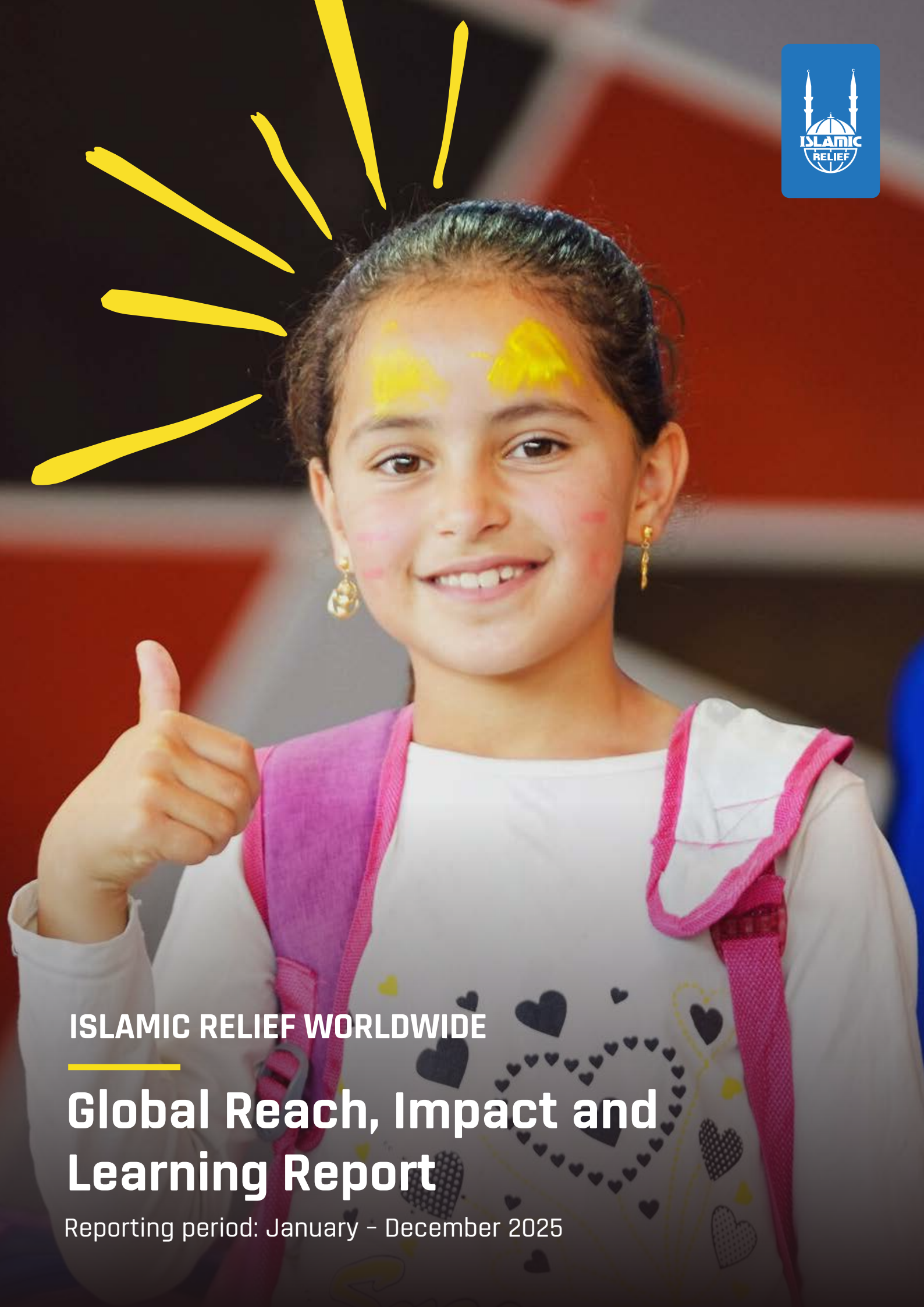
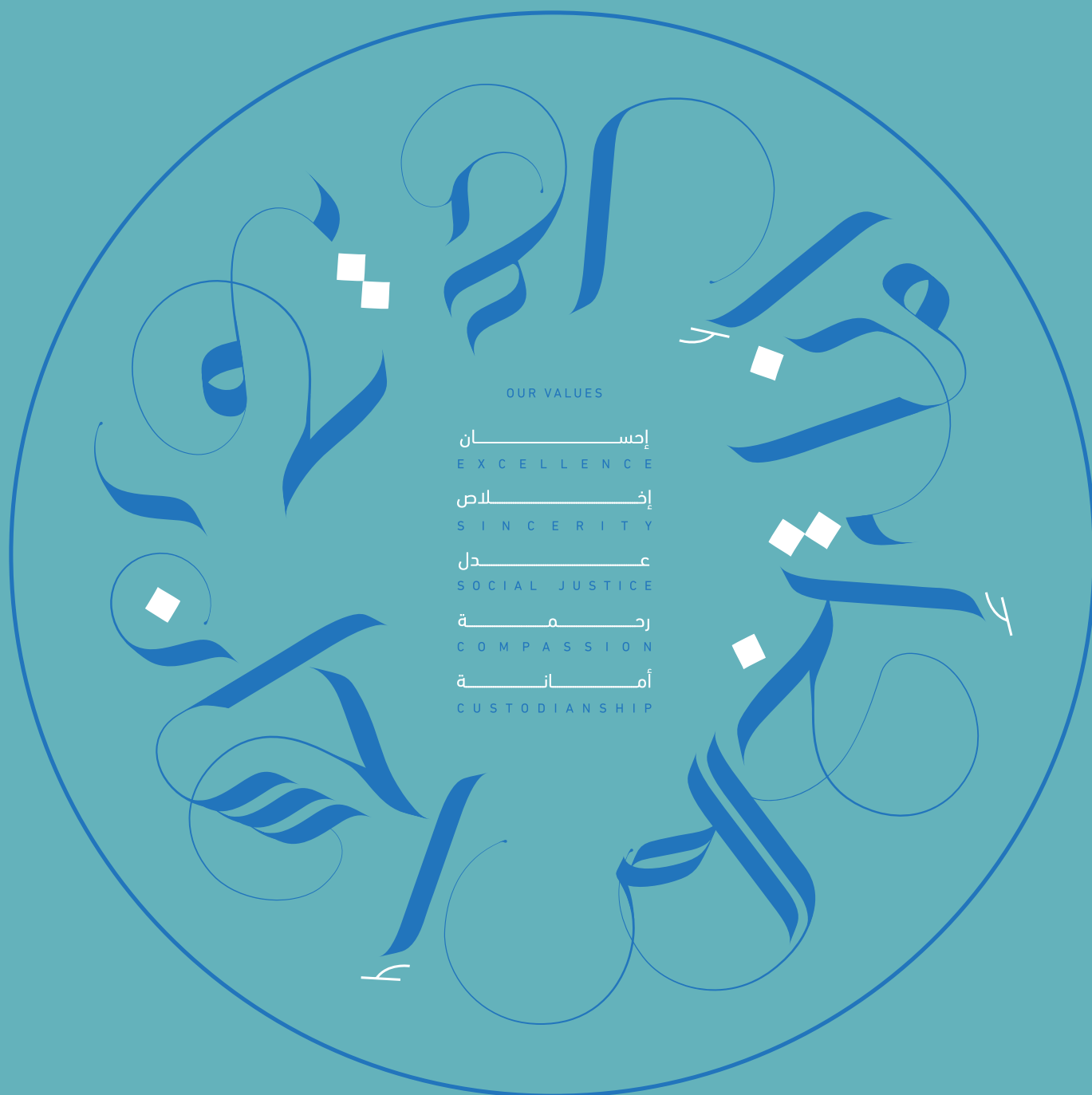




ISLAMIC RELIEF WORLDWIDE

Global Reach, Impact and Learning Report

Reporting period: January – December 2025



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REFLECTIONS ON IMPACT AND LEARNING

At Islamic Relief, impactful programmes require more than responding to need; they require a disciplined commitment to learning, adaptation, and continuous improvement. In an increasingly complex humanitarian and development landscape, our ability to listen, reflect, and act on evidence is as important as the assistance we provide.

This report highlights our global reach, the impact of our work, and the lessons we are learning from communities, partners, and colleagues across our programmes. While the figures demonstrate scale, they tell only part of the story; each project also offers insight into what is working, what can be improved, and how we can strengthen support to the people and communities we serve.

Over the past year, Islamic Relief has continued to deliver programmes across a wide range of humanitarian and development contexts while strengthening our monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning systems. A key milestone has been the continued development of our

Global Programmes and MEAL System (GPMS), which brings together programme data, results, and learning from across our global portfolio. By improving how evidence is collected, analysed, and applied, we are better equipped to make informed decisions, identify emerging trends, and understand programme outcomes. Alongside evaluations, research, community feedback, and learning reviews, this is helping to build a stronger culture of evidence-based practice across the organisation.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to using evidence and learning to strengthen programme quality, innovation, and accountability. By sharing the insights in this report, we aim to deepen our own organisational learning and contribute meaningfully to wider efforts to improve humanitarian and development practice.



Affan Cheema

Director of International Programmes

Islamic Relief Worldwide

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

In 2025, communities around the world continued to face immense challenges. Conflict, displacement, climate-related shocks, economic instability, and growing inequality placed increasing pressure on families already struggling to meet their basic needs. Yet amidst these challenges, we also witnessed remarkable resilience, determination, and hope.

This report highlights the collective impact of Islamic Relief's work over the past year. Through 802 projects implemented across 41 countries, we reached more than 13 million people directly and a further 18 million indirectly through humanitarian and development programmes designed to support communities facing crisis, vulnerability, and uncertainty.

Behind these figures are individuals, families, and communities striving to build better futures. From supporting households affected by conflict, climate change and displacement, to improving access to food, healthcare, safe water, education, livelihoods, and protection services, our work remains rooted in a commitment to human dignity, compassion, and justice.

The report also demonstrates the importance of working in ways that recognise the interconnected nature of vulnerability. Communities do not

experience challenges in isolation, and neither should our responses. Across many of the examples featured in these pages, we see how integrated approaches that combine immediate assistance with longer-term investments in resilience can help communities anticipate, withstand, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses, while generating important learning that strengthens future programmes.

None of this would be possible without the generosity of our supporters, the dedication of our staff and volunteers, the commitment of our partners, and the leadership of the communities themselves. We are deeply grateful for the trust placed in Islamic Relief and for the opportunity to work alongside people whose strength and perseverance continue to inspire us every day.

As we look ahead, Islamic Relief remains committed to delivering high-quality programmes, strengthening accountability, learning from evidence and community feedback, and ensuring that the voices and priorities of the communities we serve remain at the centre of our work. We are grateful for the trust placed in us by our supporters, partners, and communities, and we look forward to continuing this journey together.



Iftikhar Shaheen

Chief Executive Officer

Islamic Relief Worldwide

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and approach



This report presents a consolidated overview of Islamic Relief Worldwide's global reach, impact, and learning across 2025, spanning both humanitarian and development programming. It aims to demonstrate not only the scale of Islamic Relief's work, but also the depth of our contribution to improving the lives of communities affected by crisis, poverty, and vulnerability.

