



ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS SERIES

WATER JUSTICE AND CSOS IN YEMEN: MAPPING REPORT

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About the study

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Cover photo: Yemeni woman fetching water due to the water crisis and the difficult living conditions witnessed by residents of the Taiz city, June T2020.

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	6
Background	7
1.1. Water Justice, a Just Water Transition, and the Yemeni Context	8
1.2. History of Water Management Policies	9
1.3. National and International Actors	10
2. Mapping of CSOs Working in the Water Sector	11
2.1. Objectives	11
2.2. Methodology	11
3. Main Findings	12
3.1. CSOs in the Water and Environment Sector	12
3.2. Power Dynamics and Policy Engagement	15
3.3. Water Injustice Beyond Climate, Conflict, and Governance Failure	15
3.4. Governance Gaps and Policy Frameworks	17
3.5. Community Initiatives and Lessons Learned	17
3.6. Challenges and the Path to a Just Environmental Transition	18
4. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations	19
4.1. Enact Legislative and Governance Reforms	20
4.2. Institutionalize Participatory Policymaking	20
4.3. Empower Civil Society and Multistakeholder Collaboration	20
4.4. Ensure Sustainable Water Resource Management.	21
4.5. Knowledge, Awareness, and Community Engagement	21
Appendix 1: Online Survey	22
Appendix 2: CSO Workshops Concept Note	24

Executive Summary

Yemen faces an acute and worsening water crisis, exacerbated by years of conflict and climate change. The country is among the most water-scarce countries in the world. Today, 15.4 million Yemenis lack adequate access to clean water, and 17.4 million lack adequate sanitation and hygiene, which significantly increases the risk of waterborne diseases.¹

The ongoing conflict has exacerbated the country's water crisis by destroying infrastructure, causing power outages, creating fuel shortages, and hindering public institutions' ability to provide essential water and sanitation services. The war's crippling impact on public institutions has reshaped Yemen's water governance landscape and increased the number and geographic reach of civil society organizations (CSOs) addressing water shortages.

Fifty-three CSOs working in the water sector were examined for this report, which includes an analysis of their distribution, roles, perceptions of water justice, and engagement in policymaking processes. The report explores how water injustice is reflected in practice, who benefits or bears the costs, and what structural reforms are necessary to advance a fair and sustainable water transition in Yemen.

The findings indicate that while CSOs are dynamic and responsive, they operate within structural constraints and face internal capacity gaps that limit their ability to participate in and influence policy and regulatory processes. Nearly three-quarters of the mapped CSOs were established between 2012 and 2025, reflecting a significant increase in CSOs in response to humanitarian and environmental crises. Yet despite their active roles, CSOs primarily focus on project implementation and field coordination. Involvement in legislation, policy shaping, or influencing national water strategies remains minimal. Policy formulation remains dominated by governmental actors and international donors, creating a significant gap in local participation.

CSOs' structural barriers – including dependence on international funders, weak capacity in the field, centralized decision-making, limited transparency, and limited access to data – constrain their influence on local water policies and national governance frameworks.

Half of the surveyed CSOs define water and environmental justice as a human right, and there was a strong emphasis on equity, participation, and protection of vulnerable groups. The findings suggest that water injustice in Yemen is not only about scarcity but also about power, regulation failure, and unequal distribution. Marginalized populations – including women, displaced communities, small farmers, and internally displaced people (IDPs) – bear disproportionate burdens in access, cost, and quality of water. Conversely, influential actors and commercial interests often benefit from weak enforcement, unsanctioned drilling, and the monopolization of water sources.

CSO interventions appear to place heavy emphasis on community support, infrastructure rehabilitation, raising awareness, and emergency response. While critical in the current fragile context, CSOs' engagement in resource management, research, groundwater governance, and long-term sustainability remains limited. This imbalance constrains their ability to influence policies, systemic reform, social inequality, and the sustainability of water resources and systems.

This mapping utilized a mixed-methods approach that combined purposive and snowball sampling, structured questionnaires, key informant interviews, and participatory workshops in Aden, Taiz, and Hadramawt. It also led to the creation of an interactive CSO mapping platform that served as an important tool for relevant actors working in the water sector in Yemen.

Selected Recommendations

To advance a fair and sustainable water transition in Yemen, the following priority actions are recommended:

- Revise, update, and enforce existing water laws and national strategies to reflect the realities of

1 "Global Humanitarian Overview 2026: Yemen", Humanitarian Action, 2026, available at <https://humanitarianaction.info/document/global-humanitarian-overview-2026/article/yemen-4> (Humanitarian Action, "Global Humanitarian Overview 2026").

conflict, climate change impacts, water justice, and sustainability, with clear accountability and enforcement mechanisms in place;

- Establish formal, binding multistakeholder platforms that ensure CSOs and local communities participate in water policy formulation;
- Invest in sustainable and nonconventional water solutions by scaling rainwater harvesting, wastewater treatment and reuse, locally maintainable solutions, and climate-adaptive agricultural practices to reduce dependence on depleting aquifers;
- Prioritize CSOs' capacity building in climate change, environmental advocacy, monitoring and evaluation, and policy engagement, to shift them away from being emergency implementers into strategic governance actors; and
- Improve hydrological monitoring systems, transparency, and access to water-related data to support evidence-based policymaking.

Background

Yemen is one of the most water-scarce countries in the world, with renewable water resources providing only 80m³ per capita per year – well below the water scarcity threshold of 1,000 m³ per capita per year.² This volume is steadily decreasing due to Yemen's aridity, rapid population growth, and water mismanagement.³ The country's long-standing water crisis primarily stems from limited surface water availability, unsustainable use of groundwater aquifers, and the impacts of climate change and the resulting extreme weather. The ongoing war has worsened an already precarious situation, severely impacting the water sector's infrastructure and overall performance, making water delivery significantly more challenging. Water infrastructure and institutions, such as the Local Corporations for Water Supply and Sanitation, have been affected, with around 40% of such assets

completely or partially damaged since the war.⁴ Over 15 million Yemenis lack adequate access to clean water, and 17.4 million lack adequate sanitation and hygiene, increasing the prevalence of preventable waterborne diseases.⁵ Power outages and fuel shortages have hampered pumping station operations, significantly affecting water service. These have left most institutions lacking the capacity to deliver adequate water and sanitation services to residents.

