal to formal education.[61] When children miss out on schooling, they encounter numerous risks and challenges that can have serious implications for their present and future. Those boys and girls deprived of education are more likely to remain trapped in a cycle of poverty and unrealized potential throughout their lives, facing a higher risk of violence, child labor, and early marriage.[62]

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58 Confidential interview, Coordinator of the Education Cluster in Taiz and the West Coast, male, November 10, 2024.
59 Confidential interview, Head of the Sociology Department at Taiz University, Taiz, female, Nov. 14, 2024.
60 Confidential interview, Coordinator of the Education Cluster in Taiz and the West Coast, male, November 10, 2024.
61 UNICEF (2024). "Humanitarian Situation Report No. 1 – 2 January to 30 June 2024."
https://www.unicef.org/media/161521/file/Yemen-Humanitarian-SitRep-No.-30-02June2024-.pdf.pdf
62 Yemen conflict's eight-year mark – how life in the war-torn country has been unfolding | CARE International UK

2,3. The interrelationship between Safety Concerns and School Attendance

In Taiz, several critical educational factors impact students, including the correlation between children's sense of safety at school and their attendance behaviors. The feeling of safety within the school environment plays a pivotal role in shaping students' attendance patterns and overall engagement with their educational experience.

Calculating the correlation between children's feelings of safety at school and their attendance patterns, as reflected in the mapping below, helps us understand if a sense of security is a significant factor in consistent school attendance. Based on the unique responses by the children's samples:
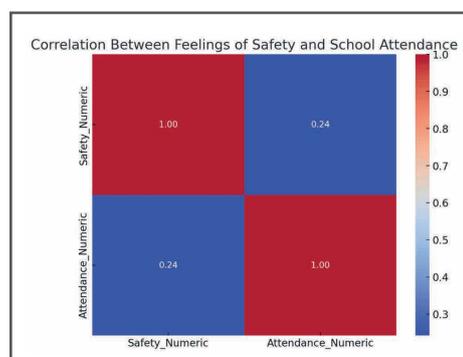
Safety Responses:

"Yes, I feel safe at school"

"Sometimes it's fine and sometimes I feel scared"

"No, I don't feel safe"

Attendance Responses:

"Yes, I always go to school."

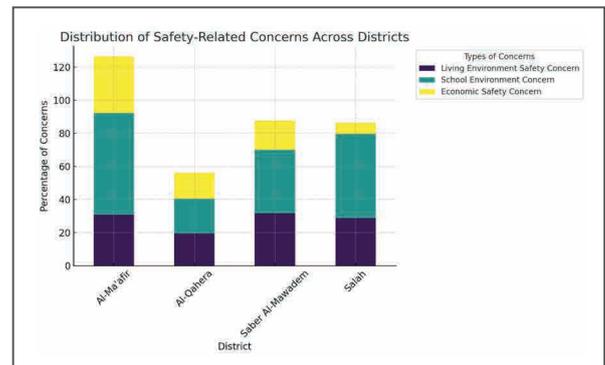"Sometimes I go, sometimes I don't"

"No, I don't go to school at all."

The map aside shows a positive correlation coefficient of 0,242. This indicates a moderate positive relationship, suggesting that higher feelings of safety at school are associated with more consistent school attendance. This relationship underscores the potential impact of improving safety measures on increasing attendance rates.

Correlation Between Feelings of Safety and School Attendance

Safety concerns are grouped under three interrelated headings. The figure showcases the distribution and intensity of safety-related concerns across the four districts.

Living Environment Safety Concerns:

● **Al-Ma'afir:** Approximately ٪31 of responses indicated concerns about the safety of their living environment.

● **Al-Qahera:** About ٪20 of respondents are concerned about their living environment's safety.

● **Saber Al-Mawadem:** Concerns are significantly noted by around ٪32 of respondents.

Distribution of Safety-Related Concerns Across Districts

● **Salah:** Nearly ٪29 of the population expressed concerns about the safety of their living environment.

▪A significant portion of students in some districts indicates a need for making their living environments safer. This suggests that external factors outside the school also significantly impact students' overall well-being and their educational experience.

School Environment Concerns:

● **Al-Ma'afir:** Stands out with over ٪61 indicating concerns about the school environment, suggesting a need for significant improvements.

● **Al-Qahera and Saber Al-Mawadem:** Both show considerable concerns at around ٪21 and ٪38, respectively.

● **Salah:** Also shows a significant ٪51 of respondents are concerned about their school environment.

In all districts, the majority of students feel safe at school, though there are variances in the level of safety perceived. This indicates that while schools might be considered safe spaces generally, there are still concerns that could be addressed to improve the sense of security further.

Economic Safety Concerns (related to needing to work instead of attending school):

● **Al-Ma'afir and Saber Al-Mawadem:** Both districts show a considerable percentage of economic safety concerns at around ٪34 and ٪18, respectively.

● **Al-Qahera:** Lower concerns at about ٪16.

● **Salah:** Shows the least concern at about ٪7.

In the analysis focusing on the interrelationship between safety concerns and school attendance, disaggregated by age, gender, and district within the quantitative sample, we aim to uncover the nuanced impact of safety perceptions on students' attendance behavior across different demographic segments. By examining how safety considerations vary among age groups, genders, and districts, we can gain valuable insights into the complex dynamics influencing students' school attendance patterns in Taiz.

Age-Specific Insights
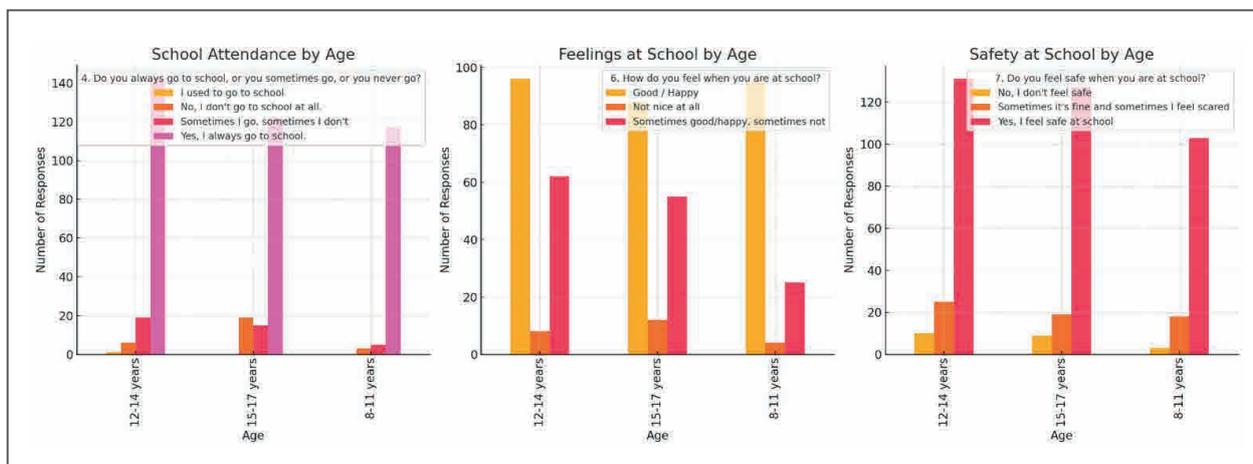
The visualizations above provide a detailed look at how different age groups perceive and experience their educational environment in the conflict-affected areas of Taiz:

School Attendance by Age:

o 11-8 years: Shows high regular attendance, reflecting a strong engagement at this developmental stage.

o 14-12 years: Similar to the younger group, most attend school regularly, indicating consistent educational access.

o 17-15 years: Attendance is generally good, but there are notable exceptions, suggesting some challenges as children grow older, possibly due to increased responsibilities or conflict impacts.
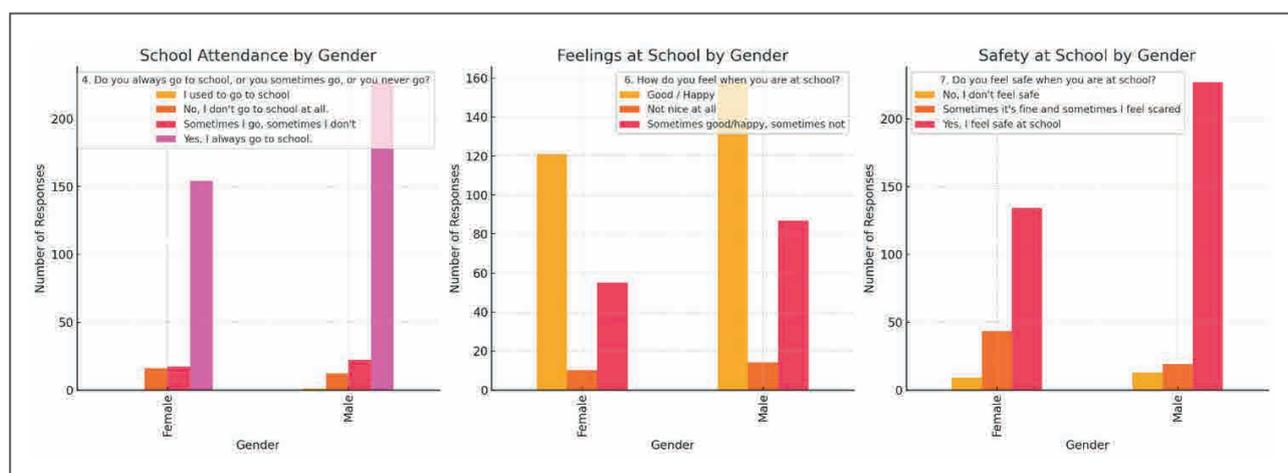
Feelings at School by Age:

o Positive feelings like "Good/Happy" dominate across all age groups, indicating that schools might be perceived as safe havens or places of normalcy amidst conflict.

o However, the presence of negative feelings, although minor, could be significant, particularly for older students who might face more complex social and academic pressures.