The report brings together quantitative data on the number of people reached across sectors and geographies, alongside programmatic insights that illustrate how programmes are delivered, experienced, and adapted in different contexts. It reflects Islamic Relief's commitment to accountability, evidence-based programming, and continuous learning.

This report covers multiple sectors including food security and livelihoods, health and nutrition, water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH), and others. It highlights how integrated and context-specific approaches contribute to both immediate humanitarian outcomes and longer-term resilience.

The objectives of this report are:

- to present a consolidated analysis of Islamic Relief's reach and programming in 2025
- to highlight impact and learning from selected projects across key thematic areas
- to support transparency, accountability and learning across the organisation and with external stakeholders.

This report combines quantitative analysis and qualitative document review to assess Islamic Relief's programme reach and explore the impact of our work in 2025.

Quantitative data is drawn from Islamic Relief's annual global reach data collection process, an organisation-wide exercise in which country offices report consolidated programme data for the reporting year. This includes information on direct and indirect rightsholders¹ reached, programme sectors, modalities, geographic coverage, and rightsholder profiles, using standardised reporting templates and internal validation processes. The data is then aggregated and analysed at global level to provide portfolio-wide insights and trends across sectors and regions.

This is complemented by a desk-based review of project documentation submitted by Islamic Relief's country offices.² These submissions (including evaluation reports, project documents, and rightsholder perspectives) were analysed to identify key themes, learning, and illustrative examples. Selected cases are presented as spotlight case studies throughout the report.

¹ Direct rightsholders are the documented recipients of services by Islamic Relief or implementing partner at the delivery point. Indirect rightsholders are those in the wider community who cannot be documented, but may accrue partial, indirect benefits

² Country offices are Islamic Relief operational entities responsible for programme implementation and delivery within countries of operation.

2. WHO WE REACHED AND WHERE

In 2025 marginalised communities worldwide continued to face significant challenges. Protracted conflicts, climate-related shocks, and ongoing socioeconomic pressures have deepened vulnerabilities and strained affected populations' capacity to cope.

In this context, the importance of timely, people-centred, and integrated programming remains critical. Through

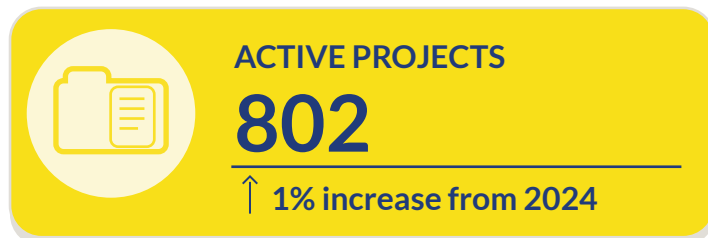
Islamic Relief's country offices, and with the support of Islamic Relief Worldwide and our member offices,³ we have continued to deliver humanitarian and development interventions to those most in need.

This section presents a global overview of the scale and distribution of our programming, highlighting where we worked and the communities we served over the past year.

2.1 Global reach



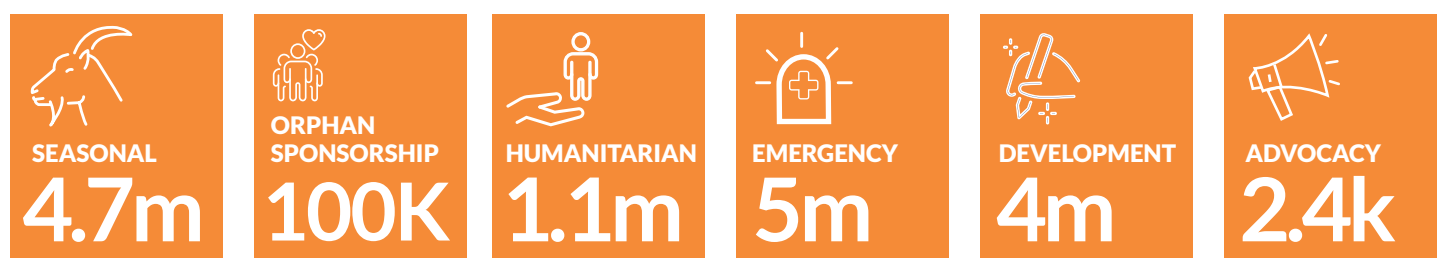
2025 IN NUMBERS



* Direct rightsholders are the documented recipients of services, by Islamic Relief or implementing partner at the delivery point

* Indirect rightsholders are those in the wider community who cannot be documented, but may accrue partial indirect benefits. Usually, any count of indirect rightsholders will always be an approximation, because it is not verifiable

PEOPLE DIRECTLY REACHED ACROSS PROGRAMME TYPES



³ Member offices are Islamic Relief entities primarily based in fundraising countries, supporting the federation through fundraising, advocacy, communications, and strategic programme support.

2.2 Where we worked



In 2025, Islamic Relief expanded our global operational footprint, increasing our programme presence from 38 to 41 countries. This growth includes new or expanded implementation in Myanmar, Egypt, Jamaica and Malaysia.

The map presented reflects countries where programmes were implemented through Islamic Relief in 2025.

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTHERN AFRICA

10 COUNTRIES
3,668,577 people reached directly
204 projects

EUROPE

8 COUNTRIES
441,940 people reached directly
156 projects

CARIBBEAN AND AMERICAS

1 COUNTRY
1,500 people reached directly
1 project

WEST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

7 COUNTRIES
1,662,454 people reached directly
78 projects

ASIA

 **10 COUNTRIES**
 **3,039,675** people reached directly
 **199** projects



EAST AFRICA

 **5 COUNTRIES**
 **4,318,595** people reached directly
 **164** projects

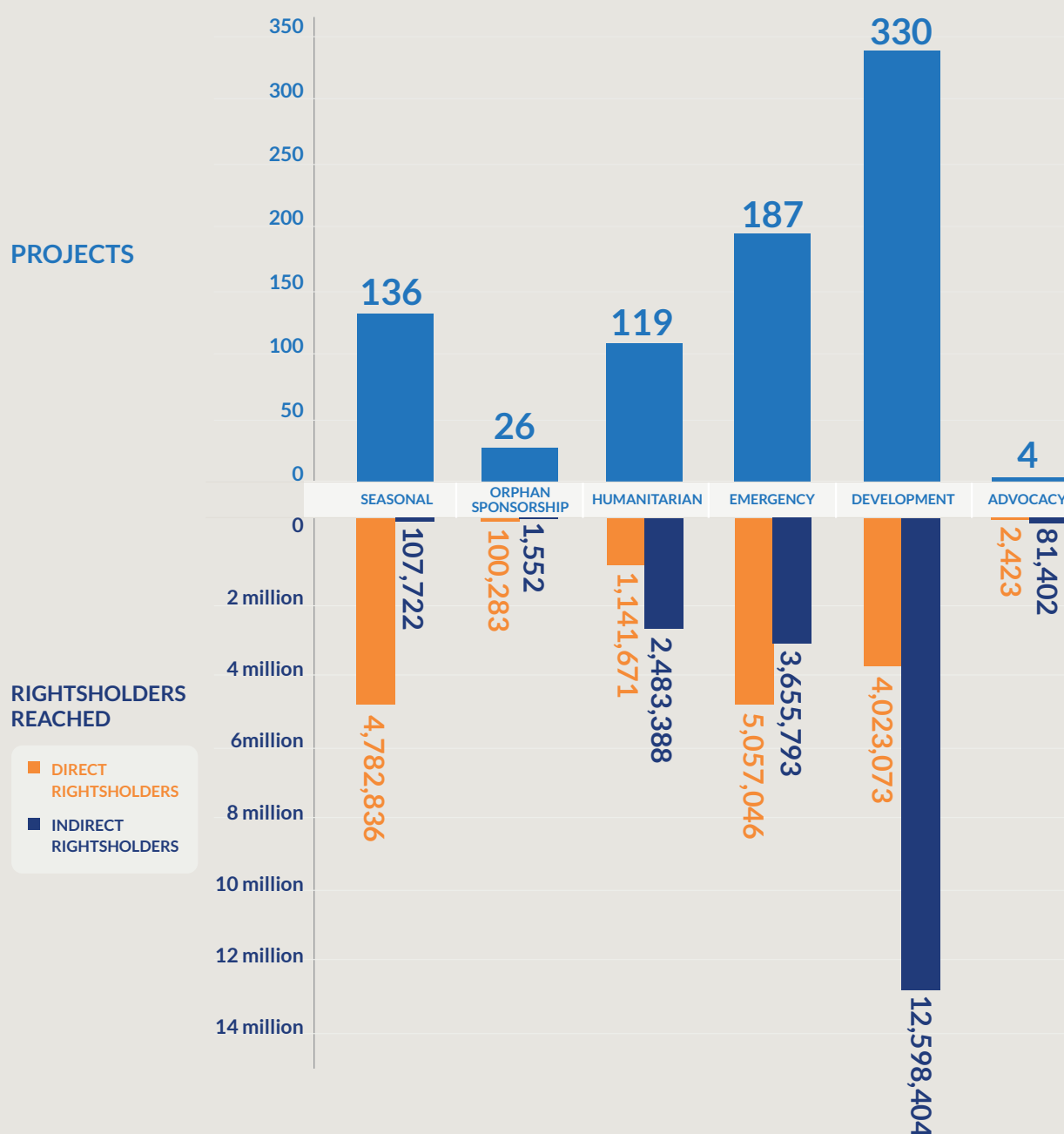
Country	Projects	People reached directly	People reached indirectly
EUROPE			
Albania	15	45,568	4,962
Bosnia and Herzegovina	11	24,769	41,337
Italy	3	2,008	0
Kosova	18	142,133	156,035
North Macedonia	7	19,451	34,817
Russian Federation (Chechnya)	7	25,384	2,283
Spain	3	1,891	0
United Kingdom	92	180,736	685,876
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA			
Egypt	1	26,660	0
Iraq	19	55,724	168,902
Jordan	19	51,033	79,243
Lebanon	19	578,181	169,245
Libya	1	1,225	1,225
Morocco	15	41,886	344
Occupied Palestinian Territory	18	500,000	879,609
Yemen	25	1,080,274	1,080,437
Syria	62	1,276,262	8,747
Türkiye	25	57,332	3,383
ASIA			
Afghanistan	50	1,027,076	471,260
Bangladesh	35	594,706	365,859
India	2	39,591	0
Indonesia	22	58,161	48,112
Malaysia	1	171	200
Myanmar	2	25,637	100
Nepal	10	113,958	100,549
Pakistan	54	1,028,277	5,970,563
Philippines	13	103,182	71,587
Sri Lanka	10	48,916	2,124
AMERICAS/CARIBBEAN			
Jamaica	1	1,500	0
WEST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA			
Democratic Republic of Congo	4	14,489	0
Lesotho	2	4,308	12,308
Malawi	11	280,004	42,024
Mali	33	733,041	1,090,317
Niger	17	522,185	457,559
South Africa	10	101,795	53,465
Zimbabwe	1	6,632	6,632
EAST AFRICA			
Ethiopia	21	1,056,637	3,972,969
Kenya	34	450,498	356,295
Somalia	33	730,604	553,567
South Sudan	14	138,746	36,014
Sudan	62	1,942,110	2,000,312

2.3 How we worked (programme types, sectors, themes)



This section of our report highlights the variety of projects and programmes implemented by Islamic Relief in 2025. These projects encompass a wide range of types, sectors, and themes, reflecting the organisation's diverse areas of focus and impact.