The decline in state institution capacity due to war has led to an increase in CSOs working in Yemen's water sector; they act as essential intermediaries between local communities, public authorities, and international actors. With public water institutions weakened and many international actors operating remotely or through partners, CSOs have helped identify urgent needs, reach different areas, and implement water-related projects.⁶ This bridging role matters, as it tackles basic water needs, especially for vulnerable groups (poor households, IDPs, smallholder farmers, women, and children) who face the highest costs and risks when water services collapse.⁷

Vulnerable groups in Yemen are more likely to rely on unsafe or expensive water sources; face repeated service disruptions; and bear the health and livelihood impacts of contamination, conflict, and climate change. Years of conflict, weak institutions, damaged infrastructure, and increased climate pressures have deepened these inequalities, making

2 Malin Falkenmark, Jan Lundqvist, and Cark Widstrand, "Macro-scale water scarcity requires micro-scale approaches", Natural Resources Forum, November 1989, available at <https://doi.org/10.1111%2Fj.1477-8947.1989.tb00348.x>

3 The population growth is also accompanied by a demographic shift from rural to urban areas.

4 "Yemen Water Sector: Damage Assessment Report of Twelve Water Supply and Sanitation Local Corporations (LCs) and their Affiliated Branch Offices and Utilities – Part 1: Resilience Strategy Report", GIZ, September 2018, available at <https://www.giz.de/de/downloads/giz2021-en-yemen-water-sector-stage-3-part-1.pdf> (GIZ, "Yemen Water Sector: Part 1").

5 Humanitarian Action, "Global Humanitarian Overview 2026".

6 "A Holistic Approach to Addressing Water Resources Challenges in Yemen: UNDP Strategic Framework", UNDP, November 2022, available at <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-12/Water%20Resources%20Challenges%20in%20Yemen.pdf> (UNDP, "A Holistic Approach").

7 "Measuring Humanitarian Localisation in Yemen: Baseline Report", International Council of Voluntary Agencies, November 2022, available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/measuring-humanitarian-localisation-yemen-baseline-report-november-2022-enar> (ICVA, "Measuring Humanitarian Localisation"); Marta Colburn, "A New Path Forward: Empowering a Leadership Role for Yemeni Civil Society", Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies, 27 January 2021, available at <https://sanaacenter.org/publications/main-publications/13021>

access to safe and affordable water increasingly uneven.⁸

Overlapping institutional responsibilities in Yemen's water sector, combined with the limited inclusion of local actors in policymaking processes, have reduced the effectiveness and legitimacy of water governance.⁹

Against this backdrop, this report explores how stronger participation of CSOs in water policymaking can improve transparency, accountability, and equity in Yemen's water governance. It introduces the concept of water justice in the Yemeni context; reviews the historical development of water management; and outlines key challenges, policies, stakeholders, and the legal framework governing CSOs in the water sector. It then presents the findings from the CSO mapping exercise and offers policy recommendations to enhance their effective engagement in public water policies.

1.1. Water Justice, a Just Water Transition, and the Yemeni Context

Water justice is grounded in the recognition of water and sanitation as fundamental human rights requiring equal access for all to safe drinking water and sanitation, nondiscrimination, participation, accountability, and transparency.¹⁰ It goes beyond fair physical availability, which involves the equitable allocation of water resources, to recognize marginalized groups and

their specific vulnerabilities, ensuring that they do not disproportionately bear the burdens of water scarcity or governance failure.

Additionally, water justice emphasizes the importance of participation in decision-making, accountability at all levels, and transparency in information sharing. It is fundamentally about who uses and controls water resources, whose voices are heard in policymaking, and whose rights are protected when water becomes scarce or contested. It is closely related to environmental justice theory, which emphasizes equitable distribution, meaningful participation, and recognition of vulnerable groups.¹¹ In this sense, water justice extends beyond equal service delivery to encompass equality in governance systems.

Applying a just transition framework for water means guiding the transformation of water governance systems toward sustainability. The International Labour Organization was the first to adopt the Guidelines for a Just Transition framework as a guiding principle for climate action that ensures social protection and inclusion during the shift toward environmentally sustainable economies, before it was referenced in the Paris Agreement in 2015.¹² Drawing from this broader just transition framework, a just water transition ensures that reforms aimed at climate adaptation, groundwater protection, infrastructure expansion or modernization, or efficiency improvements do not harm vulnerable groups. Instead, such reforms should protect livelihoods, fairly distribute both costs and benefits, and promote intergenerational equity.

In Yemen, academics and experts have not yet explicitly used the terms “water justice” or “just water transition” as seen in global frameworks. This study is the first to adopt these terms. However, some existing research discusses the water crisis through the lens of environmental justice, which implies the concept of water justice in analyses of

8 “Yemen: Country, Climate, and Development Report”, World Bank Group, 2024, available at <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099111824082514197/pdf/P5006381e44f0109719b871d68f6833548e.pdf> (World Bank Group, “Yemen: Country, Climate, and Development”).

9 UNDP, “A Holistic Approach”.

10 “Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 28 July 2010: 64/292. The human right to water and sanitation”, UN General Assembly, 3 August 2010, available at <https://undocs.org/A/RES/64/292> (UN General Assembly, “Resolution 64/292”); “OHCHR and the rights to water and sanitation”, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/water-and-sanitation>; Farhana Sultana, “Water justice: Why it matters and how to achieve it”, Water International, 2018, available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508060.2018.1458272>; Margreet Zwarteveen and Rutgerd Boelens, “Defining, researching and struggling for water justice: some conceptual building blocks for research and action”, Water International, 19 March 2014, available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508060.2014.891168>

11 David Schlosberg, “Defining Environmental Justice: Theories, Movements, and Nature”, Oxford University Press, 1 May 2007, available at <https://academic.oup.com/book/4798>

12 “Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all”, International Labour Organization, 2 February 2016, available at https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/publications/WCMS_432859/lang-en/index.htm; “Paris Agreement”, UN, 2015, available at https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf

water governance failures, conflict, and the impacts of climate stress on marginalized populations.¹³ In the region, direct country-specific publications on a “just water transition” are also still new. Reports on financing water justice discuss equitable access, transparency, and accountability in water sector investments in the MENA region, offering conceptual guides that Yemen’s water policy research can draw upon.¹⁴ Furthermore, analyses such as the UN Development Programme’s strategic framework on Yemen’s water resources articulate related principles consistent with water justice, including water as protected heritage and the need for fair, sustainable distribution.¹⁵