Safety at School by Age:

o A majority of children in all age groups feel safe at school, underscoring the importance of educational institutions as stable environments.

o There's a small yet significant portion of the older age group expressing concerns about safety, possibly reflecting broader societal issues impacting them.
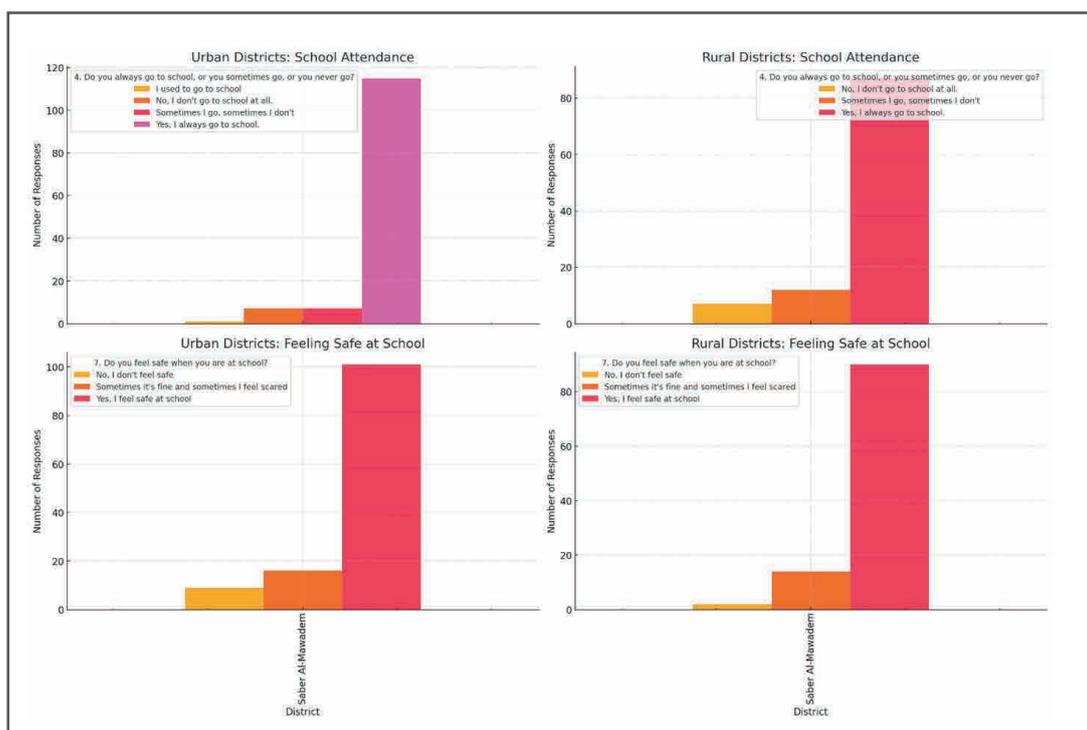

Gender Differences Insights

The visualizations above provide a clear depiction of how gender influences experiences in education within the conflict zones:

- **School Attendance by Gender:**

o Both genders show high levels of regular attendance, indicating good access to education irrespective of gender.

o Minor variations exist, where a small fraction of both genders sometimes or never go to school, pointing to challenges that might be further explored.

- **Feelings at School by Gender:**

o A majority of both genders feel "Good/Happy" at school, highlighting a positive school environment.

o There are some reports of feeling "Scared" or "Unhappy," with a slightly higher incidence among females, suggesting they might face unique stressors or challenges.

- **Safety at School by Gender:**

o A strong sense of safety is reported by both genders, but there are noteworthy differences in the number of students who do not feel safe, particularly among females. This suggests that while schools are generally safe, issues affecting perceived safety among females need addressing.

Given these insights, targeted interventions could focus on:

Addressing specific barriers that prevent small fractions of children from attending school regularly.

Enhancing psychological support and safety measures, especially for females who report feeling less safe or more negative emotions at school.

 District-Level Variation Insights

The bar charts above provide an analysis of school attendance and feelings of safety within urban and rural districts, helping to illustrate the impact of geographic and socio-economic factors on children's education and well-being in conflict-affected areas:

o **Urban Districts (Al-Qahera and Salah)**

1. School Attendance:

– In both urban districts, the majority of children report always attending school, indicating relatively stable access to education despite the ongoing conflict.

– Al-Qahera shows a smaller proportion of children who sometimes or never go to school compared to Salah being closer to the conflict frontline than Al-Qahera, suggesting slightly better conditions and access in Al-Qahera.

2. Feeling Safe at School:

– A high proportion of children in both districts feel safe at school. Al-Qahera, in particular, shows very few children feeling unsafe, which might be due to better security measures or infrastructure. But the responses from the same district highlight a significant prevalence of bullying and violence within schools. Factors contributing to these issues include lack of supervision, inadequate conflict resolution policies, and possibly cultural norms that tolerate aggressive behaviors.

o Rural Districts (Saber Al-Mawadem and Al-Ma'afer)

1. School Attendance:

– Similar to urban districts, most children in rural areas also report regular school attendance, with Saber Al-Mawadem slightly outperforming Al-Ma'afer in terms of regular attendance.

– Al-Ma'afer has a noticeable percentage of children who never go to school, highlighting more severe barriers to education in this district.

Feeling Safe at School:

– The feelings of safety are generally high; however, Al-Ma'afer again shows a slightly higher proportion of children not feeling safe compared to Saber Al-Mawadem, possibly reflecting greater exposure to conflict or less effective local governance.

Comparative Insights

• Both urban and rural districts demonstrate a strong commitment to education, as seen in the high rates of regular attendance. However, specific issues such as safety and sporadic attendance in certain areas (especially Al-Ma'afer) suggest targeted interventions might be necessary.

• The disparities in feeling safe at school, particularly in Al-Ma'afer, underline the need for enhanced security and support structures to ensure a conducive learning environment.

To further extend the analysis, many KIIs informants and FGDs participants highlighted potential safety-related concerns, be it in-school both in-environment safety concerns. The constant fear of violence creates an environment that is not conducive to learning. Running through an in-conflict context indicates that the safety condition is still not guaranteed, particularly for areas close to the conflict zones, "the quality of education has been compromised due to the pervasive fear in communities, as many schools are located in conflict zones and subject to random shelling.[63]" Another informant explained, "children are unable to focus in school because they live in constant fear of airstrikes and explosions.[64]"

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63 Confidential interview, Deputy Director General and Director of the Associations and Federations Department, Social Affairs and Labor Office, Taiz, male, Nov. 10, 2024.
64 Confidential interview, school principal, Saber Al-Mawadem district - Taiz, male, October 31, 2024.

Additionally, another informant indicated that "some children, particularly in rural areas, face difficulties reaching schools due to their distance. Sometimes, there are mixed-gender schools, and some families prevent their children, especially girls, from attending such schools, particularly if they lack proper facilities like bathrooms or are far from their homes."[65] Distance to schools is a significant issue, especially for displaced children and girls. Girls drop out of school due to long distances or because families prioritize their safety over education. "In many areas, the distance between students' homes and schools is considerable, especially for younger children aged six or seven. For girls, the nearest schools may be middle schools, while high schools are farther away, leading some girls to stop their education altogether,"[66] highlighted by an informant. Deteriorating security conditions represent constraints for children, particularly in terms of their access to education, as children are often unable to go out safely, "the districts most exposed to risks are those near the front lines, such as Salah district, which is partially situated along these lines."[67]

The ripple effects of these educational shortcomings are far-reaching. Describing the broader social implications, on the one side, a lack of educated citizens can perpetuate cycles of poverty and limit the community's ability to govern itself effectively or to challenge ongoing issues of corruption and mismanagement. The educational crisis in Taiz has been leading to sustained social and economic problems, undermining efforts to stabilize and rebuild the region. "Allowing children to leave education has long-term effects on society. Ignorance breeds a generation that is unaware, uneducated, and susceptible to violence and recruitment by armed groups, leading to an environment that is exposed to all types of risks."[68] Furthermore, students who miss out on basic education are not only at a disadvantage in the job market but are also less likely to be able to participate fully in society, from engaging in informed voting to being able to advocate for their rights and improvements in their community. This underscores the cascading effects of educational deficits, which not only diminish individual opportunities but also impede broader societal progress.

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65 Confidential interview, Center for Strategic Studies to Support Women and Children, Head of the center, Al-Qahira district-Taiz, female, Nov. 2024 ,14.
66 Confidential interview, Deputy Director of the Education Office, Salah district - Taiz, male, October 2024 ,29.
67 FGD, Salah district- Taiz, Nov. 2024 ,7.
68 Confidential interview, Coordinator of the Education Cluster in Taiz and the West Coast, male, November 2024 ,10.