REACH ACROSS PROGRAMME TYPES



Note: Emergency projects provide rapid assistance following sudden-onset disasters or flare-ups in existing crises. Humanitarian projects address ongoing needs in protracted crises where long-term development programming is constrained.

WHAT WE DELIVER

The below presents Islamic Relief's programming by sector, showing the scale and distribution of interventions across sectoral areas. It highlights both the breadth of the organisation's portfolio and the diversity of needs being addressed. Notably, food security and livelihoods, health, and WASH represent the largest areas of intervention, both in terms of reach and number of projects.



Note: Rightsholder figures presented by sector include only projects where that sector was identified as the primary sector of intervention. This approach avoids double counting individuals reached through multi-sector programmes and provides a more conservative estimate of sector-specific reach. The number of projects includes both primary sector projects and projects where the sector was delivered as an additional component

⁴ Protection and inclusion is presented here as a stand-alone sector in which projects have specific objectives focused on protection and inclusion of vulnerable groups. This is distinct from the mainstreaming of protection and inclusion across other sectors, through which these considerations are integrated into broader programming.

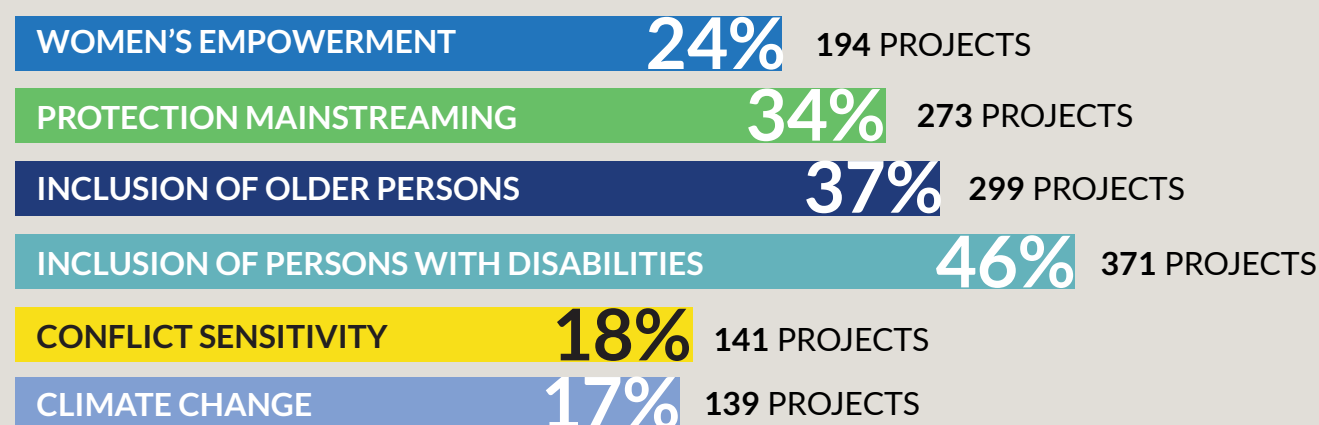
In 2025, Islamic Relief implemented 146 projects that included cash assistance. While direct cash transfers were the most common approach, vouchers and combined cash-and-voucher modalities were also used where appropriate to meet programme objectives and local market conditions.

HOW CASH ASSISTANCE WAS DELIVERED



The below chart highlights the extent to which cross-cutting themes are integrated across projects in 2025. 'Mainstreaming' refers to the integration of cross-cutting themes, such as gender, into the design and implementation of projects, rather than delivering them as stand-alone activities.

MAINSTREAMING ACROSS PROJECTS



Note: As projects may mainstream multiple themes simultaneously, figures should not be aggregated, as overlaps exist across categories.

2.4 Who we reached: Demographic and vulnerability profile



This section presents the demographic and vulnerability profile of rightsholders reached in 2025, including displacement status, gender, age, and disability. It highlights the diversity of populations reached and reflects Islamic Relief's commitment to inclusive programming across both crisis-affected and development contexts.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE



48%

of people reached
were men and boys



52%

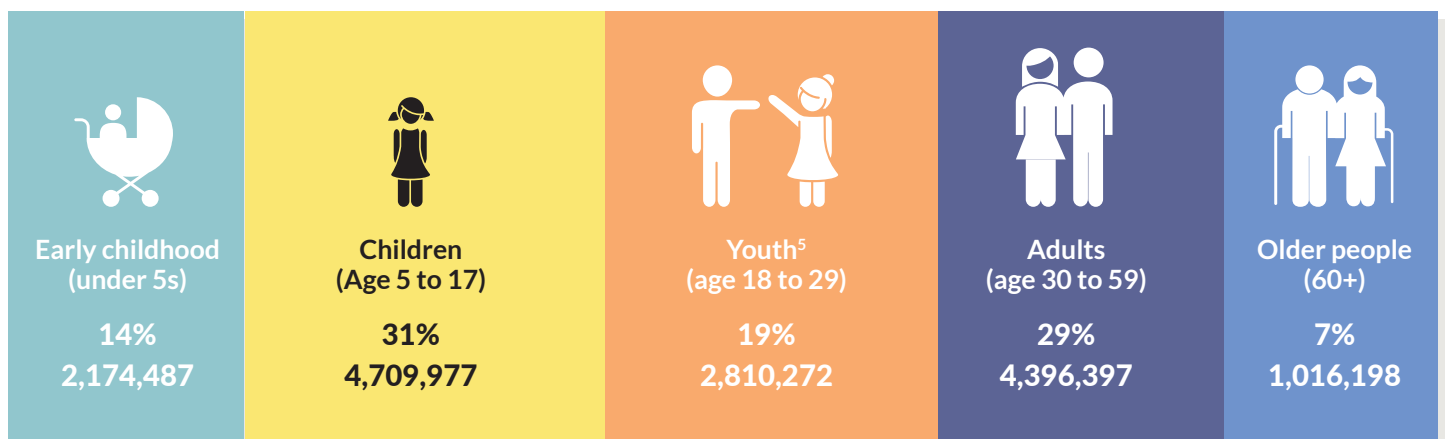
of people reached
were women and girls



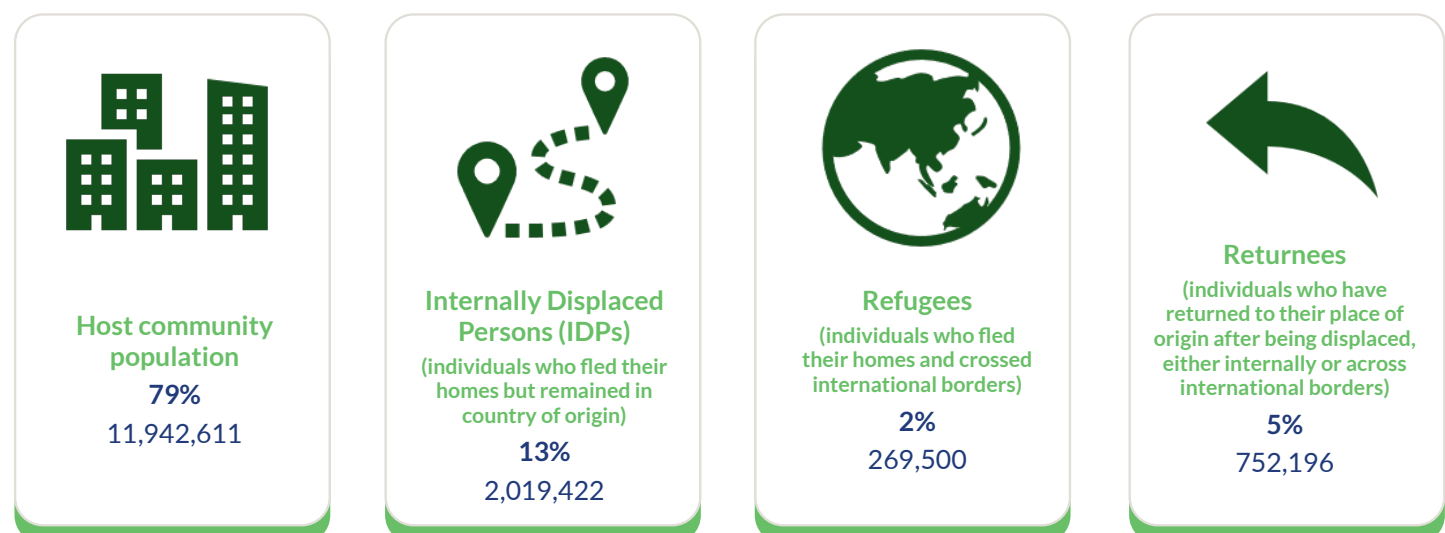
7%

of people reached
had a disability

AGE PROFILE OF PEOPLE REACHED



DISPLACEMENT STATUS



⁵ While global definitions often define 'youth' as 15–24, this report uses ages 18–29 to align with available data categories.

2.5 Impact by contributions to Sustainable Development Goals



This section of the report illustrates Islamic Relief's contributions towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Projects are mapped to the SDGs based on tagging at the project level. As projects often address multiple objectives, a single project may be associated with more than one SDG. This approach captures the multi-sectoral nature of programming but does not quantify the proportional contribution of each project to individual SDGs. While this approach does not allow for precise measurement of contribution by SDG, it does provide a useful overview of where programming is most concentrated.

The analysis shows that Islamic Relief's portfolio is most strongly aligned with SDGs related to Zero Hunger (SDG 2), Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3), and Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6), which together account for the largest share of projects and rightsholder reach. This also reflects Islamic Relief's core programmatic priority sectors. This section of the report illustrates Islamic Relief's contributions towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Projects are mapped to the SDGs based on tagging at the project level. As projects often address multiple objectives, a single project may be associated with more than one SDG. This approach captures the multi-sectoral nature of programming but does not quantify the proportional contribution of each project to individual SDGs. While this approach does not allow for precise measurement of contribution by SDG, it does provide a useful overview of where programming is most concentrated.

Sustainable Development Goals		Projects	Rightsholders
	End poverty in all its forms everywhere	53	614,086
	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture	207	5,151,959
	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	195	4,156,218
	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	101	1,224,075
	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	90	1,402,539
	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	138	2,220,019
	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all	12	333,895
	Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth; full and productive employment; and decent work for all	51	756,771
	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation	21	521,592
	Reduce inequality within and among countries	26	550,911
	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	34	936,759
	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	15	217,305
	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	48	612,609
	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development	9	157,587
	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems; sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt reverse land degradation; halt biodiversity loss	12	291,854
	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development; provide access to justice for all; and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels	23	376,724
	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development	20	272,143

3. WHAT WE DELIVERED

This section provides an overview of our programming across key sectors, including food security and livelihoods, WASH, health and nutrition, education, and disaster risk reduction. These sectors represent Islamic Relief's core areas of focus, as reflected in the scale of projects implemented and the number of rightsholders reached in 2025.