1.2. History of Water Management Policies

Until the early 1950s, traditional practices in Yemen maintained a sustainable balance between water supply and demand.¹⁶ During the 1970s and 1980s, public policies actively encouraged groundwater extraction for crop cultivation. This led to large-scale investments in well-drilling across coastal plains, dry upland plateaus, and mountain terraces. The lack of regulation in this period facilitated the rapid depletion of aquifers, posing a growing threat to both local livelihoods in rural areas and the water supply of major cities.¹⁷ The shift away from traditional practices was further compounded by labor shortages due to the emigration of working-age men. Over time, the expansion of cash crop agriculture has primarily benefited a small elite – mostly consisting of wealthy farmers, political

figures, and business owners – leaving smallholder farmers behind. This concentration of benefits has created tensions, deepened inequalities, and contributed to unsustainable patterns of water use.

In the 1990s, official authorities became aware of the risks related to water overextraction and related policies; with support from international partners, they initiated a major water reform process, including the establishment of a National Water Sector Strategy in 2005, delegating some authority to local entities such as water user associations and basin committees, particularly in the development and execution of local action plans. The Central Corporation for Water Supply and Sanitation was decentralized in major urban areas, resulting in the establishment of Local Corporations.¹⁸ Water Law No. 33 of 2002 was promulgated to promote sustainable water management and regulate groundwater extraction through measures such as the licensing and registration of wells and drilling equipment.¹⁹ The law also laid the groundwork for the establishment of the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) in May 2003. The Performance Indicators Information System was established in 2006 by the MWE to assess the functioning of local water supply services.²⁰

Moreover, several policies and strategies have been introduced to address water management challenges in Yemen, including the Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Reform Policy (1997), the Water Resources Policy and Strategy (1999-2000), the Watershed Management Policy (2000), the Agricultural Sector Reform Policy (2000), and the Irrigation Water Policy (2001).²¹ Although some reforms were introduced, they have not been fully enforced or implemented (particularly those protecting water sources) due to limited institutional capacity, weak coordination

13 Hamud al-Hitar, “Environmental Justice as an Approach for Strengthening Water Security in Yemen amid Conflict and Climate Change” (Arabic), *Journal of Strategic Studies for Disasters and Opportunity Management*, 4 January 2026, available at <https://democraticac.de/?p=108120>

14 Dana Abi Ghanem, “Financing Water Justice: International Aid and Development in the MENA Region”, *Arab Reform Initiative*, 30 January 2026, available at <https://www.arab-reform.net/publication/financing-water-justice-international-aid-and-development-in-the-mena-region>

15 UNDP, “A Holistic Approach”.

16 Gerhard Lichtenthaeler, “Water Conflict and Cooperation in Yemen”, *Middle East Research and Information Project*, 24 March 2010, available at <https://merip.org/2010/03/water-conflict-and-cooperation-in-yemen/>

17 Martha Mundy, “The war on Yemen and its agricultural sector”, *Elikadura*, April 2017, available at <https://www.elikadura21.ehnebizkaia.eus/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/50-Mundy.pdf>

18 GIZ, “Yemen Water Sector: Part 1”.

19 “Water Law No. 33 of 2002” (Arabic), *FAOLEX Database*, FAO Yemen, available at <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/yem46667.pdf>

20 “Yemen Water Sector: Damage Assessment Report of Twelve Water Supply and Sanitation Local Corporations (LCs) and their Affiliated Branch Offices and Utilities – Part 2: Situation Assessment Report”, GIZ, 2018, available at <https://www.giz.de/de/downloads/giz2018-en-Yemen-Water-Sector-Stage-3-Part-2.pdf>

21 Qahtan Yehya A. M. al-Asbahi, “Water Resources Information in Yemen”, *UN Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics*, International Work Session on Water Statistics, June 2005, available at <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/envpdf/pap-wasess3a3yemen.pdf>

among water-related authorities, low levels of public awareness, conflicting elite interests, and inadequate enforcement by judicial and security enforcement authorities.

1.3. National and International Actors

Yemen's water sector governance is marked by institutional fragmentation, particularly amid the ongoing conflict. However, several key government institutions remain relevant to water management. The structure of public water-sector institutions consists of two main national-level ministries: the MWE and the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Fisheries. The National Water Resources Authority, an intermediate-level water authority, also plays a role. According to the Water Law and its bylaws, the MWE and the National Water Resources Authority are responsible for organizing and developing water resources. The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Fisheries also plays a decisive role: 80-90% of water resources are used for agriculture, and the ministry is responsible for formulating policies and legislation that regulate the use of irrigation water in line with national water policies and plans.

Before the war, the main international actors in Yemen's water sector were the Dutch government, the German government through the GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) and the KfW Development Bank, and the World Bank. Other support on a smaller scale was provided by a mix of bilateral donors and multilateral development banks, including the Islamic Development Bank, the Japanese government through the Japan International Cooperation Agency, and UN agencies such as the UN Development Programme, UNICEF, and the Food and Agriculture Organization. These donors' interventions were closely coordinated with the Yemeni government, particularly the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, the MWE, and the National Water Resources Authority, mainly to implement the National Water Sector Strategy and Investment Program and to work toward the Millennium Development Goals in water and sanitation.

Since the outbreak of war in 2014, a wider variety of international and national non-governmental actors have taken on increasingly important roles in Yemen's water sector. Local NGOs and CSOs in particular have emerged as important actors,

often with deep community connections and contextual understanding. As of December 2024, 81 national NGOs were actively responding in Yemen, many with water-related components.²² In addition, tribal authorities, community leaders, and religious leaders remain influential in water governance throughout Yemen, particularly in rural areas. In times of war, these traditional governance structures have often proven more resilient than formal institutions, maintaining some level of water management even in areas with minimal government presence.

