

A MOBILE CLINIC BRINGS HOPE AND HEALING TO A DISPLACED GIRL IN YEMEN

Fadwa is a two-year-old girl who lives with her family in Marib camp, one of the many settlements for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and marginalized households in Yemen. She is one of the four million people who have been forced to flee their homes due to the ongoing conflict and insecurity in the country.

Life in the camp is harsh and challenging, especially for children. The camp is located in a remote desert area, far from the city, and exposed to extreme weather conditions. Access to basic services such as health, education, water, and sanitation is limited and unreliable. Fadwa and her family depend on the daily wage of her father, who works as a casual laborer in the nearby town.

One day, Fadwa suffered a severe burn on her right foot, when she accidentally stepped on a hot metal sheet that was used for cooking. The burn was deep and painful, and Fadwa cried incessantly. Her mother tried to soothe her with some traditional remedies, but they were not enough to prevent infection and complications. Fadwa's condition worsened by the day, and her family feared for her life.

They knew they needed to seek medical help, but they had no means to afford it. The nearest hospital was too far and too expensive for them. They had heard of some humanitarian organizations providing health services in the area, but they did not know how to contact them or where to find them.



Fortunately, help came to them in the form of a mobile medical team, supported by the World Health Organization (WHO). The mobile team is part of a project that aims to provide essential trauma-lifesaving healthcare services within the Support Minimum Service Package (MSP) to people in need in Marib city and Marib Al Wadi districts of Marib governorate. The project is implemented by Yemen Family Care Association (YFCA).

The mobile team visits different IDP camps and host communities regularly, providing essential healthcare services such as consultations, referrals, vaccinations, screenings, treatments, and health education. The team consists of a general practitioner GP, a nurse, a midwife, a pharmacist, and a nutritionist, who travel in a fully equipped vehicle.

The mobile team arrived at the camp on a scheduled visit, and Fadwa's family rushed to meet them. They explained their situation to the doctor, who immediately examined Fadwa. He diagnosed her with a third-degree burn, which had become infected and necrotic. He explained that Fadwa needed urgent care, otherwise she could lose her foot or even her life.

The doctor and the nurse quickly prepared the necessary equipment and supplies and proceeded to treat Fadwa's burn. They cleaned the wound with an antiseptic solution, removed the dead tissue, applied antibiotic ointment, and covered it with sterile dressings. They also gave Fadwa an injection of tetanus toxoid, to prevent tetanus, and a dose of paracetamol, to reduce her pain and fever. They instructed Fadwa's mother on how to change the dressings and apply the ointment every day and gave her a supply of medicines and materials. They also advised her to bring Fadwa back to the mobile clinic after a week, for a follow-up check.

Fadwa's family was overwhelmed with gratitude and relief. They thanked the mobile team for their kindness and professionalism and praised them for their lifesaving work. They said that the mobile team was a blessing for them and many other people in the camp, who had no other access to health care.



The mobile clinic team while treating Fadwa's burn.

Fadwa's story is a testament to the impact and value of mobile health services in humanitarian settings. Mobile health services are a key strategy to reach people in hard-to-reach and underserved areas, where health facilities are either damaged, destroyed, inaccessible, or overwhelmed. Mobile health services are also a flexible and adaptable

way to respond to the changing needs and priorities of affected populations, especially in protracted and complex emergencies. Through its mobile health services, YFCA and WHO aim to provide quality, comprehensive, and integrated health care to people in need, wherever they are. By doing so, they not only save lives but also restore dignity, hope, and resilience.