Each section highlights how programming is delivered within these sectors, combining quantitative analysis of reach and portfolio distribution with selected programme spotlights that illustrate impact and learning in different contexts.

3.1 Food security and livelihoods



Food insecurity remains one of the most pressing global challenges. According to the Global Report on Food Crises (2025), hundreds of millions of people continue to face acute hunger driven by conflict, climate shocks, economic instability, and structural inequalities. These pressures disrupt food systems, increase prices, and limit households' ability to meet their basic needs, with women, children, and displaced populations disproportionately affected.

In 2025, Islamic Relief's food security and livelihoods portfolio reflected a combination of food security, livelihoods, and graduation programming across diverse contexts. This included targeted food security interventions, livelihood support initiatives, and longer-term graduation approaches aimed at supporting households to move out of extreme vulnerability. A consistent feature across the portfolio was the strong emphasis on women's economic empowerment, with many projects intentionally designed to expand women's access to productive assets, income opportunities, savings mechanisms, and community-based support structures. This reflects both the disproportionate impact of food insecurity on women and the central role women play in household food security, resilience, and recovery.

Across contexts such as Mali, Iraq, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Niger, programming ranged from addressing immediate food needs to strengthening income generation, skills, and economic resilience. Graduation approaches, with the sequencing of support—including consumption support, livelihood inputs, training, and savings mechanisms—enabled households to transition towards more sustainable and self-reliant livelihoods.

Overall, Islamic Relief's approach to food security and livelihoods emphasises the link between food security and sustainable livelihoods. By combining short-term support with longer-term economic strengthening, programming aims to address both immediate needs and the underlying drivers of vulnerability, supporting households to build resilience over time.

3.1.1 Food security and livelihoods portfolio reach and coverage

Food security and livelihoods programming represents a significant and strategic component of Islamic Relief's global portfolio, with 137 projects where food security and livelihoods is the primary sector (17 per cent) and 85 (10.5 per cent) projects where food security and livelihoods is a secondary/integrated component.



Projects implemented

222

(28% of all projects)



Countries covered

30

(out of 41 countries)



People reached directly

2,053,858

(14% of all direct rightsholders)



People reached indirectly

5,487,732

(29% of all indirect rightsholders)

Key insights:

- Food security and livelihoods is both a stand-alone sector and an integrated one → reflected in the increase from 17% (primary) to 27% (total footprint)
- Integrated programming **significantly expands food security and livelihoods footprint**, particularly in countries such as Ethiopia: (14% → 43%) and South Sudan: (57% → 79%)
- Food security and livelihoods programming is globally distributed, with **strong concentration in fragile and climate-affected contexts**, with the highest direct reach in:
 - Pakistan – 16 projects
 - Sudan – 15 projects
 - Yemen – 12 projects
 - Bangladesh – 10 projects
- Food security and livelihoods programming is predominantly delivered to **host communities (80%)**, with nearly 1 in 5 rightsholders being IDPs (18%)

3.1.2 Programme spotlight: Food security

The projects below illustrate how integrated food security programming can deliver both immediate relief and longer-term benefits.

Qurbani Plus Mali: Integrating food security, livelihoods and women's economic empowerment

In Mali's Koulikoro region, where rural poverty, climate pressures and limited livelihood opportunities continue to undermine household food security, the Islamic Relief Canada-funded Qurbani Plus Mali project demonstrated how an integrated approach can deliver both immediate and longer-term benefits. Implemented in three villages in Safo commune, the project was designed to improve the social inclusion and economic empowerment of women through a combination of livestock fattening, market gardening and community-based savings and loans.

The project supported 150 women, including 21 women with disabilities, through market gardening and Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) activities, while 45 women, including 10 women with disabilities, participated in the Muzarah Islamic microfinance initiative.⁶ These women received young bulls for fattening, livestock feed support, technical training, and ongoing coaching. At the same time, the project established three market gardens — equipped with boreholes and management committees — and trained women on vegetable production, composting, organic fertiliser and fodder cultivation. Six VSLAs were also formed, enabling women to save collectively and access loans for both livelihood and social needs.

The project produced strong results. By the end of implementation:

- the proportion of households with an 'acceptable' Food Consumption Score (FCS)⁷ had increased from 39 per cent to 95 per cent
- average monthly household income rose from 17,293 FCFA (USD 30) to 43,713 FCFA (USD 77).
- 97 per cent of households reported at least a 30 per cent increase in income, and 95 per cent reported having a stable source of income.
- profits from livestock sales were reinvested in small ruminants, business activities and household needs
- VSLA members saved over 5.4 million XOF (USD 9,660) and accessed more than 2.7 million XOF (USD 4,830) in loans
- women also reported stronger community ties, with 100 per cent of respondents stating that the project contributed to improved social cohesion.

KEY RESULT

95%

reported having a stable source of income.



Several common lessons emerged for future food security programming:

- Integrated approaches that combine livelihoods, financial inclusion and climate adaptation produce stronger resilience outcomes than stand-alone interventions.
- Women's access to assets, savings mechanisms and productive resources significantly improves both household food security and social cohesion.
- Market linkages and seasonal demand patterns must be considered when designing livelihood interventions.
- Strengthening community governance structures and producer organisations improves sustainability and local ownership.



⁶ Muzarah is a form of agricultural partnership or sharecropping contract in Islamic law where a landowner grants land to a farmer for agricultural production in exchange for a predetermined share of the harvested crops.

⁷ The Food Consumption Score (FCS) is a World Food Programme (WFP) composite indicator measuring household food security based on dietary diversity, consumption frequency, and relative nutritional value. It calculates the seven-day recall frequency of eight food groups, weighted by nutritional importance to categorise household food consumption as poor, borderline, or acceptable.

Strengthening Community Resilience and Economic Empowerment Programme (SHEEP): A regional programme for integrated resilience

SHEEP is a multi-country resilience programme implemented in some of the Horn of Africa's most fragile and shock-prone contexts across Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. Operating in environments marked by climate variability, displacement, economic instability and weak access to services, the programme was designed to strengthen community resilience through integrated interventions in food security, livelihoods, water access, disaster risk reduction and social inclusion.

Evidence from the programme's regional outcome harvesting analysis shows consistent improvements in food security and income across all countries, with results varying by context:

1. Kenya:

- 85 per cent of farmers adopted improved practices, leading to increased productivity.
- Average household income increased by 48 per cent, driven by improved market access (84 per cent).
- Strong performance in water access, with 90.5 per cent of households reporting improvements.

2. Somalia:

- 78 per cent of households increased crop production, contributing to the elimination of seasonal 'hungry months'.
- 84 per cent reported increased income, supported by agriculture, VSLAs and youth enterprises.
- 70 per cent improved access to markets, strengthening economic resilience.

3. Ethiopia:

- 79 per cent reported increased crop yields, with significant gains in agricultural productivity.
- 99 per cent of households reported increased income, enabling higher spending on basic needs, education and healthcare
- Strong market engagement, with 98 per cent accessing new or improved markets.

4. South Sudan:

- 94 per cent adoption of improved practices, the highest across all countries
- 92 per cent of households reported increased crop production, with direct improvements in food security
- 75 per cent gained improved market access, supporting income growth

5. Sudan:

- 99 per cent of households reported increased crop production (the highest across all countries), alongside improved livestock productivity
- 92 per cent reported higher income and better market access
- High uptake of improved practices, with strong gains in both agriculture and livestock systems

Across all five countries, the most consistent outcome was improved food security and income, driven by high adoption of improved practices and strengthened market linkages.

Evidence from the programme's regional lessons learned process shows that SHEEP's strongest results emerged where interventions worked across multiple layers of resilience at once. In practice, this meant linking support to agriculture and livestock production with water access, savings and financial inclusion, market-oriented producer groups, and community governance structures.

The regional learning process also highlighted important priorities for future programming, including the need to formalise VSLAs and producer groups into cooperatives, strengthen market systems development from design stage, and invest in solarised water systems with strong community governance.

KEY LEARNING

Across all five countries, the most consistent outcome was **improved food security and income**.



3.1.3 Programme spotlight: Sustainable livelihoods

Beyond immediate support, livelihoods programming plays a critical role in strengthening resilience and economic stability. The below highlights how targeted livelihood interventions can enhance income generation and reduce vulnerability over time.

Strengthening Community Resilience in Bara District, Nepal: Linking livelihoods, protection and climate resilience

In Nepal's Bara district, where high poverty levels, climate variability and social inequalities intersect, Islamic Relief implemented an integrated resilience programme to address the structural drivers of economic vulnerability. The area is highly exposed to climate shocks, including erratic rainfall and rising temperatures, while many households, particularly those from Dalit and Muslim communities, rely on low-productivity agriculture and casual labour, with limited opportunities for income diversification.

The Islamic Relief Canada-funded project was designed to strengthen livelihoods while addressing underlying barriers related to gender inequality, protection risks and access to basic services. It combined climate-resilient agriculture, small business development, WASH infrastructure and community-based protection mechanisms, recognising that economic empowerment alone is insufficient if social and environmental constraints are not addressed.

The project reached over 14,000 people, with targeted livelihood support provided to vulnerable households through agricultural inputs, training and small enterprise development. Farmers adopted climate-smart practices such as crop rotation, bio-fertiliser use and improved irrigation systems, leading to increased productivity and diversification of income sources. At the same time, 323 individuals were supported to establish or expand small businesses, ranging from tailoring and retail to repair services, creating new economic opportunities in underserved rural markets.

The external evaluation confirms that the project translated this integrated design into tangible and measurable improvements across multiple outcomes:

- Food security improved significantly, with the proportion of households reporting adequate access to food increasing from 56 per cent to 68.5 per cent.
- Adoption of climate-smart agriculture practices also rose from 40 per cent to 53.9 per cent, contributing to more resilient livelihoods.
- Women's economic empowerment emerged as a key outcome, with 89 per cent of women reporting increased income and greater influence over household financial decisions.



The project's impact is also reflected in individual livelihood transformations. In Bara district, Chandrika, a farmer from Mahagadhimai Municipality, challenged long-standing community taboos around mushroom cultivation.

“I am not growing mushrooms, I am growing white gold,” he says, highlighting both the economic and nutritional value of his harvest.

With support from Islamic Relief, Chandrika established a mushroom demonstration plot on previously unused land. A practice once viewed with suspicion is now an accepted and growing livelihood activity within the community. Chandrika and his wife produce over 200 kilograms of oyster mushrooms per season, generating income and inspiring others.

“At first, people thought I was crazy. Now they come to buy mushrooms from me,” he explains. His farm has since become a local learning hub, with more than 100 community members visiting, and several beginning their own mushroom cultivation.

However, these gains did not fully translate into broader household resilience. The proportion of households exhibiting resilience characteristics increased only marginally, from 35 per cent to 38.2 per cent, highlighting a critical gap between short-term improvements and sustained resilience outcomes. This suggests that, while the project was effective in improving immediate food security and agricultural practices, building economic empowerment and resilience requires longer-term, system-level changes, including stronger market linkages, asset accumulation, and sustained support beyond the project cycle.

Supporting Economic Recovery through MSMEs and youth employment in Iraq

In Iraq's Thi Qar and Halabja governorates, prolonged conflict, economic stagnation, and weak private sector development have left many young people, particularly graduates, without viable employment pathways. At the same time, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), which underpin local economies, face constraints in accessing finance, skilled labour, and markets.