Since the onset of the ongoing conflict, international organizations and UN agencies have become more actively engaged in water-related interventions in Yemen, including the UN Development Programme, UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Bank, the International Rescue Committee, CARE International, Oxfam, Save the Children, and the Norwegian Refugee Council. As of January 2025, 197 aid organizations were actively implementing humanitarian responses in Yemen, with many engaged in water-related interventions.²³ Key international donors have included the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, USAID, the EU and its member states, the UK, the World Bank, the Central Emergency Response Fund, Canada, Japan, Norway, and Sweden.²⁴

The private sector is also an important actor in the Yemeni water sector, especially given ongoing state fragility. Private vendors supply water to rural areas without working piped networks, even at high cost, since there are few other options. It also plays a complementary role during shortages in areas with networks, including urban areas.

22 "Yemen Overview", OCHA, 2026, <https://www.unocha.org/yemen>

23 "Yemen Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025", OCHA, 15 January 2025, <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-2025-january-2025ensureprotectprevent> (OCHA, "Yemen Humanitarian Needs").

24 OCHA, "Yemen Humanitarian Needs".

2. Mapping of CSOs Working in the Water Sector

2.1. Objectives

A total of 53 CSOs working in the water sector were mapped, with a focus on areas under the internationally recognized government. Due to security challenges and the ongoing crackdown on CSOs by the Houthis, only eight organizations from Houthi-controlled areas were able to respond and were included in this mapping. The report examines the role of Yemeni CSOs in water management. The main objectives guiding this mapping were as follows:

- Identify and map CSOs working in the water sector, including their roles, interventions, challenges, and opportunities;
- Document locally driven water-related initiatives in order to understand who bears responsibility for achieving a just transition and who is affected by it;
- Examine power dynamics between CSOs and government institutions in relation to policy formulation and decision-making processes related to water governance and just transition pathways;
- Develop evidence-based, actionable policy recommendations outlining clear, feasible steps for key stakeholders to advance a just transition in Yemen, with particular focus on the water sector; and
- Provide a user-friendly, interactive, online mapping tool.

This mapping outlines the research details, including the selection of CSO participants, the methods and tools used for data collection, the study's main findings, and related policy recommendations.

2.2. Methodology

The mapping process employed a multistage mixed-methods approach to identify related CSOs and their roles.

Phase 1: Identification of CSOs and Initial Key Informant Interviews

The initial phase employed purposive and snowball sampling.²⁵ It began with identifying local CSOs and networks across the country through desk review, relevant online social platforms, and organizations known to the research team. Semi-structured online interviews were conducted with representatives and heads of identified local CSOs, during which respondents discussed their organizational activities and were also asked to identify additional CSOs working on water justice or related advocacy. This approach enabled organic expansion and proved effective in a conflict-affected context.²⁶ Online interviews were conducted with CSO representatives to explore their operational contexts, internal policies, advocacy strategies, community engagement approaches, and interactions with governmental and international actors.

Phase 2: Structured Questionnaires for CSOs

To complement the insights gathered, a structured questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was distributed online to the 53 CSOs identified in Phase 1, including eight CSOs from Houthi-controlled areas. Many CSOs based in areas under internationally recognized government control also have branches operating in areas under Houthi control. The questionnaires collected data on organizational characteristics, thematic focus areas (such as water access, sanitation, environmental advocacy, capacity building, and irrigation), geographic coverage, and information regarding barriers to effective engagement and policy influence. This phase facilitated the generation of comparable quantitative data, aiding in the mapping of CSO activities.

25 "Purposive sampling" means choosing participants because of their specific knowledge or experience relevant for the study; "snowball sampling" means starting with study-related or known participants and asking them to recommend other relevant people, allowing the sample to expand through personal or professional connections.

26 Rowland Atkinson and John Flint, "Accessing Hidden and Hard-to-Reach Populations: Snowball Research Strategies", Social Research Update, Issue 33, Summer 2001, available at <https://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU33.html>; Mahin Naderifar, Hamideh Goli, and Fereshte Ghaljaie, "Snowball Sampling: A Purposeful Method of Sampling in Qualitative Research", Strides in Development of Medical Education, 25 June 2017, available at https://sdme.kmu.ac.ir/article_90598.html

Phase 3: Stakeholder Workshops

The third phase involved four participatory workshops – two held in Aden and one each held in Taiz and Hadramawt – for CSOs and policymakers, including officials and representatives from water-related authorities. These workshops took place in December 2025 and were facilitated by experts in water, environmental, and other related fields.

The workshops aimed to achieve three main objectives: (1) to confirm preliminary research findings; (2) to facilitate dialogue among diverse stakeholders regarding water access – specifically discussing who benefits and who loses, associated policies, areas of shortcomings, and opportunities for cooperation; and (3) to develop policy-relevant recommendations. These workshops uncovered perceptive, though sometimes contradictory, insights, particularly regarding the relationship between CSOs and formal institutions; they were crucial for diagnosing the current dynamics between CSOs and official authorities. This understanding is necessary to identify appropriate policy responses. Appendix 2 provides details of the workshop agenda and participant lists.

Phase 4: Interactive CSO Mapping and Data Visualization

A key analytical component of this report was the creation of an interactive online mapping platform that visualizes the spatial distribution, thematic focus, and operational scope of CSOs involved in water-related initiatives across Yemen. Data

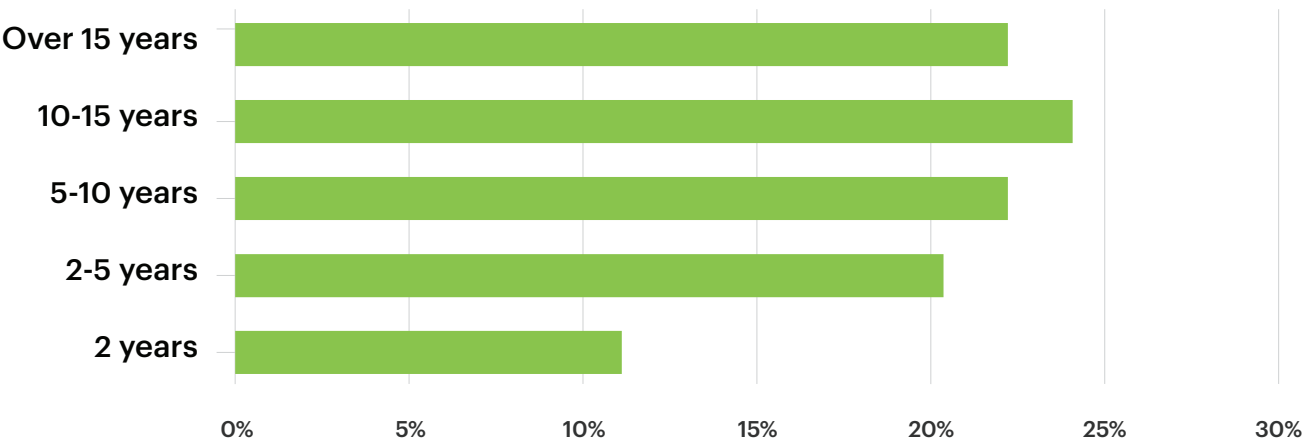
collected from interviews and questionnaires were integrated into this mapping tool, allowing for the identification of geographic clusters, service gaps, and potential collaboration opportunities. The interactive map features details on 53 organizations across the country and is designed to support both English and Arabic, enabling users to easily switch between languages.²⁷ It also provides filtering options, allowing users to search and categorize organizations by governorate, district, field of work, and specific keywords. This makes it a practical tool for expansion, exploration, and analysis.