3,2. Protection and Psychological Support

3,2,1. Impact of War on Children's Lives

The data presented in the chart below illustrates the profound impact of war on children's lives, highlighting various challenges they face in the aftermath of conflict. Each response sheds light on the emotional and practical repercussions of living in a war-torn environment like Taiz. The responses range from disruptions in education to concerns about safety and financial instability, providing a comprehensive overview of the struggles that children endure during and after wartime.
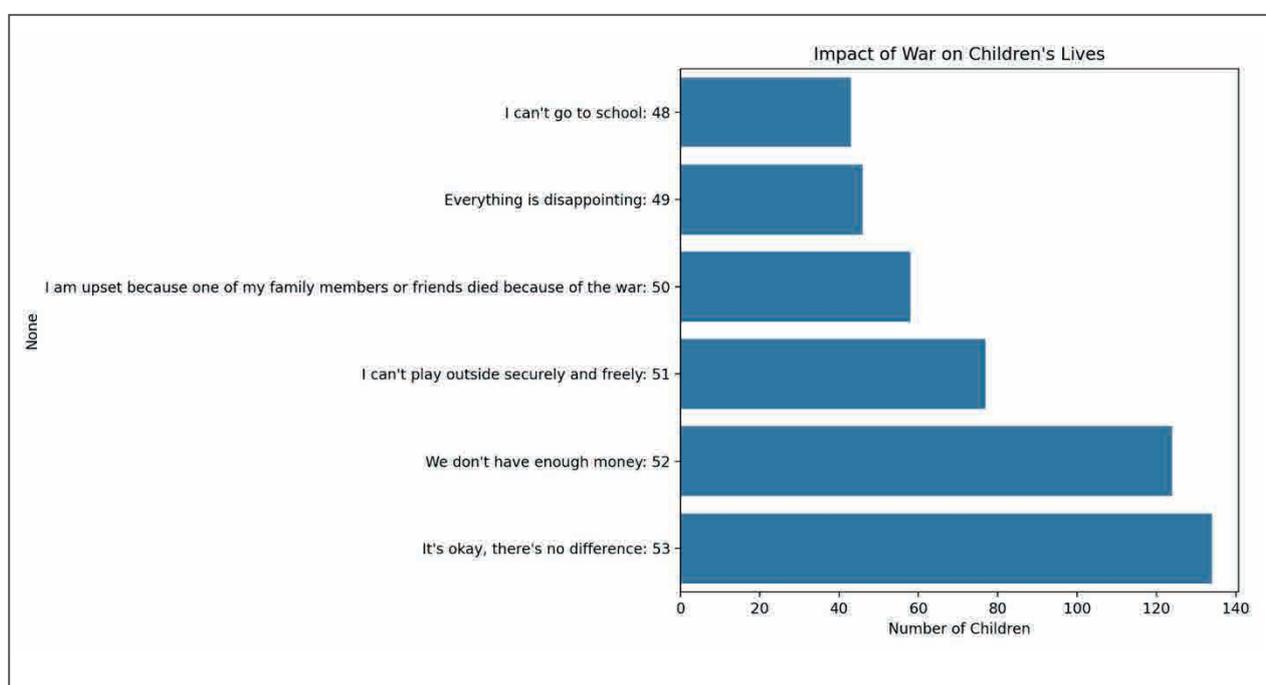
The chart above reveals that a significant number of children express feelings of disappointment and insecurity due to the effects of war, with the inability to attend school and play outside safely being the most prominent concerns. The high number of children reporting disappointment (49) and feelings of instability due to their inability to go to school (48) underscores the disruption of their educational journey, which is critical for their development and future opportunities. Furthermore, the data indicates financial strain, with 52 children noting a lack of money, exacerbating the challenges faced by families. The response "It's okay, there's no difference" (53) may signify a troubling normalization of the adverse effects of war on children's lives, reflecting a resigned attitude that could hinder efforts to seek change. Collectively, these findings highlight the urgent need for interventions that address the emotional, educational, and economic needs of children affected by conflict, ensuring they receive the support necessary to recover and thrive.

Nationwide, from March 2015 to November 2022, the UN has confirmed that over 11,000 children have been killed or severely injured.[69] More than 4,000 children have been recruited and used by armed groups, further inhibiting their participation in any structured societal roles, and there have been over 900 attacks on and military uses of educational and health facilities.[70] "The recruitment of children into armed groups is still occurring, and physical violence is also present, sometimes occurring within the family itself. The scarcity of jobs can lead to family problems, including divorce and domestic violence, with children often becoming victims of these pressures. The cumulative effect of these challenges severely impacts children's mental and emotional well-being, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive support and protection measures,"[71] remarked by an interviewee. These actions severely obstruct children's fundamental rights to safe and adequate access to health care and education. Since these figures only reflect verified cases, the actual numbers are likely much higher.

The ongoing conflict in Taiz, with relevant focus on the target regions, has profoundly impacted the safety and well-being of children, particularly during their daily commutes to school. Families and local authorities face a stark reality of the extreme security risks that threaten the lives of students. The traumatic experience of children encountering sniper fire underscores the urgent need for effective solutions to ensure their safety and access to education, while also revealing the limitations of existing measures. "The greatest concerns for families and local authorities are security risks. Many children have been exposed to sniper fire on their way to school, with one notable case being that of a girl who was shot at 7 a.m. in Wadi Salah while heading to school. In such areas, we have attempted to provide alternative schools, but they remain within the line of fire. We have also tried to implement precautions, such as sealing windows, but this restricts air circulation for the students,"[72] one key informant highlights. This duality of concern reflects the broader challenges faced by communities in war-torn areas, where the struggle for safety frequently undermines the fundamental right to education. Therefore, this emphasizes the urgent need for a collaborative approach involving the community, civil society organizations, and government authorities to protect children and support their education. As one interviewee explains "creating a safe environment is crucial to ensure that children can learn without fear of exploitation or abuse. Facilitating their return to education not only helps them regain lost opportunities but also empowers them for the future.

69 UNICEF (8" .(2023 years of crushing conflict in Yemen leave more than 11 million children in need of humanitarian assistance."
https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/-8years-crushing-conflict-yemen-leave-more-11-million-children-need-humanitarian
70 Ibid
71 Confidential interview, Deputy Director General and Director of the Associations and Federations Department, Social Affairs and Labor Office, Taiz, male, Nov. 2024 ,10.
72 Confidential interview, Local Council Director General, Salah district-Taiz, male, Nov. 2024 ,7.

Additionally, providing means of livelihood is essential to alleviate economic pressures on families, enabling children to focus on their studies rather than work."[73] Thus, upholding children's dignity is integral to fostering a supportive atmosphere where they can thrive, highlighting that their well-being is a shared responsibility that requires collective action.

Additionally, another interviewee further remarks "some children, particularly in rural areas, face difficulties reaching schools due to their distance. Sometimes, there are mixed-gender schools, and some families prevent their children, especially girls, from attending such schools, particularly if they lack proper facilities like bathrooms or are far from their homes."[74] This highlights the multifaceted barriers that hinder children's access to education, particularly for girls in rural areas. The distance to schools poses a significant challenge, as long journeys can discourage attendance and create safety concerns. In mixed-gender schools, cultural and familial attitudes further complicate matters; some families may restrict girls' education due to societal norms or fears about their safety in coeducational settings. The absence of adequate facilities, such as bathrooms, exacerbates these issues, reflecting a broader systemic neglect of girls' needs in educational planning. This underscores the importance of not only improving infrastructure but also addressing cultural perceptions to create an inclusive environment where all children, regardless of gender, can pursue their education without hindrance. The interplay of geographical, cultural, and infrastructural factors reveals the critical need for targeted interventions that consider the unique challenges faced by rural communities.

The complex interplay of economic hardship and cultural norms significantly influences educational access for children in marginalized and displaced families. As highlighted by a key informant, many families prioritize sending their male children to school while keeping their daughters at home due to financial constraints, "through our studies and surveys, we found that many families, particularly those from displaced and marginalized groups, prioritize sending their male children to school while keeping their daughters at home due to the inability to afford educational costs for all their children. Furthermore, due to their inability to meet the economic costs of either caring for or educating all their children, these families resort to early marriage for their daughters, primarily to avoid this dilemma."[75] The prioritization of male children's education over that of daughters highlights entrenched societal norms that devalue female education, often rooted in economic necessity.

73 Confidential interview, Coordinator of the Education Cluster in Taiz and the West Coast, male, November 2024 ,10.
74 Confidential interview, Center for Strategic Studies to Support Women and Children, Head of the center, Al-Qahira district-Taiz, female, Nov. 2024 ,14.
75 Ibid

For many families, limited financial resources compel them to make difficult choices, leading to the exclusion of girls from schooling. The mention of early marriage as a coping mechanism underscores the desperation of these families; by marrying off their daughters, they attempt to alleviate the financial burden and navigate the challenges of raising multiple children in precarious circumstances. This practice not only robs girls of their educational opportunities but also perpetuates cycles of poverty and gender inequality. Furthermore, the systemic neglect of marginalized groups in educational policy and support services exacerbates these issues, demonstrating a critical need for targeted interventions that address both the economic and cultural barriers to education for girls. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing effective policies that promote gender equity in education and empower all children to pursue their academic potential.

On the other side, the economic hardships faced by families lead to serious consequences including children taking on family caregiving responsibilities, which often leads to school dropouts.[76] This, indeed, is one of the most critical issues, as when children leave school, they face significant risks, including resorting to begging, engaging in labor, or becoming targets for exploitation by armed groups and other abusive entities. This cycle of dropout and exploitation not only harms the individual children but also negatively impacts the wider community, as it perpetuates poverty, increases vulnerability to abuse, and undermines the potential for future development. "The loss of educational opportunities for children ultimately threatens the social and economic stability of the community as a whole, and puts children in constant protection risks,"[77] remarked by a key informant.