Islamic Relief's project attempted to address these interconnected challenges through an integrated economic empowerment approach combining skills development, enterprise support, and market linkages. By simultaneously strengthening youth employability and MSME capacity, the project contributed to creating sustainable pathways from unemployment to income generation for the young graduates involved.

The Islamic Relief UK-funded project supported over 700 direct rightsholders through Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), apprenticeships, and business development services. Across Thi Qar and Halabja, young people were placed in practical work environments and trained in market-relevant trades, while MSMEs received business training, mentorship, and conditional cash grants to expand operations.

At the same time, the project highlighted important challenges and lessons learned. Despite strong skills development results, employment was not immediate for all participants, particularly in Halabja, where 59 per cent of apprentices were still seeking jobs three months after completion of the project, reflecting limited job availability in the local economy.

Participants also identified barriers such as low wages, limited market demand, and mismatches between training and available opportunities.

These findings underline a critical learning: skills development alone is not sufficient to drive employment outcomes in fragile contexts. Sustained job placement support, stronger private sector engagement, and market systems development are essential to translate skills into stable livelihoods.

Evidence from impact assessments show strong results:

- In Thi Qar, 73 per cent of apprenticeship participants secured employment within three months of conclusion of apprenticeships, while 86 per cent reported earning income as a direct result of the training.
- 83.7 per cent reported that the programme met or exceeded expectations, alongside improved confidence (83.7 per cent) and expanded professional networks (69.8 per cent).
- In Halabja, 80 per cent of participants applied their new skills and 60 per cent had already started income-generating activities.

Beyond employment, the programme contributed to broader economic recovery:

- Over 70 micro-enterprises were established, and approximately 260 jobs were created or sustained.
- Women's participation was a notable achievement, with many female participants engaging in home-based enterprises — that improved household income — to navigate social constraints.

KEY RESULT

Over **70** micro-enterprises were established, and approximately **260** jobs were created or sustained.

3.1.4 Programme spotlight: Graduation model

The **Falah Graduation Model** is Islamic Relief's flagship model, designed to support ultra-poor households move from crisis and dependency toward sustainable livelihoods and self-reliance through sequenced, multi-dimensional support. The below demonstrates how this support can enable long-term change.

Sustainable Livelihoods development of the extreme poor communities (SUPPORT), Bangladesh: Enabling pathways out of extreme poverty

In northern Bangladesh, where extreme poverty, seasonal unemployment and gender inequality intersect, Islamic Relief's SUPPORT project applies a structured graduation approach to help 3,000 extreme-poor households in Dinajpur move from vulnerability to self-reliance. The Islamic Relief Canada-funded project delivers sequenced and layered support reflecting the full graduation pathway. This includes:

- **targeting and planning:** Household-specific livelihood plans based on capacity and opportunity
- **asset transfer and training:** Climate-adaptive agriculture, livestock and small business support
- **financial inclusion:** Self-help groups (SHGs) managing interest-free revolving funds (qard hasan)
- **Coaching and follow-up:** Continuous 1-2-1 mentoring and peer learning
- **Social empowerment:** Women's leadership groups and rights awareness
- **Systems linkages:** Connections to markets and government services

KEY RESULT

More than
229%
increase in average
household income.

Early results from the mid-term evaluation demonstrates significant growth:

- More than 229 per cent increase in average household income (from BDT 3,875 (USD 31) to 12,749 (USD 104).
- 97 per cent of households engaged in multiple income-generating activities.
- 100 per cent of households participating in SHGs.
- 80 per cent accessing government social safety nets (up from 8 per cent at baseline)



Harnessing Opportunities for Poverty Eradication (HOPE), Niger: A multi-sector graduation approach tackling extreme urban poverty

In Niamey, where rapid urbanisation, unemployment and rising living costs are trapping ultra-poor households in chronic poverty, Islamic Relief's HOPE project applies a multi-sector graduation model to support 9,678 direct rightsholders to move towards sustainable livelihoods. This Islamic Relief Canada-funded project targets urban communities by applying the full graduation sequence: consumption support (cash assistance) to stabilise households; skills and asset transfer (vocational training, start-up grants); financial inclusion (savings group, financial literacy); and intensive coaching and follow-up.



The project also highlights key challenges that matter for learning:^a

- **Women's empowerment remains uneven** → participation increased, but decision-making power within households was still constrained.
- **Group performance varied** → some SHGs required intensive mentoring and motivation support.
- **Adoption of new practices (i.e. climate-resilient practices) required demonstration** → behaviour change depended on practical, hands-on learning.
- **Market access and climate risks affected viability** → affecting income reliability and requiring ongoing adaptation of livelihood plans.

Importantly, this particular iteration of graduation programming in Niger is layered with additional support, including nutrition (using the FARN approach),⁸ WASH infrastructure and protection and gender-based violence (GBV) services reflecting a true multi-dimensional graduation model project. Mid-term results demonstrate significant household transformation:

- 92.7 per cent of rightsholders increased income from employment or IGAs.
- 82.9 per cent of supported businesses generating profit.
- 99 per cent of households achieved minimum dietary diversity.
- 15,229 people gained access to safe water through solar systems.



"Before this project, I didn't think it was possible... now I have fresh vegetables at home and don't have to worry about preparing food."

Halima, a 47-year-old widow from Niamey, struggled to support her two sons after the death of her husband. Without a stable income, her children had to drop out of school and the family relied on irregular and insufficient means to survive.

Through the HOPE graduation project, Halima received multipurpose cash support, vocational training for her one of her sons, and training in soilless urban farming, enabling her to produce vegetables at home. She also joined a women's savings group, allowing her to begin saving and accessing small loans.

Today, Halima reports improved food security, reduced daily stress, and greater confidence in her ability to support her family. Her experience reflects how graduation approaches can simultaneously stabilise households, build livelihoods, and restore dignity in highly vulnerable urban settings.

Despite strong results, the project highlights key challenges:

- Financial inclusion bottlenecks (bank access, documentation delays) slowed implementation.
- Urban constraints (lack of land) limit traditional livelihood options.
- Dependence on cash support in early stages raises sustainability questions.
- Access to training centres and markets remains uneven.
- Behaviour change (e.g. hygiene adoption at 48% per cent shows partial uptake only).

A key takeaway from this project is that graduation approaches can be highly effective in fragile urban contexts where they address structural urban constraints (space, markets, services) and invest in continuous coaching and local systems. However, sustainability depends on stronger integration of financial systems, more accessible market linkages and infrastructure, and continued consumption support.

⁸ The FARN approach (Foyers d'Apprentissage et de Réhabilitation Nutritionnelle or Homes of Learning and Nutritional Rehabilitation) is a community-based intervention targeting moderately malnourished children under five. It brings mothers together for 12 days to learn improved nutrition, hygiene, and local recipe preparation to rehabilitate children and prevent future malnutrition.

3.2 Health and nutrition



In many of the contexts in which Islamic Relief operates, limited access to quality health services, high rates of malnutrition, and weak health systems continue to undermine development outcomes, particularly for women, children, and vulnerable groups. These challenges are often compounded by conflict, displacement, climate shocks, and poverty, which disrupt service delivery and increase health risks.

Islamic Relief's approach to health and nutrition focuses on strengthening access to essential services while addressing underlying determinants of health. This includes supporting primary and secondary healthcare systems,¹⁰ improving maternal, newborn and child health, scaling up nutrition interventions such as Maternal, Infant, and Young Child Nutrition (MIYCN) and Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM), and integrating WASH, food security and behaviour change to improve outcomes.

Programmes are often delivered through integrated, community-based approaches, combining service delivery with capacity strengthening of health systems, community engagement, and partnerships with local authorities. This ensures that interventions not only address immediate needs but also contribute to longer-term system strengthening and resilience.

3.2.1 Health and nutrition portfolio reach and coverage

Health programming forms a core pillar of Islamic Relief's global portfolio, delivered both through dedicated interventions and as part of integrated, multi-sector responses. In 2025, 79 projects identified health as the primary sector (9.9 per cent), with a further 85 projects incorporating health as a secondary or integrated component (10.6 per cent), spanning 24 countries. This reflects its central role in addressing vulnerability in both humanitarian and development contexts.

Nutrition programming is a highly integrated component of Islamic Relief's work, closely linked to health, food security and WASH outcomes. In 2025, 12 projects identified nutrition as the primary sector (1.5 per cent), with a further 50 projects incorporating nutrition as a secondary component (6.2 per cent), across 19 countries. This number highlights nutrition's role as a priority, embedded within broader sectoral interventions, particularly in fragile and malnutrition-prone contexts.



Projects implemented

226

(26.2% of all projects)



Countries covered

26

(out of 41 countries)



People reached directly

2,654,686

(18% of all direct rightsholders)



People reached indirectly

4,329,183

(23% of all indirect rightsholders)

Key insights:

- Health is both a primary sector and an integrated component → reflected in the increase from 9.9% (primary – 79 projects) to 20.5% (total footprint – 164 projects).
- Nutrition is predominantly delivered through integrated programming → reflected in the increase from 1.5% (primary – 12 projects) to 7.7% (total footprint – 62 projects).
- Health programming is globally distributed, with strong concentration in:
 - Sudan – (25 projects)
 - Syria – (19 projects)
 - Afghanistan – (13 projects)
- The highest concentration of nutrition programming is in:
 - Afghanistan - (9 projects)
 - Sudan - (9 projects)
 - Ethiopia - (5 projects)

¹⁰ Primary healthcare refers to the first point of contact individuals and communities have with the healthcare system. This may include essential preventive, promotive and basic curative services such as outpatient care, maternal and child health, immunisation, nutrition screening, and treatment of common illnesses. Secondary healthcare refers to more specialised care typically provided through referral facilities, including inpatient services, specialist consultations, and more advanced diagnostic or clinical treatment.

3.2.2 Programme spotlight: Health and nutrition

The projects below illustrate how health and nutrition programming can improve access to essential services while addressing immediate needs and supporting longer-term health and nutritional outcomes.

Oromia Healthcare Improvement Project (OHIP), Ethiopia: Strengthening health systems through equipment, skills and systems

In Oromia, Ethiopia, limited functionality of medical equipment has significantly constrained access to quality healthcare, with over 40 per cent of devices in public facilities estimated to be non-functional. This has led to delays in diagnosis, increased referrals, and avoidable risks for patients, particularly in maternal, neonatal, and emergency care.

Funded by Islamic Relief Canada, the OHIP adopted a health systems-based approach, combining equipment rehabilitation with capacity building and institutional strengthening across numerous health facilities. Headline results include:

- 3.1 million people reached across Oromia
- more than 300 medical devices installed or restored
- 29 health facilities equipped with critical equipment
- 50 biomedical engineers and 50 health workers trained
- emergency service capacity increased by 50 per cent in some facilities.

By restoring functionality and strengthening capacity of local health systems, OHIP enabled health facilities to deliver services that were previously unavailable. This includes:

- a fully operational paediatric intensive care unit (ICU) was established, with 50 critically ill children treated within five months
- emergency departments expanded, increasing patient capacity from 800 to 1,200 patients per month
- new services (including surgical care, rehabilitation, and palliative care) were introduced.