3. Main Findings

3.1. CSOs in the Water and Environment Sector

CSOs focused on water and the environment in Yemen are relatively new. Data from questionnaires show that 73.6% (39 out of 53) of the organizations mapped were established between 2012 and 2025 (see Figure 1). This trend highlights the decline in the capacity of formal state institutions and the reduced availability of donor funding, particularly since the start of the popular uprising in 2011 and the ensuing political crisis and war that have deteriorated public services. Geographically, CSO activities are concentrated in key urban areas of the internationally recognized government, such as Aden, the interim capital, and Taiz, the largest urban center (see Figure 2).

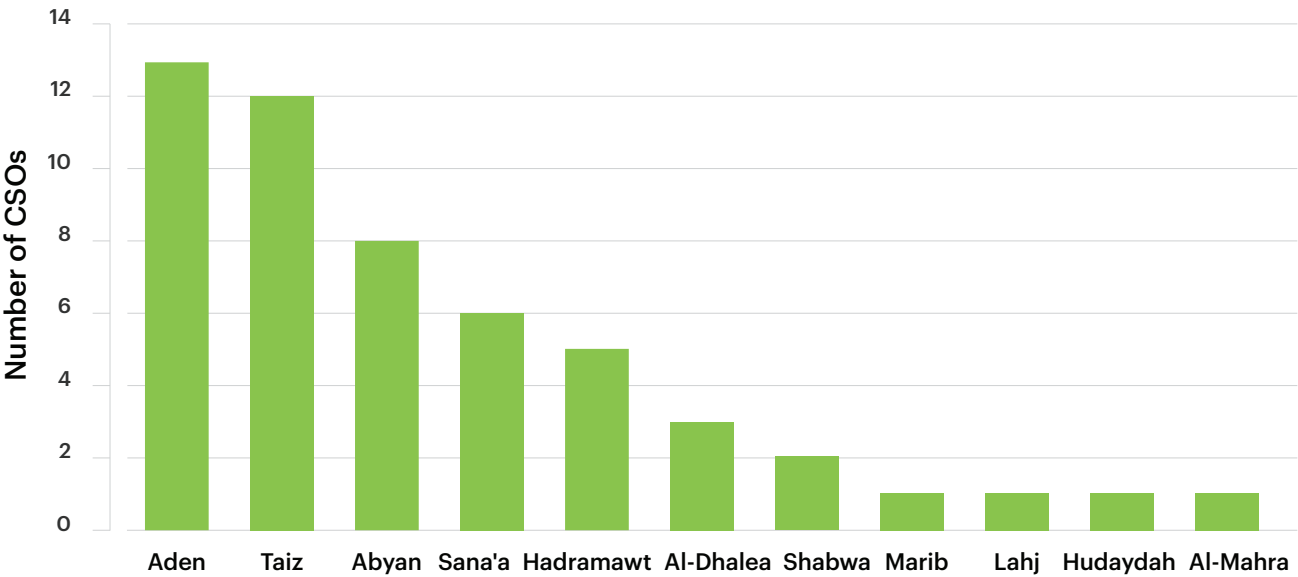
Figure 1. Distribution of CSOs by Year of Establishment



Notes: Author-created graph based on collected data.
Among all the organizations surveyed, there was no organization less than two years old.

27 “Water-Related Organizations in Yemen”, Interactive map, Sana’a Center for Strategic Studies, available at <https://yemen-water-orgs.onrender.com/>

Figure 2. Distribution of CSOs by Governorate

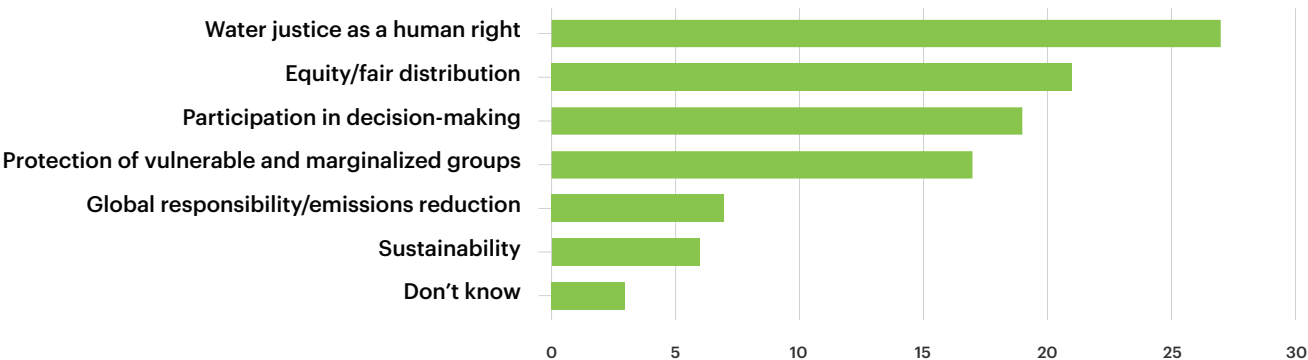


Note: Author-created graph based on collected data.