3,2,2. Children's Emotional State

As per the data demonstrated in the table below, the survey reflects the emotional turbulence among children in Taiz: 29,7% feel happy and comfortable, 13,7% describe life as disappointing, 55,5% feel neither good nor bad, and 1,1% did not respond.

27. Tell us how do you feel these days?			
NO	Answer	Number of samples	Percentage
1	I feel happy and comfortable	135	(29.7%)
2	Life is a disappointment	62	(13.7%)
3	N/A	5	(1.1%)
4	Neither good nor bad	252	(55.5%)
	Total	454	(100%)

76 This was iterated in all the FGDs conducted in the four districts
77 Confidential interview, Head of the Sociology Department at Taiz University, Taiz, female, Nov. 14, 2024.

The ongoing conflict has deeply affected children's emotional well-being across all demographics in Taiz. An informant describes the broad impact, "the current situation of children in Taiz is deeply concerning. The war has affected all groups, including displaced children and marginalized communities.[78]" This statement highlights the pervasive nature of the conflict's psychological impact, emphasizing the emotional toll on various vulnerable groups. Despite some children feeling "happy and comfortable" (29,7%), a significant portion views life negatively (13,7%). This distinct proportion of children who explicitly describe their life as disappointing indicates a conscious awareness of their adverse circumstances and a pessimistic outlook towards their future. This sentiment is echoed in a detailed account: "Many children are experiencing heightened levels of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder.[79]" Children dealing with anxiety, depression, and PTSD are less likely to participate actively in school and social activities, which further isolates them and impedes their developmental progress. "The ongoing conflict has created a situation where normal childhood development is continually disrupted, leading to significant social and educational setbacks.[80]"

The high percentage (55,5%) of children who report feeling "neither good nor bad" deserves special attention. This emotional numbness or desensitization can be interpreted as a coping mechanism developed in response to ongoing trauma. As explained by an informant, "these children, who have been constantly exposed to war, have learned to suppress their emotions as a way to protect themselves from the harsh realities of their environment.[81]" This survival strategy, while adaptive, can have detrimental long-term effects on their emotional and psychological development. Moreover, children's ongoing exposure to violence leads to complex emotional responses, "children have not experienced a true childhood; they have no memories of how they grew up or what it means to be a child. The current circumstances strip parents and families of their ability to nurture and raise their children effectively.[82]" This loss of a nurturing environment is critical, as it underpins many of the emotional challenges children face.

Displacement exacerbates children's emotional distress, "for displaced children, the disruption of their routine, loss of familiar environments, and separation from friends and family exacerbate these issues, leaving them feeling isolated and vulnerable.[83]" The specific challenges faced by displaced children underline the complex interplay of loss, instability, and trauma, contributing to their overall emotional strain.

78 Confidential interview, Office of Public Health and Population-Taiz, Mental Health Officer, male, Oct. 2024, 27.
79 Confidential interview, CSO, Executive Director and Psychologist, female, Oct. 2024, 28.
80 Confidential interview, Office of Public Health and Population-Taiz, Mental Health Officer, male, Oct. 2024, 27.
81 Confidential interview, Local community, Community Leader, Salah district – Taiz, female, Oct. 2024, 30.
82 Confidential interview, school principal, Saber Al-Mawadem district - Taiz, male, October 2024, 31
83 Confidential interview, Office of Public Health and Population, Director, Al-Qahira district-Taiz, male, Nov. 2024, 4.

The data indicate sporadic efforts to provide psychological support, which while helpful, are not sufficient. As notified by an interviewee, "organizations have conducted psychological sessions at schools, offering activities such as games and drawing.[84]" While these activities help restore some confidence and hope, reducing fear temporarily, the lack of sustained mental health programs is a significant gap. As one interviewee explains, "the intermittent nature of psychological services means that while some immediate symptoms are addressed, the deeper emotional wounds are left to fester, often surfacing later as more complex disorders.[85]" Only a more continuous and structured intervention can effectively address the deep-rooted emotional scars left by prolonged exposure to conflict.

The emotional scars and ongoing stress highlight the need for robust psychological support systems, "The cumulative effects of conflict have not only disrupted their education and mental health but have also compromised their overall well-being and future prospects.[86]" This comprehensive view of the implications of war on children's emotional states underscores the urgent need for interventions that are not only reactive but also preventive, providing continuous support to mitigate long-term damage. To combat the challenges underlined by unsustainable programs, informants propose more integrated approaches to ensure continuity of psychological care. "We need to embed psychological support within community structures, perhaps through schools or local health centers, to ensure that children have consistent access to care. Training local professionals and community workers to recognize and address psychological issues can help sustain support even when external funding wanes.[87]" This approach suggests a shift towards more localized and community-driven strategies to maintain a consistent level of support.

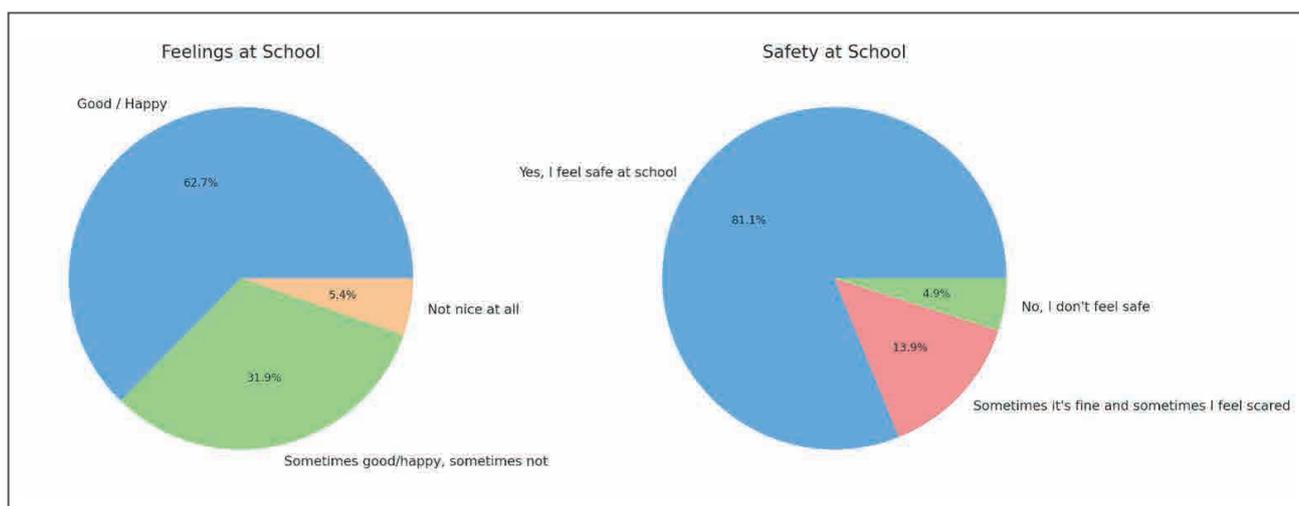84 Confidential interview, Protection Cluster in Taiz, Coordinator of the Cluster, male, Oct. 2024 ,29.
85 Confidential interview, Social Affairs and Labor Office Director, Al-Ma'afir district-Taiz, female, Oct. 2024 ,29.
86 Confidential interview, Office of Public Health and Population-Taiz, Mental Health Officer, male, Oct. 2024 ,27.
87 Confidential interview, Office of Public Health and Population, Nutrition Officer, Al-Ma'afir district-Taiz, female, Oct. 2024 ,29.

3,2,3. Feeling Safety at School

Here we look at how children feel about school and their safety perceptions based on the data available under "How do you feel when you are at school?" and "Do you feel safe when you are at school?".

Feelings at School

Good / Happy
62.7%
5.4%
Not nice at all
31.9%
Sometimes good/happy, sometimes not

Safety at School

Yes, I feel safe at school
81.1%
4.9%
No, I don't feel safe
13.9%
Sometimes it's fine and sometimes I feel scared

■ Feelings at School: Analyzes children's emotional states while at school.

The pie chart above displays a distribution of feelings among children while at school. This can indicate the overall emotional climate, which is crucial for both: one, it directly impacts students' ability to concentrate and engage in learning activities; two, it influences their psychological well-being. Specific percentages (shown on the chart) illustrate that many children feel positive ("Good/Happy"), indicating a positive school environment that supports their emotional health. A smaller, yet critical percentage might express feelings of being ("Scared"/"Unhappy"), pointing towards potential issues like bullying, academic stress, and inadequate support which need immediate attention.
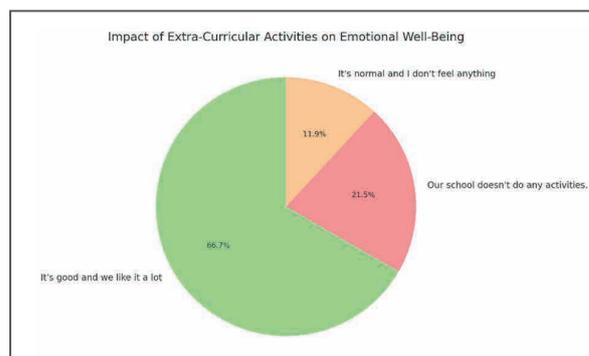
To demonstrate further explanation on what factors impacting children's feelings at school, the pie chart below provides further analysis of the impact of extra-curricular activities on children's emotional well-being at school, such as sports, arts, and other recreational events.