These changes also reduced referrals, improved treatment timelines, and strengthened patient trust in local health systems.

KEY RESULT

3.1 million people
reached across Oromia.



OHIP highlights important lessons for health systems programming:

- **Donation-only approaches are insufficient** without parallel investment in skills and systems.
- **Local technical capacity is critical to sustaining** equipment functionality.
- **Infrastructure constraints** (e.g. power compatibility issues) can undermine impact if not addressed early.
- **Logistical and supply chain delays** can limit coverage and require adaptive implementation. While strong progress was achieved, only 29 of the planned 50 facilities received full equipment support during the reporting period, underscoring the importance of realistic timelines and supply chain planning.



Integrated Food Security & Livelihoods, Health and WASH Response to the Vulnerable Groups in Taiz Governorate, Yemen: Restoring access to life-saving healthcare

In Yemen's Taiz Governorate, years of conflict have severely weakened the health system, leaving vulnerable populations — particularly IDPs — with limited access to essential care. Through an integrated response, Islamic Relief supported the rehabilitation and operation of Khalifah Hospital, restoring access to critical specialised healthcare services.

At the heart of this intervention was a simple but urgent objective: to ensure that vulnerable communities can access quality, reliable healthcare when they need it most.

The project ensured the delivery of the minimum service package for secondary health care — rehabilitating infrastructure, equipping the hospital (through the provision of essential medicines, medical equipment, furniture and laboratory solutions) supporting health workers, and strengthening accountability systems.

- 52,190 people accessed secondary healthcare services, exceeding the project target.
- Rightsholder satisfaction increased from 38 per cent to 94 per cent, reflecting significant improvements in service quality.
- Access to healthcare improved for 40 per cent of the target population, a substantial increase from zero baseline.
- The hospital transitioned from non-functional to fully operational, with essential medicines, equipment, and laboratory services in place.
- This transformation meant that communities no longer had to travel long distances for treatment, reducing both financial and physical barriers to care.
- Beyond immediate service delivery, the project contributed to strengthening the local health system:
 - 49 healthcare workers received incentives, improving retention and service continuity.
 - 60 health workers were trained, with 95 per cent demonstrating increased knowledge.

- Joint supervision with government authorities increased, improving coordination and oversight.

Despite strong results, the project highlighted important challenges for future programming:

1. Financial barriers remain — some services and tests are still unaffordable for vulnerable households.
2. Service quality gaps persist — including staff availability and patient experience.
3. Sustainability risks — particularly related to operational costs such as fuel and staff incentives.

These findings reinforce the importance of linking service delivery with long-term system financing as well as continuing investment in health workforce capacity and accountability



KEY RESULT

52,190

people accessed secondary healthcare services.

Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition (MIYCN) Project, Kenya: Improving access to nutrition services

In Wajir County, Kenya, recurrent drought, food insecurity and limited access to health services continue to drive high levels of malnutrition among women and children. Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM)¹¹ remains above emergency thresholds (19 per cent), while poor feeding practices and limited dietary diversity further compound risks.

Islamic Relief's MIYCN project (funded by Islamic Relief Spain and Islamic Relief Italy) aimed to address these challenges through a community-based and health systems strengthening approach, combining frontline worker training, mobile outreach services, and behaviour change interventions. Main achievements from the project include:

- 1,720 children screened through outreach (target: 1,000)
- Vitamin A supplementation increased from 58 percent to 89 per cent
- Antenatal care (ANC) attendance increased from 35 per cent to 58 per cent
- 75 per cent of caregivers reached through community health promoters (up from 26 per cent).
- 80 per cent of women aware of key MIYCN practices.

The project was effective in improving access to services and awareness. This was through mobile outreach, which extended services to remote communities; Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) who increased uptake and trust; and multi-channel communication (radio, groups, community dialogue) which increased coverage. These interventions led to improved service utilisation and micronutrient uptake.

Despite strong progress on access and awareness, behaviour change outcomes declined. This was evident as exclusive breastfeeding¹² dropped from 69 per cent to 23 per cent; dietary diversity decreased; and knowledge indicators declined, despite high exposure. According to the final evaluation, caregivers mentioned that though they had received messages from the health workers that breastfeeding is adequate for the first six months, other factors, such as the belief that breastmilk is not adequate to quench thirst for infants during hot weather, influence from grandmothers and other relatives made it difficult for them to practice exclusive breastfeeding. This finding was reiterated by the Sub-County Nutritionist who mentioned that deeply ingrained cultural behaviours persist. Furthermore, other factors such as caregivers spending more time to collect water during the dry season had a negative impact on exclusive breastfeeding.



This project highlights a critical lesson: Behaviour change requires integrated approaches that address cultural, economic and structural barriers; not awareness-raising alone. This is because:

1. Cultural norms can override knowledge

- Deeply embedded beliefs, particularly among grandmothers and older caregivers, continued to drive harmful practices (e.g. giving water to infants, rejecting colostrum). → Future programmes must actively engage 'cultural gatekeepers', not just mothers.

2. Food insecurity can constrain behaviour change

- Caregivers often knew recommended practices but lacked the means to apply them due to limited food access, seasonal shocks and low purchasing power. → Nutrition interventions must be integrated with food security and livelihoods support.

3. Availability of water can undermine outcomes

- Over half of households rely on unsafe water sources. Women also spend significant time collecting water. → Structural constraints directly limit childcare and feeding practices.

¹¹ Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) is a standard indicator used to measure the proportion of children aged 6–59 months who are acutely malnourished, including both moderate and severe acute malnutrition. It is commonly used to assess the severity of nutrition crises and guide humanitarian response.

¹² Exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) refers to the practice of feeding children of 0–6 months of age with breastmilk exclusively. This implies that no food or drink, including water, is given to the child with the exception of oral rehydration solution, or drops/syrups of vitamins, minerals or medicines. WHO recommends that infants should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life to achieve optimal growth, development and health.

3.3 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)



Access to safe WASH services is fundamental to health, dignity and resilience. In many of the contexts where Islamic Relief operates, limited access to clean water and sanitation infrastructure contributes directly to disease, malnutrition, and reduced livelihood opportunities, particularly for women, children and vulnerable groups.

Islamic Relief's WASH programming addresses both immediate needs and long-term system gaps, combining infrastructure development with behaviour change and community engagement. Interventions typically include water supply systems, sanitation facilities, hygiene promotion, and support to local governance structures to ensure sustainable service delivery.

WASH is delivered through an integrated, community-based approach, often linked with health, nutrition, education and livelihoods programming. This reflects the critical role of WASH in improving wider development outcomes, including reducing waterborne diseases, improving school attendance, strengthening community resilience to climate-related shocks, and supporting food security and livelihoods, particularly through agriculture and irrigation.

3.3.1 WASH portfolio reach and coverage

WASH programming represents a significant and strategic component of Islamic Relief's global portfolio, with 70 projects where WASH is the primary sector (8.7 per cent) and 140 (17.5 per cent) projects where WASH is a secondary/integrated component.



Projects implemented

210

(26.2% of all projects)



Countries covered

27

(out of 41 countries)



People reached directly

952,682

(6% of all direct rightsholders)



People reached indirectly

1,753,403

(9% of all indirect rightsholders)



Key insights:

- WASH integration as a secondary sector significantly expands the sector's footprint reflected in the jump from 8.7% (primary) to 26% (total footprint), particularly in countries such as Malawi: (0% → 45%), Niger: (0% → 47%) and South Sudan: (0% → 50%).
- **Strong multiplier effect** remains a defining feature in this sector with nearly 1.5x indirect reach compared to direct reach. This was driven by water infrastructure, community-level sanitation systems and public health spillover effects.
- WASH programming is most concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa, **particularly across East Africa (62 projects) and West Africa (30 projects).**
- This is followed by **Asia (47 projects) and the Middle East (44 projects)**, where WASH is often delivered in crisis and displacement-affected contexts.
- WASH programming is globally distributed, with **strong concentration in crisis-affected contexts.** The highest was in:
 - Mali – (22 projects)
 - Pakistan – (20 projects)
 - Kenya – (18 projects)
 - Syria – (19 projects)

3.3.2 Programme spotlight: WASH

The projects below illustrate how WASH programming can improve access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene while supporting longer-term health and resilience outcomes.

Resilient Initiatives to Support in Emergency (RISE-II), Pakistan: Restoring safe water, sanitation and dignity to crisis-affected communities

In Pakistan, conflict and climate shocks have severely disrupted access to safe water and sanitation, with millions relying on unsafe sources, and widespread open defecation increasing public health risks. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh provinces, damage to water systems and sanitation infrastructure left communities exposed to disease, protection risks and unsafe living conditions. The Sida-funded RISE-II project adopted an integrated response, with WASH as a core pillar to restore safe services and reduce health risks. Headline results highlight significant improvements in access, behaviour and wellbeing:

- Safe water access increased from 0 per cent to 71.7 per cent through rehabilitation of nine water supply schemes.
- Latrine use increased from 10.2 per cent to 80.5 per cent, reducing open defecation.
- 2,000 hygiene kits and 2,350 menstrual hygiene kits were distributed.
- 200 hygiene promotion sessions delivered, reaching over 4,000 people.
- 11 accessible latrines and handwashing facilities constructed in schools and health centres.

These interventions led to measurable improvements in hygiene behaviour, with 88.6 per cent of households practising handwashing at critical times, contributing to reduced disease risk and improved community health outcomes. Beyond infrastructure, the project strengthened community ownership and sustainability, establishing operation and maintenance committees and delivering training to ensure long-term functionality of water systems.

RISE-II demonstrates how integrated WASH programming can deliver both lifesaving and longer-term outcomes when combined with community engagement and behaviour change. Importantly, WASH interventions were designed with protection and inclusion at their centre. This included gender-sensitive sanitation facilities, menstrual hygiene support, and accessible infrastructure for people with disabilities.

KEY RESULT

Safe water access increased from

0% to 71.7%
through rehabilitation of nine
water supply schemes.



Strengthening Livelihood and Climate Resilience in Ligawasan Marsh, Philippines: Integrated WASH for community resilience

In the Ligawasan Marsh, one of the largest wetland ecosystems in the Philippines, communities face overlapping challenges of poverty, environmental degradation, and climate vulnerability. Limited access to safe water and sanitation (particularly in schools) has contributed to poor health outcomes and increased risks for children.

While not a standalone WASH intervention, this Islamic Relief Canada-funded project demonstrates how integrating WASH within livelihoods, environmental management, and community governance can deliver more sustainable health and resilience outcomes. Key WASH results include:

- 100% of targeted schools (11 schools) now have functional WASH facilities
- 2,027 children gained access to safe water and sanitation
- Student absenteeism reduced by 20–30 per cent due to improved hygiene conditions
- School WASH committees established across all sites, strengthening ownership and maintenance

KEY RESULT

Student absenteeism reduced by

20–30%
due to **improved**
hygiene conditions.

- 70 per cent increase in handwashing and hygiene practices among students
- The project contributed to shifts in both behaviour and community norms:
 - Children became agents of change, promoting hygiene practices at household level.
 - Teachers reported that improved WASH conditions directly contributed to better student attendance and learning outcomes.
 - Increased awareness and openness around menstrual hygiene.
 - Improved understanding of the links between water, health, and environmental sustainability.