According to the survey results, the majority of CSOs consider water and environmental justice to be human rights. Fifty percent (27 organizations) emphasized that this includes the right to a healthy environment. Following this, 39% (21 organizations) said they focus on equity and fair resource distribution, while 35% (19 organizations) emphasized participation in decision-making processes. Additionally, 31% (17 organizations) stressed the need to protect vulnerable and marginalized groups. A smaller portion of

respondents pointed out global responsibility, sustainability, and emissions, while a few (6%, or three organizations) acknowledged limited conceptual understanding of these issues (see Figure 3). These definitions align closely with global environmental and water justice frameworks, which underscore the fair allocation of benefits and burdens, inclusive participation, transparent governance, and the recognition of equal rights for all diverse community identities.²⁸

Figure 3. How do CSOs define Water and Environmental Justice



Note: Author-created graph based on collected data.

28 UN General Assembly, "Resolution 64/292"; Emily McKee, "Procedural Justice in Water Management: A Review", *Water*, Vol. 17, No. 13, 2 July 2025, available at <https://doi.org/10.3390/w17131987>; Marian J. Neal, A. Lukaszewicz, and G. J. Syme, "Why justice matters in water governance: Some ideas for a 'water justice framework'", *Water Policy*, Vol. 16, No. S2, November 2014, available at <https://doi.org/10.2166/wp.2014.109>

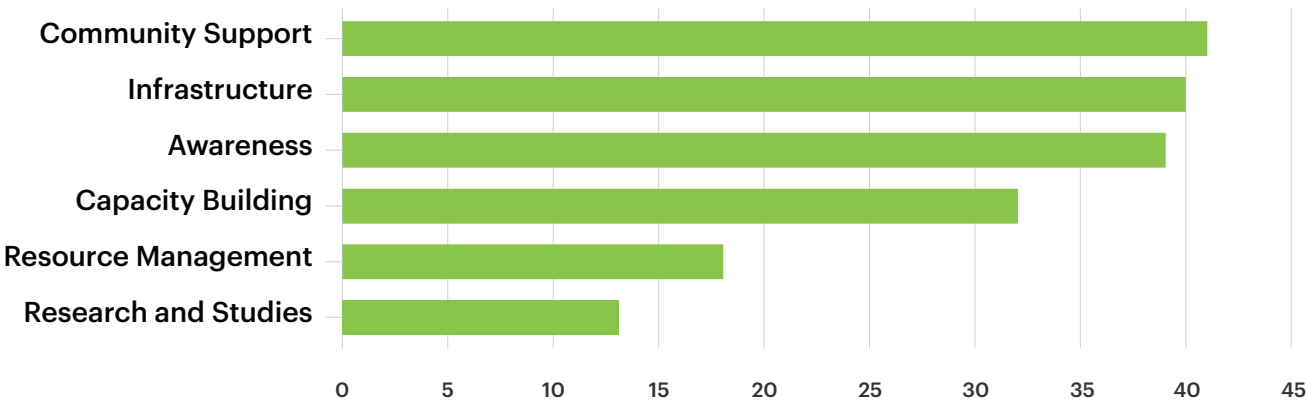
While the majority of the surveyed CSOs focused solely on water-related issues, 44 of them also worked on other environmental issues. For the most part, CSOs’ interventions tend to focus on community support, infrastructure, and awareness-raising activities (see Figure 4 below). While these interventions play a critical role in addressing immediate needs, the relatively limited engagement in resource management and research highlights a structural gap that may constrain sustainability, long-term water governance, environmental justice, and just transition efforts in Yemen.

CSOs’ focus areas include community awareness (42 CSOs) as a critical component of sustainable resource management, alongside emergency water and sanitation projects (39 CSOs) that reflect the urgent needs of local communities in conflict-affected settings. At the same time, interventions in irrigation (28 CSOs) and rainwater harvesting (23 CSOs) indicate an intensifying water crisis and a growing shift toward sustainable agricultural and

water management practices.

However, several studies and expert assessments suggest a more critical interpretation of these interventions. Although these interventions often provide life-saving support, a significant portion of them remain donor-driven, fragmented, and without comprehensive needs assessments. In many cases, there is duplication of projects, weak coordination, and limited sustainability.²⁹ Emergency-focused interventions dominate, while the depletion of already scarce groundwater, irrigation inefficiency, and institutional fragmentation remain unresolved.³⁰ The problem is not only a service-delivery gap, but it is also a matter of fragmentation, weak regulation of groundwater, and the dominance of short-term responses over systemic reform and development interventions.³¹ Therefore, concerns persist regarding prioritization, coordination, and the strategic alignment of interventions with long-term water resource management objectives.

Figure 4. Areas of CSOs’ Interventions



Note: Author-created graph based on collected data.

CSOs’ perceptions of what constitutes the most significant environmental or climate impact on Yemen directly shape their work, with water shortages (48 CSOs) and floods (37 CSOs) being the most frequently cited issues. Water scarcity,

exacerbated by climate change and conflict, undermines equitable access. This situation disproportionately affects vulnerable populations and deepens social inequities. CSOs’ awareness of the combined challenges of chronic water scarcity

29 ICVA, “Measuring Humanitarian Localisation”.

30 World Bank Group, “Yemen: Country, Climate, and Development”.

31 “Input to the Yemen Policy Note no. 4 on Inclusive Services Delivery: Addressing the Challenge of Extreme Water Scarcity for Reconstruction and Beyond”, World Bank Group, Working Paper No. 120533, 2017, available at <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/6730615084060878Types26/pdf/120533-WP-P159636-PUBLIC-Yemen-Water-Policy-Note-Input-to-PN-4.pdf> (World Bank Group, “Input to the Yemen Policy Note”).

and acute climate-related disasters is essential to advancing an environmental transition. This understanding highlights the climate-induced vulnerabilities that aggravate conflict-related water scarcity.

3.2. Power Dynamics and Policy Engagement

The relationship between CSOs and local authorities is characterized by operational coordination rather than strategic policy influence. Although a partnership framework between the government of Yemen and CSOs was developed in 2013, with a comprehensive action plan through 2015, there is no evidence of progress in its implementation. Interview data indicate that the primary functions of this relationship are field coordination (reported by 49 CSOs) and project implementation (reported by 32 CSOs). In contrast, only 17 CSOs reported engaging with authorities to obtain licenses, while 27 CSOs sought technical support.