• ٪66,67 of children express that they 'like it a lot' (in green), indicating a strong positive impact of these activities on their emotional well-being. This significant majority suggests that when available, extra-curricular activities are highly beneficial, enhancing children's enjoyment and providing a valuable outlet for stress relief.

- ٪21,48 report that 'Our school doesn't do any activities.' (in pink), highlighting a gap in the provision of such opportunities. This substantial proportion suggests that a lack of extra-curricular programs might be a missed opportunity for supporting emotional and social development.

- ٪11,86 feel 'It's normal and I don't feel anything' (in orange), indicating a neutral response. This group may not perceive these activities as particularly impactful, which could reflect variations in personal interests or the quality of the activities offered.

The data indicates that extra-curricular activities play a crucial role in the emotional development of children, with a majority finding significant enjoyment and emotional benefit from these experiences, which helps us understand how these activities impact their emotional well-being. However, the absence of such activities in some schools represents a critical area for intervention, as these programs are instrumental in supporting holistic development beyond academic achievement. This information is crucial for designing and implementing programs that effectively support children's emotional health through recreational means.

- **Safety at School:** Assess how safe children feel at school.

The second pie chart illustrates children's perceptions of safety within their school environments. A high percentage of feeling safe is a strong indicator of effective protection measures within the school environment. Conversely, there is a significant percentage of students feeling unsafe ranging from physical safety concerns (i.e., "I get beaten by teachers and/or other students") or emotional threats (i.e., "bullying") which require immediate attention to address potential security issues and psychological support deficits. This also points out that the educational environment itself can be threatening, not just due to external violence but also internal issues such as bullying and inadequate support structures. This deterioration affects children's ability to learn and feel safe within school walls.

3,2,4. Support Activities in the Area and their Effectiveness

The data below evaluates the effectiveness of psychological support systems and recreational activities in alleviating stress and promoting well-being among students. This adds insights into the community engagement aspect of psychological support and its potential integration into school services. The aim is to analyze the distribution of these supportive activities across the districts and their impact on children's psychological well-being.

The figure below displays the distribution of community support activities across districts, which shows varying levels of availability that can impact children's psychological well-being:

- **Al-Ma'afir:** The highest proportion of supportive activities being available regularly (٪30,32).
- **Al-Qahera:** Moderate availability with ٪24,62 reporting regular activities.
- **Saber Al-Mawadem:** Similar to Al-Qahera with slightly less, ٪22,64.
- **Salah:** The lowest availability of regular support activities at ٪15,52.

The heatmap indicates that the majority of responses across districts lean towards limited or rare organization of supportive activities. However, Al-Ma'afir stands out with a more significant portion of activities, which might suggest a stronger community engagement in providing psychological support.
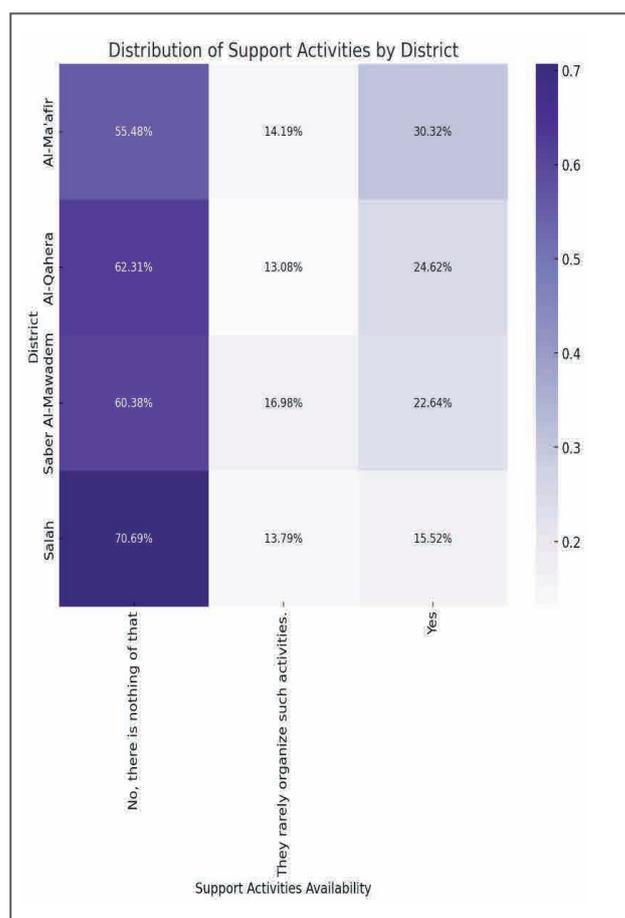
Accordingly, for Al-Ma'afir, to enhance the current initiatives, the efforts need to be tailored towards leveraging the existing community programs to integrate formal psychological support services within schools. While for Al-Qahera and Saber Al-Mawadem, there is a need to increase collaboration between schools and local organizations to regularly organize support activities.

Additionally, introduce school-based counseling services to address the gaps. For Salah, with the lowest availability of activities, a targeted approach to develop new community engagement programs is crucial. This could include partnerships with NGOs to deliver regular recreational and supportive activities aimed at improving mental health.

We further analyzed children's feelings during recreational activities to understand their emotional impact. The pie chart below illustrates children's emotional responses to recreational activities, based on children's responses to "Tell us how you feel when there are recreational activities (such as: sports, drawing, a trip to the park, a competition and prizes)". The following table assesses how effective these activities are in relieving tension and anxiety among children, exploring their role in the well-being of children, and how these systems interact with broader support mechanisms.

18,1 If, for example, you participated in activities like these, did it help you and relieve your tension or anxiety?			
NO.	Answer	Number of samples	Number of samples
1	I participated before but we didn't like it	30	(6.6٪)
2	N/A	5	(1.1٪)
3	These activities are nice and make us feel happy.	242	(53.3٪)
4	They sometimes organized such activities but I have never participated	177	(39.0٪)
	Total	454	(100٪)

The table above indicates that positive responses (٪53,3) to recreational activities highlight these activities' effectiveness in providing relief and enjoyment, crucial for emotional balance. On the other side, negative feedback (٪6,6) and indifference (٪39,0) indicate a lack of alignment with the children's interests or needs, suggesting areas for improvement.

We further analyzed children's feelings during recreational activities to understand their emotional impact. The pie chart below illustrates children's emotional responses to recreational activities, based on children's responses to "Tell us how you feel when there are recreational activities (such as: sports, drawing, a trip to the park, a competition and prizes)". The following table assesses how effective these activities are in relieving tension and anxiety among children, exploring their role in the well-being of children, and how these systems interact with broader support mechanisms.

When we asked children who they choose to communicate when they feel scared or upset. The pie chart aside shows that a substantial percentage of children turn to their family, indicating the critical role families play in providing emotional support. However, there's a noticeable portion of children who do not talk to anyone, highlighting a potential area where more proactive support could be beneficial.

Family Engagement in Emotional Support

The pie chart reveals significant disparities in the sources of emotional backing for the children.
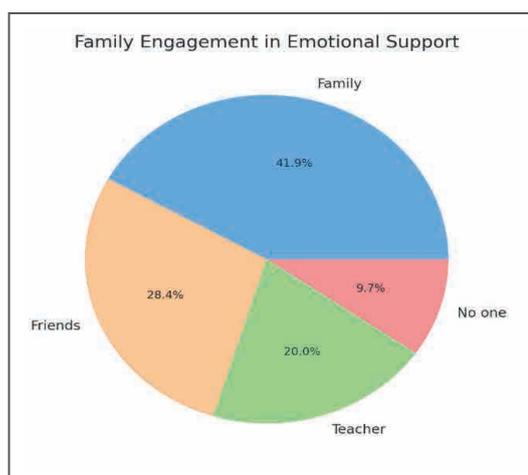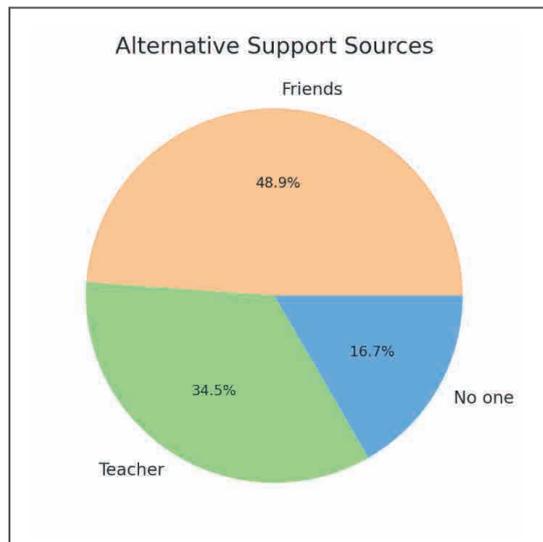
Family emerges as the primary source, accounting for ٪41,9 of responses, indicating that most individuals rely on their relatives for emotional sustenance. Friends also play a notable role, comprising ٪28,4, highlighting the importance of peer relationships in providing emotional support. Meanwhile, teachers contribute ٪20, suggesting that educational environments can offer a vital support system, especially for students. However, the ٪9,7 of respondents who indicated "no one" as their source of support raises concerns about isolation and the potential negative impacts on mental health. This data underscores the critical role of familial and social networks in emotional well-being, while also pointing to a need for greater awareness and intervention for those lacking support systems, particularly among vulnerable populations.