What makes this approach effective is the way WASH was embedded within a broader resilience model. School-centred interventions not only improved access to safe water and sanitation but also contributed to better health and education outcomes. These gains were reinforced through behaviour change campaigns, which helped establish lasting hygiene practices among students and communities. By actively engaging community members and young people, the project extended its impact beyond schools into homes, encouraging wider adoption of improved practices. At the same time, linkages with environmental conservation and climate resilience efforts strengthened the sustainability of these outcomes, ensuring that WASH improvements were part of a more holistic and durable system of change.

This ensured that WASH improvements were not just infrastructure gains, but part of wider community strengthening measures.



Before the project, students and teachers at Sadangen school had no access to safe water onsite and were forced to fetch water from other parts of the village for basic needs such as drinking and cooking. This not only disrupted learning but also posed risks to children's health.

As teacher Rahib Said explained, “When a child is healthy, there is a greater chance they will learn more quickly.”

Through the introduction of WASH facilities and behaviour change activities, students quickly adopted improved hygiene practices. Within a month, children were independently washing their hands, and the school achieved the Department of Education's three-star WINS standard.¹³

These changes extended beyond the classroom. Students began practising hygiene at home; encouraging their families to adopt habits such as handwashing and waste management.

¹³The Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines uses a Three Star Approach to implement its WASH in Schools programme. This approach provides a clear, incremental pathway for schools to transition from basic compliance to national standards for hygiene and sanitation. To reach the three-star levels, schools must meet specific criteria across different areas: they must provide safe drinking water free to all children at all times; and they must have a functional pupil-to-toilet seat ratio of 50 or less, with gender-segregated toilets that are secure, private, and well lit.

Afar Livelihoods Restoration and Reconstruction Project (ALRRP)

Communities in Ethiopia's Afar Region have faced severe disruption to livelihoods and basic services due to the combined impacts of conflict and recurrent drought. Many families returned home once relative peace returned to find water infrastructure destroyed, livestock lost, and income sources depleted, leaving them highly vulnerable to continued shocks.

ALRRP, funded by Islamic Relief UK, adopted an integrated approach to addressing these challenges by combining emergency assistance with longer-term recovery and resilience interventions.

A central component of the project was the rehabilitation and expansion of water infrastructure. Solar-powered water systems, boreholes, and irrigation schemes were constructed or rehabilitated. This significantly improved access to safe and reliable water for domestic, livestock, and agricultural use. Community-based WASH Committees (WASHCOs) were established and trained to manage these systems, strengthening sustainability through local ownership. The project also supported livelihood recovery among pastoralist and agropastoralist households. Livestock restocking, veterinary services, and access to agricultural inputs such as improved seeds and irrigation systems enabled households to rebuild productive assets and resume income-generating activities.

Emergency assistance (including food distribution, water trucking, and provision of NFIs) played a critical role in stabilising households in the immediate aftermath of conflict and displacement. This ensured that basic needs were met while recovery interventions were being established.

The evaluation highlights strong project effectiveness:

- Livelihoods re-established: 75 per cent of households used project-supported irrigation systems for crop production.
- Water access restored at scale: Access to improved water sources increased from less than 10 per cent to over 70 per cent, supported by solar-powered systems and rehabilitated infrastructure.
- System functionality improved: Water source functionality rose from 43.2 per cent to 76.8 per cent.
- Hygiene practices strengthened: Open defecation reduced from 96.7 per cent to 37.1 per cent, with handwashing facilities increasing from 4.6 per cent to 66.8 per cent.

However, the evaluation also highlighted that sustainability remains uneven, with some water systems requiring stronger maintenance arrangements and continued technical support.

3.4 Protection and inclusion (P&I)



P&I is critical to Islamic Relief's programming, ensuring that the most vulnerable populations, particularly children, women, and marginalised groups are supported not only to meet their basic needs, but also to live in safety and dignity.

Across diverse humanitarian and development contexts, Islamic Relief integrates protection principles into its programming while also delivering targeted interventions that address specific risks and vulnerabilities. These targeted interventions include psychosocial support (PSS), GBV response and case management, and support for orphans and vulnerable children.

3.4.1 P&I reach and coverage

Across the 2025 portfolio, protection represents in a wide range of projects, either as a primary focus (76 projects, 9.5 per cent) or as an integrated component of multi-sectoral programming (142 projects, 17.7 per cent).



Projects implemented

218

(27% of all projects)



Countries covered

29

(out of 41 countries)



People reached directly

248,081

(2% of all direct rightsholders)



People reached indirectly

2,832,017

(31% of all indirect rightsholders)

Key insights:

- P&I programming reaches nearly three times as many people indirectly as directly, highlighting its broad, system-wide impact.
- Protection-related programming is implemented across a wide range of countries, with particularly high concentrations observed in:
 - Mali (15 projects)
 - Sudan (13 projects)
 - South Sudan (11 projects)
 - Indonesia (10 projects)
 - Somalia (10 projects)
- Countries such as South Sudan (79%), Russian Federation (57%), Myanmar (50%), Sri Lanka (50%), Indonesia (45%) and Mali (45%) demonstrate high protection and inclusion integration within their programme portfolio.

3.4.2 Programme spotlight: P&I

The project below illustrates how P&I programming can strengthen psychosocial wellbeing, protect vulnerable groups, and dignity through integrated support to individuals and households.

Fostering Hope for the Future, Lebanon: Restoring psychosocial wellbeing and stability for orphaned children and caregivers

In North Lebanon, Islamic Relief delivered an integrated protection-focused intervention supporting orphaned Syrian children and widowed caregivers living in highly vulnerable conditions. The project combined PSS, education assistance, life skills training, and shelter support, recognising that child wellbeing depends on both individual care and household stability.

The Islamic Relief UK-funded intervention reached 255 direct rightsholders, including 181 orphans and 74 caregivers, alongside over 1,100 indirect beneficiaries. Core activities included structured PSS sessions, case management, life skills training, educational support, and operational assistance to maintain safe shelter environments.

Evidence from post-intervention feedback highlights the scale of impact:

- 100 per cent of caregivers reported improved emotional wellbeing and safety of children
- 100 per cent confirmed positive impacts on children's behaviour, happiness, and social development
- High levels of satisfaction, with over 90 per cent rating PSS sessions and facilitators as excellent.
- 100 per cent of participants reported improved psychosocial wellbeing and a strengthened sense of stability and normality.

In response to rising protection risks linked to housing insecurity, resources were reallocated to provide rental support, preventing the displacement of approximately 140 children and 55 caregivers and ensuring continuity of care and services.

A critical lesson emerging is that shelter stability is a foundational condition for protection, enabling children to recover from trauma, engage in learning, and rebuild a sense of normality in safe and supportive environments.



Suzane, a widowed mother of three in Tripoli, struggled to provide for her family after losing her husband. With irregular income and no support network, meeting basic needs and supporting her children's emotional wellbeing was a daily challenge.

Through Islamic Relief's Fostering Hope for the Future programme, Suzane attended life skills sessions while her children participated in PSS activities. These sessions provided a safe and nurturing environment where her children could express their feelings, begin to cope with the loss of their father, and develop important social and emotional skills.

Today, Suzane's children are happier, more confident, and more engaged in school, while she feels stronger and more capable as a parent.

"The project gave us hope, emotional strength, and the feeling that we are not alone," Suzane says.

KEY RESULT

100%

confirmed **positive impacts** on children's behaviour, happiness, and social development.

Empowering Institutions and Communities to Prevent GBV in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan: Strengthening protection systems for GBV survivors

Across Pakistan, GBV remains a critical protection concern, with many survivors unable or unwilling to seek support due to stigma, limited services, and weak referral systems. In response, Islamic Relief Pakistan implemented a multi-layered protection project to strengthen both community-based services and institutional response systems, with a focus on Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

This project, funded by the United Nations Population Fund, aimed to ensure that women and girls at risk of or affected by GBV can safely access timely, confidential, and survivor-centred support. It combined safe spaces, helplines, and system strengthening, creating multiple entry points for survivors to seek support.

- 8,885 calls received through the BOLO Helpline, demonstrating significant demand and reach of protection services.
- 7,184 cases received direct support, including legal advice, psychosocial counselling, and referrals.

- 1,551 cases referred to specialised services, including legal aid, shelters, and health services.
- Women represented 74 per cent of callers, highlighting strong uptake among those most at risk.

At the same time, Women and Girls Friendly Spaces (WGFS) were established and strengthened, providing safe, accessible environments for survivors to receive PSS and access multi-sectoral services.

A key strength of the programme was its focus on integration and coordination across services. Helplines were linked with police, legal aid, shelters, and health services, enabling timely and appropriate referrals. The integration of the BOLO helpline with police services also improved response to high-risk and emergency cases.

The helpline data has provided critical insights into the realities faced by GBV survivors: Domestic violence is the most commonly reported, often occurring within the home. Psychological (39 per cent) and physical (38 per cent) violence were the most prevalent. Furthermore, the majority of preparators were intimate partners or family members, highlighting the hidden nature of GBV.

At the same time, key challenges remain, including limited availability of services in remote and underserved areas, a need for stronger referral networks and system integration; and capacity gaps and risks of secondary trauma among frontline staff.

3.5 Education



Education remains a critical foundation for long-term resilience, protection, and economic opportunity, particularly in fragile and crisis-affected contexts. Islamic Relief's education programming focuses on improving access to safe, inclusive, and enabling learning environments, while addressing the structural barriers that prevent children, especially girls and vulnerable groups, from participating in education.

Typical programming spans both direct education interventions (such as school rehabilitation, provision of learning materials, and teacher support) and integrated approaches, where education outcomes are strengthened through complementary sectors such as WASH, protection, and livelihoods. This reflects a recognition that learning outcomes are shaped not only by access to schools, but also by health, safety, household income, and social norms.

3.5.1 Education reach and coverage

Education features prominently across the portfolio, with 51 (six per cent) dedicated education projects and 69 (nine per cent) additional projects integrating education as a secondary component, highlighting the importance of cross-sectoral approaches to education outcomes.



Projects implemented

120

(15% of all projects)



Countries covered

30

(out of 41 countries)



People reached directly

246,440

(2% of all direct rightsholders)



People reached indirectly

312,027

(2% of all indirect rightsholders)

Key insights:

- Education is often delivered through integrated programming with 69 secondary-sector projects vs 51 primary.
- Education is more frequently embedded within broader interventions (e.g. WASH in schools, child protection).
- A significant proportion of education programming is concentrated in conflict-affected settings and displacement **with strong concentration in:**
 - Syria (22 projects)
 - Mali (12 projects)
 - Kenya (11 projects)
 - Afghanistan (8 projects)

3.5.2 Programme spotlight: Education

The projects below demonstrate how education programming can improve access to learning opportunities while supporting longer-term development and resilience.

Assisting Out-of-School Girls Access to Education (AGE) Project, Afghanistan: Expanding access through community-based education

In Afghanistan, decades of conflict, poverty, and entrenched gender norms have severely limited access to education, particularly for girls. An estimated 3.5 million children — 75 per cent of them girls — remain out of school due to barriers including insecurity, lack of female teachers, long distances to schools, and cultural restrictions.