CSOs have noted a weakness in their participation in policymaking.³² However, officials and decision-makers hold a different view. “Policy formulation is an exclusively governmental responsibility”, said one official.³³ Another official expressed disappointment during interactions with CSO representatives and self-proclaimed “water and environmental experts”, noting that many lacked the necessary qualifications. Such views hinder effective coordination in water policy. They also underscore a disconnection and a clear gap in the current policy landscape regarding the capabilities of CSOs.³⁴ Policy formulation processes with limited involvement of relevant stakeholders – particularly local communities and CSOs – lead to policies that disproportionately benefit those with existing influence and access to resources or those who profit from weak regulatory oversight, such as actors who engage in unchecked, unsanctioned drilling and resource monopolization.

Effective coordination is hindered by the lack of transparency and the absence of a shared platform for government bodies, international organizations, and CSOs to agree on common standards and policies. In this case, government institutions apply and enforce their own policies.³⁵ Although many CSOs have units working on the environment or water projects, they lack internal institutional policies that guide their work on environmental issues in general and on water in particular. Instead, their interventions are shaped by the strategies and frameworks of donors or national or international project-supervising bodies.³⁶

3.3. Water Injustice Beyond Climate, Conflict, and Governance Failure

The water crisis in Yemen is not only a matter of natural aridity but a complex interplay of mismanagement, environmental degradation, political instability, and socioeconomic vulnerabilities.³⁷ Climate change manifests through increased water scarcity, erratic rainfall, and extreme weather events and directly impacts agriculture and local livelihoods. The ongoing conflict further exacerbates these challenges by disrupting governance structures and allowing infrastructure to collapse, impacting resource management and contributing to unregulated water exploitation.³⁸ These factors have led to water injustices characterized by unequal access, unaffordable costs, and monopolization of water sources.³⁹

Inequality

During the workshop held in Aden, CSOs pointed to significant inequalities in water access where some urban areas receive a consistent water supply while others, particularly IDP camps and rural communities, are forced to rely on expensive and

32 Workshop for CSO representatives, Aden, 22 December 2025 (Aden workshop for CSO representatives).

33 Workshop for decision-makers and public institution representatives, Aden, 23 December 2025 (Aden workshop for decision-makers).

34 See also section 3.1.3, that shows CSOs limited engagement in resource management and research, highlighting a capacity gap in water governance.

35 Aden workshop for decision-makers.

36 Workshops for CSOs and decision-makers and public institution representatives, Taiz, December 20, 2025 (Taiz workshop).

37 World Bank Group, “Input to the Yemen Policy Note”

38 Helen Lackner, “Climate change and conflict in Hadhramawt and Al Mahra, Yemen”, Berghof Foundation, Berghof Report 12/2021, 2021, available at https://berghof-foundation.org/files/publications/2021_YemenClimateChange_EN.pdf; World Bank Group, “Yemen: Country, Climate, and Development”.

39 Aden workshop for CSO representatives.

often unsafe water tankers.⁴⁰ Women and girls, small farmers, IDPs, and those in conflict-affected areas are disproportionately impacted. This issue was also highlighted during the workshop held in Mukalla, where participants noted that vulnerable populations are forced to drink from unsafe wadi streams due to the absence of safe and affordable alternatives.⁴¹ The reported national average of water share per capita often hides the severe reality faced by those living far below this threshold.⁴²

In contrast, large industries, export agriculture, cash crop traders, and influential individuals or groups are profiting from the crisis and the absence of effective authorities. They often monopolize water sources, revealing significant power imbalances in resource allocation.⁴³ This situation underscores a critical aspect of water injustice: more than just scarcity or technical solutions, it is about who holds power, who benefits, and who suffers.

The connection between water scarcity, injustice, and conflict was clearly evident in the findings. A workshop held with local CSOs in Taiz exposed how water weaponization and restricted access led to severe water scarcity and the deprivation of many neighborhoods, a crisis intensified by the ongoing siege and high water costs.⁴⁴ Participants in Hadramawt also identified water conflicts as a widespread and escalating phenomenon directly linked to unfair distribution, monopolization by powerful actors, and weak institutions and regulatory frameworks. These water conflicts often intertwine with land disputes, becoming common issues in local courts. The dire situation has exacerbated social tensions and inequalities. Water injustice is increasing, revealed along lines of unequal power, politics, and control, with poor regulatory implementation and diminished public accountability as its symptoms.

Water Pollution

Water pollution emerged as a critical yet often overlooked dimension of water injustice. During the workshop held in Mukalla, participants shared vivid and disturbing accounts of both microbiological

and oil pollution. One participant recounted the story of a woman in Brom Mayfa'a who was forced to collect drinking water from a polluted wadi because she could not afford to purchase it from tankers. Concerns were also raised about widespread surface water contamination from inadequate sewage systems (cesspools) and the potential presence of heavy metals due to oil company operations in areas such as Sah and al-Aliyah. While specialized studies on oil pollution are scarce, community testimonies consistently highlight its detrimental impact on public health and livelihoods. This is a clear case of environmental injustice, where the most vulnerable communities bear the disproportionate burden of environmental degradation.⁴⁵

Technical solutions – including drilling new wells, using water tankers, and rehabilitating networks – have not been able to address deeper systemic imbalances. Water access as a technical or engineering problem hides the politics and institutional processes that define who owns it; who enjoys it; and who bears the consequences of water shortages, pollution, and service failure. Reframing this issue is crucial as it shifts the policy agenda toward structural reform. This shift could be facilitated by moving toward a governance-based justice paradigm rather than focusing solely on a scarcity narrative that valorizes technical solutions.

Overextraction

Finally, overextraction emerged as one of the most pervasive and alarming themes. Participants across the various workshops distinguished between natural depletion (influenced by climate change and reduced recharge) and human overextraction (excessive pumping, mainly by solar pumps and unsanctioned drilling). They agreed that “overextraction” more precisely describes the Yemeni context, citing examples of wells in the valley of Hadramawt where water levels had dropped dramatically to “eight pipes” deep (nearly 50m), and there is a significant annual water deficit (400 million m³ pumped versus 250 million m³ of recharge). This unsustainable exploitation of a finite resource not only jeopardizes current water security but also severely compromises future generations' rights to access clean water.