Yet, it is significant to also evaluate how effective families play in providing emotional support. The following chart provides information of how children feel when they get back to their families among the respondents.

When you have a problem and you talk to your family, do your family help you?
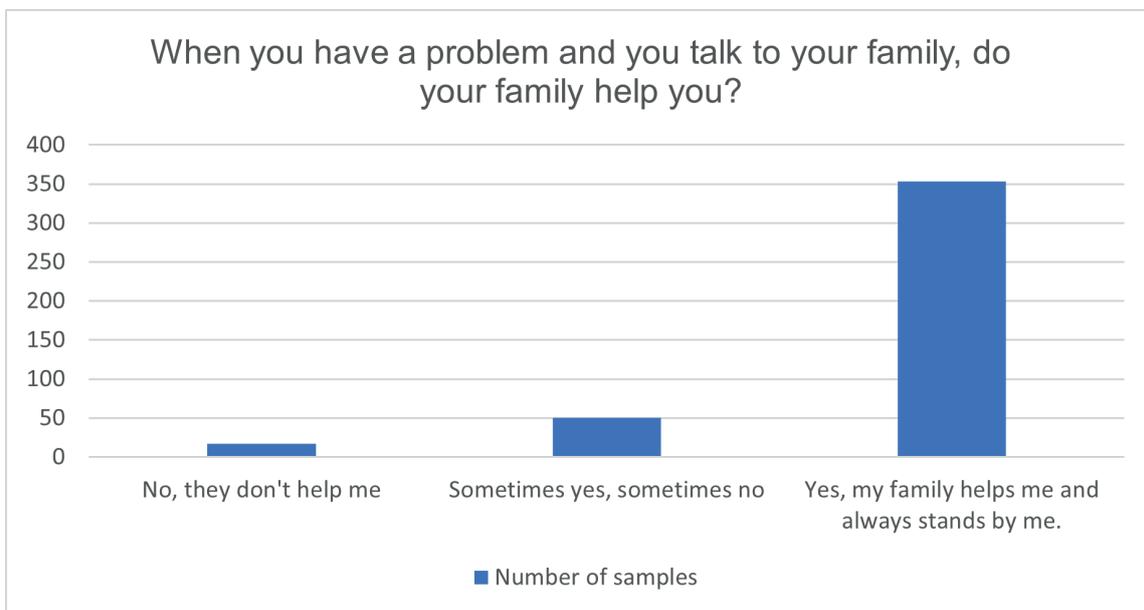

The bar graph illustrating responses to the question of whether family members provide help when the children face problems indicates a strong reliance on familial support. A substantial majority of respondents, represented by the towering bar indicating nearly 350 samples, affirm that their families assist them consistently, highlighting the critical role of family as a dependable support system. This overwhelming response suggests that many individuals view their families as a primary source of emotional and practical help, which is essential for coping with challenges effectively. In stark contrast, the categories indicating "No, they don't help me" and "Sometimes yes, sometimes no" are represented by significantly lower numbers, with the former being almost negligible. This disparity underscores a general sentiment of satisfaction and trust in familial relationships among the respondents. The low percentage of individuals reporting a lack of support reflects broader societal norms that prioritize family cohesion and collective problem-solving. However, it also raises questions about those who may feel unsupported by their families, as even a small number in the "no help" category represents children who could be experiencing isolation during difficult times. Overall, the data emphasizes the importance of family dynamics in emotional resilience and the necessity for support systems that can assist those who may not benefit from their familial relationships.

Furthermore, as per the data, a number of children do not turn to their families for support when they feel scared or upset. Thus, analysis of the reasons behind their reluctance or inability to seek family support reflects issues related to trust or fear of negative reactions from family members. The pie chart aside displays the distribution of alternative sources to which children turn when they feel scared or upset, among those who exclude family. The data highlights the significant role that friends and teachers play in providing emotional support, with a notable percentage of children preferring these sources over family members.

The pie chart aside displays the distribution of alternative sources to which children turn when they feel scared or upset, among those who exclude family. The data highlights the significant role that friends and teachers play in providing emotional support, with a notable percentage of children preferring these sources over family members. This is important as it helps in understanding the full scope of support options available to them. This comprehensive analysis highlights the importance of a multi-faceted approach to supporting children in conflict-affected areas, focusing on improving family dynamics, school support systems, and community involvement to ensure all children have access to the emotional and psychological support they need.

The data also enquire about children's expressed desires for familial love and care, which can be an indicator of their need for emotional support and encouragement. ٪81,74 of responses indicate no expressed need for additional family love and care (in green). This suggests that a majority of children feel sufficiently supported in terms of familial affection and care, reflecting a positive emotional environment at home. While ٪18,26 of responses show a desire for more family love and care (in pink). This significant minority indicates a need for enhanced emotional support from their families.
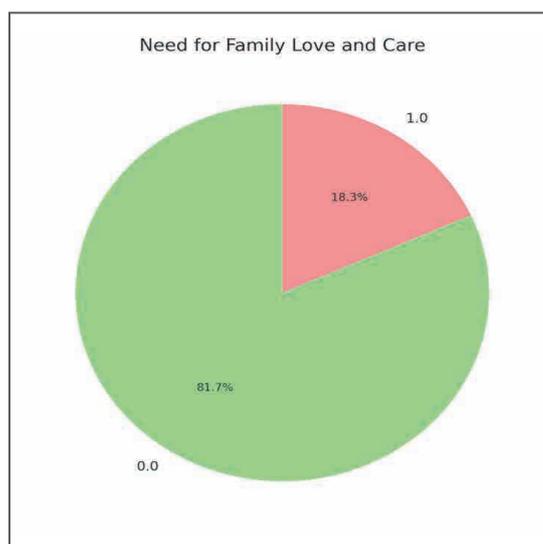
This indicates potential gaps in familial interactions or emotional support that could be addressed to improve children's emotional health, which are necessary to foster stronger family bonds and emotional well-being.

3,2,5. Access to Mental Health Resources

The data provides illustration to the extent to which children have access to mental health resources, specifically through interactions with healthcare providers in their area. The pie chart above illustrates the extent to which children have access to mental health resources, specifically through their interactions with healthcare providers in their area. **96,88% of responses indicate no interaction with healthcare providers** regarding mental health support (in green).

Access to Mental Health Resources
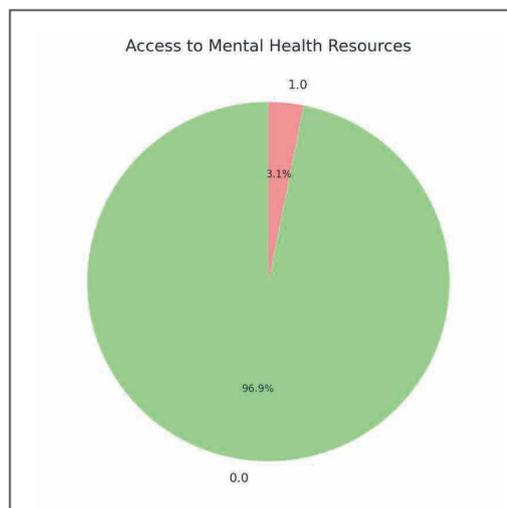
While **only 3,12% report having interactions with healthcare providers** that involve discussions and support for their emotional and psychological needs (in red). The data starkly highlights a significant gap in access to mental health resources for children. The overwhelming majority do not engage with healthcare providers for emotional support, which may indicate several potential barriers:

• **Lack of Awareness:** Children and their families might not be aware of the availability of mental health resources or the importance of seeking such support.

• **Limited Availability:** There may be a scarcity of mental health services that are accessible or tailored to children's needs in the area.

• **Stigma and Reluctance:** Cultural and social stigmas associated with seeking mental health care can deter families and children from reaching out for help.

The lack of mental health resources is a critical issue, with significant consequences for children's long-term well-being, "the centers that used to provide services for individuals with disabilities have shut down, leaving them reliant solely on their families." This shutdown reflects the broader collapse of support systems that are crucial for addressing children's psychological needs. Stigma and cultural barriers further hinder access to mental health services, "cultural and social stigmas associated with seeking mental health care can deter families and children from reaching out for help."[89]

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88 Confidential interview, Director of the Education Office, Saber Al-Mawadem district- Taiz, male, Nov. 2024, 4.
89 Confidential interview, Deputy Director General and Director of the Associations and Federations Department, Social Affairs and Labor Office, Taiz, male, Nov. 2024, 10.
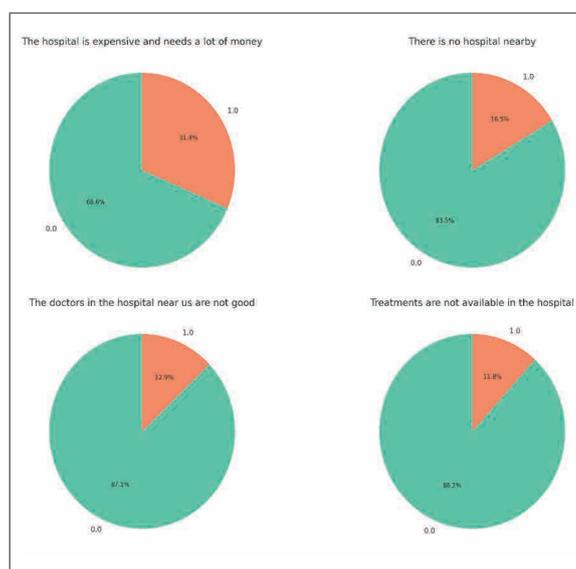
Overcoming these barriers requires community education and the normalization of mental health support. The qualitative data highlights the dire need for increased mental health services, "many children are suffering from the effects of war, having become accustomed to violence and bloodshed.[90]" This accustomed state to such traumatic experiences underscores the urgent need for psychological interventions. Additionally, the need for professional psychological support is evident, "The lack of trained professionals and resources means that many do not receive the necessary support and interventions.[91]" This lack highlights a critical gap in services that must be addressed to support children's mental health adequately and professionally. Partnerships between educational institutions, healthcare providers, and CSOs, both INGOs and local CSOs, could facilitate more accessible and effective support systems. Furthermore, integrating mental health education into school curricula and training teachers to recognize and respond to signs of psychological distress can help bridge the gap between need and access to support.