The AGE project aimed to address these challenges through a community-based education model, combining access, quality, and social norm change interventions.



Through a combination of community-based classes, teacher recruitment, and sustained engagement with caregivers and local leaders, the project reached thousands of previously-excluded children and supported their progression through the education system. The results include:

- **7,083 out-of-school children enrolled**, of which 90 per cent were girls, significantly expanding access in underserved communities
- **85 learning centres established**, including both public schools and community-based education classes, bringing education closer to households
- **109 female teachers recruited and trained**, addressing a key barrier to girls' participation
- **4,092 caregivers and community members** engaged through awareness sessions to promote girls' education
- **90 per cent completion rate achieved**, with all students progressing to the next grade

A key strength of the project was its ability to address multiple barriers to girls' education simultaneously, rather than treating access as a standalone issue. Approaches included:

- **reducing the distance and safety concerns** that often prevent girls from attending school by establishing community-based education classes within villages. This localised approach made education more accessible, particularly in remote and conservative areas where mobility is restricted.
- **building trust with families** through the recruitment and training of female teachers. In many communities, the presence of female teachers directly influenced parental willingness to enrol their daughters, helping to overcome deeply rooted cultural norms.
- **shifting perceptions around girls' education** by investing heavily in community engagement, working with caregivers, elders, and religious leaders. This contributed to a gradual but meaningful change in attitudes, with increased acceptance of girls attending school and completing their education.



"I couldn't even write my name before. Now I can write my name, my sisters' names, and my father's name."

Khokila, a student in a community-based education class in Nangarhar Province, had never been to school before the AGE project. Like many girls in her community, barriers such as distance, limited access to female teachers, and social norms had kept her out of education.

Through the project, a learning centre was established in her village, giving Khokila access to education close to home in a safe and culturally acceptable environment.

Today, Khokila can read signboards, recognise names, and write confidently—skills that have already transformed her daily life.

"At home, my family calls me the smart one," she says with pride.

She now dreams of becoming a doctor.

Despite these successes, the project also highlighted the limits of such interventions in highly constrained environments. Government policy changes in 2023 required the handover of INGO-supported education activities to government authorities, resulting in the transfer of a significant number of community-based education classes. This disrupted continuity and reduced the project's ability to sustain engagement with communities.

As a result, some planned activities, particularly around community awareness and behaviour change, could not be implemented to the intended scale. These challenges underline a critical point: while community-based models can effectively expand access and shift attitudes, their sustainability remains highly dependent on the broader political and policy environment.

KEY RESULT

7,083

out-of-school children enrolled, of which 90% were girls, significantly expanding access in underserved communities.

Creating Child-Friendly Schools (CCF), Malawi: Improving education outcomes through integrated WASH, infrastructure and protection

In Blantyre District, Malawi, children were learning in overcrowded classrooms, sitting on floors, and lacking access to safe water and sanitation; conditions that undermined both learning and dignity, particularly for girls. The Islamic Relief UK-funded project addressed these challenges through an integrated approach combining education infrastructure, WASH services, and child protection mechanisms.

The project delivered measurable improvements across both learning conditions and wellbeing:

- Access to desks increased from 20 per cent to 100 per cent, significantly improving classroom participation.
- Six functional classrooms (four new, two rehabilitated) reduced overcrowding and reliance on outdoor learning.
- 96.6 per cent of pupils and teachers reported improved learning environments.
- 95 per cent of households reported improved access to clean water, supported by solar-powered systems.
- 85 per cent of sanitation facilities equipped with water and soap, strengthening hygiene practices.
- 86.7 per cent of households reported improved awareness of child protection and referral pathways.

These changes translated into increased attendance, improved concentration, and greater participation, particularly among girls, who benefited from improved privacy and menstrual hygiene facilities.

However, implementation challenges highlight important lessons. Delays in infrastructure rehabilitation, unresolved quality issues in water kiosks, and limited reach of protection committees in remote areas point to the need for stronger contractor management, technical supervision, and resourcing for community outreach. These constraints affected the completeness and consistency of delivery in some areas.



3.6 Disaster risk reduction



Disaster risk reduction (DRR) is a critical component of Islamic Relief's approach to building resilience in communities exposed to climate shocks, natural hazards, and protracted crises. Rather than focusing solely on response, DRR programming aims to reduce vulnerability, strengthen preparedness, and enable communities to anticipate, absorb, and recover from shocks.

Islamic Relief's approach to DRR is rooted in community-based resilience building, combining risk awareness, preparedness planning, institutional strengthening, and early action. DRR is rarely delivered in isolation; instead, it is often embedded within broader programmes across food security, WASH, livelihoods, and shelter, reflecting the interconnected nature of risk and vulnerability.

3.6.1 DRR reach and coverage

DRR is primarily delivered as an integrated component across the portfolio, with 10 dedicated DRR projects (on per cent) and 47 additional projects (six per cent) incorporating DRR as a secondary component, highlighting the importance of cross-sectoral approaches to strengthening community resilience and preparedness. This distribution reflects a broader portfolio approach where risk reduction is embedded within sectoral programming, rather than implemented as a standalone intervention.

Key insights:

- DRR is primarily delivered as an integrated sector → reflected in the increase from 10 primary sector projects (1.2%) to 57 projects overall (7%), with over 80% of all DRR programming delivered as a secondary component (47 projects).
- Countries with the highest proportion of DRR within their portfolio include **Nepal (30%), Ethiopia (24%), Indonesia (23%), and Philippines (23%)**, indicating stronger prioritisation of risk reduction in hazard-prone contexts.
- DRR programming is concentrated in **climate- and disaster-prone regions, particularly in Asia and East Africa**, where communities face recurrent floods, droughts, and geophysical hazards **with strong concentration in:**
 - Pakistan – 7 projects
 - Indonesia – 5 projects
 - Somalia – 6 projects
 - Ethiopia – 5 projects



Projects implemented

57

(7% of all projects)



Countries covered

20

(out of 41 countries)



People reached directly

402,697

(3% of all direct rightsholders)



People reached indirectly

458,075

(2% of all indirect rightsholders)

3.6.2 Programme spotlight: DRR

The projects below illustrate how DRR programming can strengthen preparedness and response capacities while supporting longer-term resilience to shocks.

Deepening the Role of Faith Leaders and Religious Places in Disaster Risk Management (DROFLERD), Indonesia: Embedding disaster resilience within community institutions

In Central Sulawesi and Jakarta Province, Indonesia, where exposure to earthquakes, tsunamis and climate-related hazards remains high, Islamic Relief's DROFLERD project, funded by Islamic Relief Netherlands, demonstrates how DRR can be strengthened by working through trusted community institutions. The project focused on enhancing the role of faith leaders and religious places as centres of disaster preparedness, awareness, and response.

Rather than delivering stand-alone DRR activities, the project embedded resilience within existing social and religious systems. Working across six faith groups, it combined capacity building, institutional strengthening, and knowledge development to position religious leaders as key actors in disaster risk management.

Projects results include:

- **288 facilitators and 61 national trainers** developed across six religions.
- **6 national technical guidelines and training curricula** on disaster-resilient religious institutions developed and launched.
- **6 religious institutions established disaster risk management systems**, including action plans and response teams.
- **1,961 community members reached** through awareness campaigns integrated into religious spaces.

The project achieved strong gains in awareness and engagement. Midline findings show that 96 per cent of participants understood local disaster risks, and 100 per cent recognised potential disaster impacts, reflecting improved knowledge and risk perception. Furthermore, the use of faith leaders as trusted messengers and religious institutions as entry points proved to be effective for community resilience. By integrating DRR messaging into sermons, training, and institutional systems, the project extended its reach beyond direct participants into wider communities.





“

For Lauw, a 54-year-old religious leader in East Jakarta, floods are not a rare event; they are a recurring reality. His community has faced repeated flooding over the years, disrupting daily life, damaging infrastructure, and limiting access to essential services, including places of worship.

Through the DROFLERD programme, Lauw and his community became part of the Disaster-Resilient House of Worship (RITB) initiative, expanding their Vihara (Buddhist monastery) from a solely being place of worship into a hub for disaster preparedness and response.

Before the project, disaster response was largely reactive. Today, the community is better organised and more prepared. The Vihara now plays an active role in community resilience, with strengthened coordination, clearer procedures, and increased awareness among worshippers.

Looking ahead, Lauw envisions a stronger, more self-reliant system, including the establishment of a community kitchen and pre-positioned food supplies to support families during flood events.

“With continued support and collaboration, we can build a future where no one faces disaster alone” he says with hope.

However, the project also highlights important limitations. Despite increased awareness, significant gaps remained in practical preparedness:

- 81 per cent of institutions lacked evacuation routes or signage.
- 84 per cent did not have formalised contingency plans.
- 79 per cent had no dedicated DRR budget.
- Only 35 per cent of disaster response teams were able to operate independently.

These findings underline a critical lesson: awareness alone is insufficient without institutionalisation, resourcing, and systems strengthening. While the project successfully shifted knowledge and engagement, translating this into fully functional preparedness systems requires longer-term investment and stronger integration with government and financing mechanisms.

4. WHAT 2025 TAUGHT US

The 2025 portfolio demonstrates the scale, diversity and adaptability of Islamic Relief's programming across humanitarian and development contexts. Islamic Relief reached communities facing conflict, displacement, climate shocks, economic hardship and limited access to essential services. The year highlighted not only the breadth of need, but also the importance of integrated, locally grounded approaches that address the interconnected drivers of vulnerability.

A clear lesson from 2025 is that **impact is strongest when programmes work across systems**. Food security outcomes were strengthened when linked with livelihoods, savings groups and women's economic empowerment. WASH interventions contributed not only to health, but also to education, dignity and resilience. Health and nutrition programming showed that access to services and awareness-raising must be accompanied by action on food security, WASH, social norms and household constraints. Education programming demonstrated that learning outcomes depend on safe environments, community trust, gender-sensitive infrastructure and protection systems.

The year also reinforced the value of **community ownership and local structures**. Across countries, VSLAs, self-help groups, school committees, water management committees, community protection structures, faith leaders and local authorities played a critical role in sustaining results. Projects that invested in local leadership and community systems were better positioned to adapt, maintain services and strengthen accountability.

At the same time, 2025 showed that **awareness alone is not enough**. Whether in nutrition, disaster preparedness, protection or hygiene promotion, knowledge did not always translate into sustained behaviour change. Programmes were more effective where behaviour change was supported by practical resources, enabling environments, social norm engagement and continued follow-up. This points to the need for longer-term support, stronger coaching models and deeper engagement with cultural and community influencers.

The portfolio also highlighted the importance of **women's leadership and economic empowerment** as a pathway to resilience. Many of the strongest examples from 2025 placed women at the centre of livelihood recovery, savings groups, market gardening, small business development, education, health and community decision-making. These approaches improved household resilience while also shifting confidence, dignity and social participation.

Looking ahead, the learning from 2025 points to a clear direction: Islamic Relief's impact will be strongest when programmes combine **immediate support with longer-term pathways to resilience**, integrate service provision with investments in community systems. The challenge for future programming is not only to reach more people, but to ensure that support is deeper, more connected and more durable.

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