3,2,6. Children's Access to Healthcare

The data demonstrated in the pie chart below includes three critical barriers that impact children's access to healthcare: cost, accessibility, and availability of treatments.

3,2,6,1. Cost Barrier:

• ٪31,40 of respondents report that cost is a significant barrier to accessing healthcare services, indicating that the expenses associated with hospital visits are prohibitively high for a significant minority. This prevents families, especially those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, from seeking necessary medical care. High costs can prevent timely medical interventions, leading to worsened health outcomes. For these families, "the fear of incurring debt or the inability to pay for services discourages them from seeking necessary care,[92]" resulting in untreated conditions that could have been managed with earlier intervention.

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90 Confidential interview, Office of Public Health and Population, Doctor at Al-Aarous Rural Hospital, Saber Al-Mawadem district-Taiz, male, Oct. 2024 ,31.
91 Confidential interview, CSO, Executive Director and Psychologist, female, Oct. 2024 ,28.
92 Ibid

• ٪68,60 do not view cost as a barrier, suggesting that for the majority, either healthcare costs are manageable or they have access to free or subsidized healthcare services, or a lack of need for hospital care among these respondents. This disparity in perception of cost as a barrier suggests a significant divide in healthcare access based on socioeconomic status, with the majority potentially benefiting from a more robust healthcare system or personal financial stability.

3,2,6,2. Accessibility Barrier:

• ٪16,48 of respondents indicate that there is no hospital nearby, highlighting a crucial geographical barrier that delays or completely hinder access to medical care, especially in urgent situations. For individuals living in rural or underserved areas, the lack of nearby healthcare facilities can delay treatment, particularly in emergencies where every minute counts. This could lead to exacerbated health issues and increased mortality rates among children who may not receive timely interventions. As noted by a key informant, "remote areas, such as Al-Shu'oba, Al-Jabziya, and Al-Sharaf, are particularly exposed to risks. In mountainous regions, there have been many fatalities due to the difficulty of accessing hospitals. Additionally, there have been cases of newborn deaths because pregnant women from these areas were unable to reach medical facilities in time."[93] Security is also a fundamental pillar for accessing essential services like education and healthcare, "in the absence of a secure environment, there are restrictions on children's movement, and parents live in constant fear for their safety, including the threat of abduction. Areas such as Al-Shuqb, Abdan, Al-Sarmin, and some parts of Al-Arous are among the most hazardous." [94]

• ٪83,52 do not report problems with hospital proximity, suggesting that for most, hospitals are within a reachable distance or that accessibility is not their primary concern. This high percentage indicates that urban or well-planned suburban areas likely have sufficient healthcare infrastructure to meet community needs. However, this highlights the ongoing issue of healthcare inequity, where certain populations, particularly those in rural or economically disadvantaged regions, continue to face significant barriers.

3,2,6,3. Quality of Medical Staff:

• ٪87,08 are satisfied with the quality of doctors, reflecting a general trust in the medical staff available to them.

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93 Confidential interview, Office of Public Health and Population, Nutrition Officer, Al-Ma'afir district-Taiz, female, Oct. 2024 ,29.
94 Confidential interview, Director of the Education Office, Saber Al-Mawadem district- Taiz, male, Nov. 2024 ,4.

• ٪12,92 express concerns about the quality of doctors, while most children perceive the doctors in their vicinity as competent, there is a significant minority who are dissatisfied with the quality of care. This dissatisfaction could be due to various factors such as perceived lack of skill, poor communication, or inadequate treatment provided by healthcare professionals. This perception significantly impacts their willingness to seek care when needed.

3,2,6,4. Availability of Treatments:

• ٪11,80 report that the necessary treatments are not available in their local hospitals, a critical issue that renders nearby healthcare facilities ineffective for their specific health needs. For instance, the centers that used to provide services for individuals with disabilities have shut down, "leaving them reliant solely on their families.[95]" This statement points to a lack of essential healthcare services, which can be life-altering for children with specific health conditions. This gap in available treatments leads to referrals to distant facilities, causing delays in care and potential deterioration of health conditions that require immediate attention.

• ٪88,20 do not face this issue, which suggests that most hospitals are adequately equipped to meet the healthcare demands of their communities, or this is not a primary concern. This positive finding indicates that the majority of healthcare facilities are functioning effectively to provide necessary treatments, but it also underscores the importance of addressing the gaps for the minority who may not have access to critical services, "many areas in Taiz face shortages, with the most critical being healthcare, job opportunities, and means of livelihood." [96]

In summary, while a majority of respondents express manageable access to healthcare, significant barriers remain that can adversely affect children's health outcomes. The interplay of cost, accessibility, quality of medical staff, and availability of treatments creates a complex landscape that requires comprehensive strategies to ensure equitable healthcare access for all children, particularly in conflict-affected regions like Taiz.

95 Confidential interview, Director of the Education Office, Saber Al-Mawadem district- Taiz, male, Nov. 2024 ,4.
96 Confidential interview, Deputy Director General and Director of the Associations and Federations Department, Social Affairs and Labor Office, Taiz, male, Nov. 2024 ,10.

Conclusion

The extensive research conducted in Taiz has unveiled the severe and multifaceted challenges faced by children amid ongoing conflict. These challenges are deeply interconnected, impacting not only the immediate survival and development of these children but also the broader societal stability and future prospects of the region. The report integrates findings from an extensive quantitative and qualitative data. The findings underscore significant disruptions in educational access, profound vulnerabilities in child protection, and widespread psychological trauma. It explores the critical interrelationship among these sectors, recognizing these as interconnected pillars essential for safeguarding children's rights and securing their futures. Education is the cornerstone of recovery, offering a pathway out of poverty and trauma, but its absence undermines children's potential and exposes them to exploitation. Protection is the foundation of survival, ensuring that children are safeguarded from abuse, neglect, and exploitation in their most vulnerable moments. Meanwhile, psychological support addresses the hidden scars of conflict, enabling children to heal and reintegrate into normal life. Together, these elements form a comprehensive framework to address the challenges faced by children in conflict zones. These elements form a triad of critical needs that must be addressed cohesively. Failure to tackle one aspect weakens the others, perpetuating cycles of poverty, violence, and emotional distress.

Regarding education, the ongoing conflict in Taiz has led to widespread destruction and damage to educational infrastructure, severely impairing children's access to a stable learning environment. Many school buildings have been rendered unusable due to direct hits from shelling or have been repurposed as shelters or military bases. Those schools that are still operational often suffer from a lack of basic utilities such as electricity and water, making them unsafe and unsuitable for educational purposes. Additionally, there is a significant shortage of educational materials such as textbooks and learning aids, which are essential for effective teaching and learning. The lack of these materials hampers the quality of education provided, leaving students without the necessary resources to engage fully in their studies.

The economic impact of the conflict has been devastating, with many families experiencing significant financial hardship. This economic strain forces children, especially those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, to abandon their education in order to contribute to their family's income. Child labor has become increasingly common, pulling children away from the classroom and into the workforce at a young age. For many girls, the economic crisis has led to an increase in early marriages, as families seek to reduce their financial burdens. These practices not only deprive children of their education but also expose them to further risks, including physical and emotional abuse.

The quality of education in Taiz has also been compromised by a shortage of qualified teachers. Many educators have fled the area due to safety concerns or because of the irregularity of pay in these tumultuous times. Those who remain often work in extremely challenging conditions, with oversized classes and insufficient support, which can lead to burnout and decreased teaching efficacy. The lack of professional development opportunities for teachers during the conflict further diminishes the quality of education, as teachers are unable to update their skills or adapt new teaching methodologies to better meet the needs of their students.

The psychological toll of the conflict on students cannot be overstated. Children attending school in Taiz often experience high levels of stress and anxiety, which can significantly impair their cognitive functions and learning capabilities. The constant fear of violence affects their concentration and motivation, and many suffer from trauma-related symptoms that go unaddressed due to the stigma surrounding mental health issues. Socially, students face a deteriorating school environment where bullying and aggression may become more prevalent, reflecting the chaos and instability of their external world.

The disruption of education in Taiz has long-term implications for the region's development. A lack of education limits individual career opportunities and reduces economic prospects, perpetuating the cycle of poverty and dependency. Moreover, the absence of a structured learning environment stunts the personal and social development of children, affecting their ability to function as productive and capable adults in the future. The broader societal impact is a generation ill-prepared to rebuild or contribute effectively to the post-conflict recovery of the region.

As for the protection side, the forced recruitment of children by armed groups in Taiz is a critical issue, with these groups often exploiting the vulnerability of children in poverty-stricken or conflict-affected families. Recruitment is not only a direct violation of children's rights but also exposes them to extreme physical and psychological risks. Children as young as ten are sometimes coerced or misled into joining these groups, losing their chance at education and a normal childhood. The involvement in armed conflict leaves lasting trauma and significantly hinders their psychological development and future prospects.

Both boys and girls in Taiz are subjected to forms of violence that are specific to their gender, exacerbating their vulnerability in the conflict setting. Girls are particularly at risk of sexual violence, exploitation, and early forced marriages, practices that are often used as survival strategies by families in dire economic conditions. Boys, on the other hand, may face higher risks of physical violence and forced recruitment. The lack of a protective legal framework and functional law enforcement worsens these issues, with many cases of gender-specific violence going unreported or unpunished.

The ongoing conflict has led to a significant deterioration of institutional and community-based child protection systems. The structures that would typically monitor and respond to issues of child safety are overwhelmed or incapacitated by the instability in the region. This breakdown in protection mechanisms leaves children exposed to various forms of abuse and exploitation without recourse to justice or rehabilitation. Many children are left to navigate these threats with minimal support, relying on overburdened families or communities that might themselves be compromised.

In the absence of robust external support systems, children often depend solely on their family for safety and protection. However, families in Taiz are frequently struggling with the same conditions of conflict, displacement, and insecurity that affect the children. This shared vulnerability impair the ability of families to provide a safe environment, sometimes leading to neglect or abuse. Economic hardship also compel families to make decisions that are detrimental to the well-being of children, such as acquiescing to early marriage or labor.

The cumulative effect of these protection concerns is an environment where children are at a high risk of exploitation and abuse. The chaos and breakdown of normal safeguards allow for exploitation by not only armed groups but also by individuals within the community who take advantage of the lack of oversight and accountability. The psychological impact of such exploitation and abuse is profound, leading to long-term mental health issues and diminished life opportunities for the affected children.

The report also sheds light to the status of children in Taiz who are routinely exposed to the harsh realities of war, including the frequent sounds of gunshots and bombings, which are profoundly disruptive to their sense of security and normalcy. This exposure has led to widespread cases of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression among the young children. Psychological traumas are compounded when children witness the death of family members or the destruction of their homes, experiences that leave indelible marks on their young psyches. The constant state of alertness and fear interrupt normal developmental processes, leading to long-term emotional and behavioral issues.

The psychological support services available to children in Taiz are frequently disrupted by ongoing hostilities, which halt services abruptly and leave children without necessary mental health care. Many of the existing programs lack continuity; they start and stop based on fluctuating security situations and funding streams, which undermines their effectiveness. Additionally, there is a significant shortage of mental health professionals who are adequately trained to handle complex trauma cases in children. This lack of trained professionals means that even when services are available, they may not be equipped to address the specific needs of war-affected children comprehensively.

The sporadic nature of mental health support in Taiz means that interventions often provide only temporary relief. Children may receive some initial therapy or counseling sessions, but without ongoing support, these interventions are insufficient to foster long-term healing. The lack of sustained engagement with mental health professionals makes it difficult for children to develop coping mechanisms that are robust enough to manage their ongoing stressors. As a result, many children relapse into severe psychological distress.

The unmet mental health needs of children in Taiz have profound implications for their future. Persistent psychological distress can affect their educational achievements, social relationships, and overall ability to function effectively in daily life. The long-term impact extends into adulthood, potentially resulting in a generation of individuals who are less able to contribute positively to their communities or to engage fully in the workforce. The broader societal implications include increased healthcare costs, decreased productivity, and the perpetuation of cycles of violence and poverty.

The findings from this research underscore the necessity for holistic, gender-sensitive strategies that address the interconnected domains of education, protection, and psychological support. Policymakers and humanitarian organizations must prioritize the rebuilding of educational infrastructure, ensuring safe access to schools, and equipping teachers with trauma-informed training. Furthermore, strengthening community-based child protection mechanisms and expanding mental health services are critical to safeguarding children's rights and fostering resilience.

In response to the pressing challenges faced by children in Taiz, Yemen, amidst ongoing conflict and instability, a summed-up set of integrated, context-specific recommendations have been devised to address the critical areas of education, protection, and psychological support. These recommendations are tailored to confront the unique and interrelated difficulties encountered by the children in this war-torn region, aiming to rebuild, protect, and heal. By focusing on enhancing educational infrastructure, strengthening child protection mechanisms, and providing consistent psychological support, these initiatives strive to create a nurturing and safe environment where children can thrive despite the adversities they face. This comprehensive strategy seeks not only to address immediate needs but also to lay down a resilient framework for sustainable development and long-term well-being of Taiz's future generations.

3. Education

3,1. Enhance physical security measures such as secure fencing and controlled access points to schools to address specific safety concerns.

3,2. Repair and maintain school facilities that have been damaged or neglected, especially those near conflict zones, to ensure a safe learning environment.

3,3. Develop community watch programs involving parents and local authorities to monitor and report on safety issues around schools. This can help in creating a safer route to and from school for students.

3,4. Implement school-based counseling services, focusing on trauma-informed care to address the psychological impacts of conflict, which may be more pronounced in rural settings due to isolation.

3,5. Distribute free school supplies, uniforms, and transport vouchers for marginalized groups.

3,6. Recruit and train teachers, with a focus on "gender-sensitive pedagogy" and "trauma-informed teaching practices." It is necessary to prepare teachers to handle classes in a manner sensitive to the backgrounds and experiences of students affected by conflict.

3,7. Incentivize teachers to work in rural and conflict-affected areas by offering subsidies and regular salaries.

3,8. Train teachers on basic psychological support techniques and provide regular visits by mental health professionals to ensure continuous support for students.

3,9. Launch mobile education units that can reach students in remote areas to ensure they continue to receive education when attending school is not possible due to safety concerns.

3,10. Implement community initiatives to raise awareness about children's rights and the importance of education.

3,11. Set up a reliable communication system for emergency situations, allowing schools to quickly contact security services and parents if safety issues arise.

3,12. Conduct regular safety audits to assess and improve the security measures at schools. Organize workshops for students, staff, and parents to raise awareness about safety protocols and emergency response strategies.

3,13. Strengthen school-based recreational programs could provide important emotional and social support for students.

3,14. Develop initiatives that facilitate and encourage parental involvement in their children's education, potentially through community-based programs or school events.

3,15. Implement programs that offer financial support or flexible schooling options to students who need to work could help in reducing the educational disruption caused by economic pressures.

4. Protection and Psychological Support

4,1. Strengthen programs that equip families with the tools to support their children emotionally and psychologically. Training on communication strategies and emotional intelligence could be beneficial.

4,2. Expand community support activities and ensure they are inclusive and accessible to all children to help mitigate the adverse effects of conflict on children's psychological health.

4,3. Develop school-based counseling and peer support programs could provide critical outlets, especially for children who do not talk to anyone when upset.

4,4. Implement educational campaigns to raise awareness among children, families, and educators about the importance of mental health and the availability of resources.

4,5. Increase the availability and accessibility of child-friendly mental health services in schools and communities. This could involve training more child psychologists, providing mobile health units, and integrating mental health services with regular health check-ups.

4,6. Work with community leaders, schools, and healthcare professionals to reduce stigma associated with mental health issues. This can be achieved through workshops, community talks, and school programs that educate and open dialogue about mental health.

4,7. Address early marriage through awareness campaigns targeting families in rural and displaced communities. Collaboration with local religious leaders could be an effective strategy to discourage child marriages and advocate for children's rights.

4,8. Enhance coordination among civil society organizations, government bodies, and educational institutions to unify efforts for child protection.

Additional Recommendations

5. Advocate for stronger government policies prioritizing children's rights and well-being, including funding for education and mental health services.

6. Form community watch groups, including women and youth leaders, to monitor and report violations.

7. Partner with key stakeholders to develop child protection hotlines accessible even in remote areas.

8. Provide holistic interventions that address parental trauma alongside children's needs, ensuring stable family dynamics.

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YWBOD, SCI, and Author

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YWBOD

Established in April 2013, YWBOD is a non-governmental, non-profit, civil society organization working on youth empowerment, peacebuilding and development in Yemen. YWBOD has the strategic vision to be the pioneer platform for young men and women engaging in peacebuilding programs in Yemen. Since its establishment, YWBOD seeks to empower young changemakers in a peaceful, coherent and inclusive context in Yemen, supporting the effective roles of young people in local and national policies to contribute to development and peace. This has resulted in strong partnerships and collective work towards impactful and sustainable results for the empowerment of young men and women and their engagement in community security, community resilience and conflict resolution, recovery and reconstruction, humanitarian relief and livelihoods.

SCI

Established in 1919, Save the Children is an independent, non-governmental and non-profit organization dedicated to protecting children's rights and improving their well-being worldwide. Save the Children envisions a world where every child has the opportunity to survive, learn, and be protected. In Yemen, the organization works to create a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for children affected by conflict and crisis, ensuring access to essential services such as education, health, nutrition, child protection, and emergency response. Over the years, Save the Children has developed strong partnerships with local communities, authorities, and civil society organizations to deliver sustainable and impactful programs. Its interventions contribute to enhancing community resilience, supporting vulnerable families, and promoting long-term recovery and development while placing children at the center of all humanitarian and development efforts.

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