40 Aden workshop for CSO representatives.

41 Workshop for CSO representatives, Mukalla, December 23, 2025 (Mukalla workshop for CSO representatives).

42 Mukalla workshop for CSO representatives.

43 Aden workshop for CSO representatives.

44 Taiz workshop.

45 Mukalla workshop for CSO representatives..

3.4. Governance Gaps and Policy Frameworks

Although Yemen has formal legal frameworks – such as the National Water Policy (1998-2005), Water Law No. 33 (1995) and Environmental Protection Law No. 26 (1995) – and relevant institutions such as the MWE and the National Water Resources Authority, the implementation and enforcement of these laws have been weak, inconsistent, or politically constrained. Additionally, many of the laws are incomplete, outdated, and not aligned with the current challenges posed by conflict and climate change.⁴⁶ The regulatory failure is multilevel. First, there is lax enforcement or bypassing of permit requirements for drilling wells, and informal extraction is widespread. Second, evidence-based decision-making is constrained by fragmented or outdated systems for monitoring groundwater levels and abstraction rates. Third, institutional overlaps and mandate duplication create confusion about authority and undermine oversight. Combined, they create a system in which extraction proceeds with little to no accountability, accelerating long-term resource depletion and compromising intergenerational equity.

A particularly striking illustration of governance failure was the “permit paradox”. Participants noted that while legally drilling a well may require numerous bureaucratic signatures, in practice, widespread unsanctioned drilling often occurs without permits. This indicates a profound breakdown in enforcement and oversight, rather than merely a lack of regulations. Formal procedures are routinely bypassed, leading to uncontrolled resource exploitation and exacerbating water scarcity and injustice. This underscores the urgent need not only for new or updated laws, but also for effective mechanisms to implement and enforce them.

Key gaps noted by participants include a significant deficit in governmental capacity, a critical lack of reliable data, dilapidated infrastructure, and underfunding. Political fragmentation and the perception of water as a commodity rather than a fundamental human right further undermine efforts toward equitable distribution and sustainable

management.⁴⁷ Official institutions are often perceived as lacking the capabilities and resources to implement effective programs, particularly during the current conflict, leading to a disconnect between policy and practice. These institutional weaknesses, coupled with corruption and the brain drain of expertise, result in fragmented and often ineffective responses.⁴⁸

3.5. Community Initiatives and Lessons Learned

The workshops documented several successful community-led initiatives that offer lessons for advancing water justice and resilience in Yemen. These initiatives underscore the power of local knowledge, community agency, and adaptive strategies when navigating the country’s intertwined crises. A devastating tropical storm in 2008 caused significant damage to irrigation structures in the Wadi Thabi valley in the Tarim district. In the aftermath, the local leader responsible for coordinating water flows played a crucial role in strategically managing the crisis. His prompt action helped protect approximately 65 acres of agricultural land from further destruction. Large-scale structural repairs were later carried out by organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Organization for Migration, showcasing a successful collaboration between local crisis management and international technical support.

That same year, the Wadi al-Ain Foundation effectively rehabilitated critical canals in the Wadi Hadramawt river valley after the official water management system collapsed due to floods. Despite a delayed formal response that resulted in years of hardship, this initiative highlighted the ability of local communities and institutions to step in when state mechanisms fail.

In Aden, the youth-led initiative Ehna Qadaha (We Are Capable of It), alongside the Basmat Amal (Hope Fingerprint) Initiative, mobilized groups of young volunteers in response to significant displacement and acute water shortages in al-Mansoura. The youth undertook efforts to install water storage tanks and excavate surface water wells to alleviate

46 Mukalla workshop for CSO representatives..

47 Aden workshop for CSO representatives.

48 Aden workshop for CSO representatives .

immediate needs. Although these interventions were largely emergency-driven, they were critically important for addressing urgent water needs. These examples underscore the importance of recognizing, documenting, and supporting indigenous knowledge systems and community-based adaptive strategies, which are essential for building resilience.

3.6. Challenges and the Path to a Just Environmental Transition

CSOs in Yemen encounter several challenges that limit their effectiveness. According to the questionnaire results, the most significant issue is funding and financial constraints, reported by 51 organizations, demonstrating a heavy reliance on external sources, particularly international organizations. Their financial vulnerability is further exacerbated by internal capacity constraints mixed with external logistical constraints. The lack of financial sustainability is forcing many CSOs to focus on short-term, emergency-based interventions instead of pursuing long-term development initiatives.⁴⁹ Insights from the Aden CSO workshop further highlighted internal governance weaknesses, poor implementation of internal policies, and technical deficits as challenges alongside external factors such as the volatile security, economic, political, and environmental contexts. Another issue is the significant difficulty of accessing crucial information and studies, which are often monopolized by state institutions.

The potential of CSOs to drive positive change is often hampered by systemic barriers and power imbalances with governmental entities. However, a pervasive concern was the absence of effective official frameworks for meaningful CSO involvement. They frequently cited centralized, top-down decision-making, a lack of transparency, and widespread institutional dysfunction as primary reasons for their exclusion from policymaking processes. They underscored this by noting the absence of a coherent general policy for official bodies, which severely complicates coordination efforts between government and civil society. While CSOs may be consulted, their input often remains

peripheral.⁵⁰

CSOs also contend with weak internal capacities. The identified capacity-building needs are highly instructive for the sector's future direction. The top two topic areas were climate change, reported by 51 organizations, and environmental advocacy, reported by 44, indicating a clear desire among CSOs to move beyond emergency response to the systemic, long-term drivers of the water crisis and engage in policy-level change. The table below summarizes self-identified challenges and key areas where CSOs said they require capacity support.

49 Aden workshop for CSO representatives.

50 Aden workshop for CSO representatives; Mukalla workshop for CSO representatives.

Table 1. Key Challenges and Capacity-Building Needs Reported by CSOs

Category	Issue or Capacity Area	Frequency
Prominent Challenges	Funding and Financial Constraints	51
	Weak Partnerships and Coordination	24
	Logistical or Communication Difficulties	12
	Lack of Technical Personnel	12
Capacity-Building Needs	Climate Change	51
	Environmental Advocacy	44
	Monitoring and Evaluation	33
	Project Management	29
	Gender	20
	Proposal Writing	14

4. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Water injustice in Yemen manifests through an interplay of factors, with the country's sustained water crisis exacerbated by conflict and climate change. This injustice is characterized by unequal access, the monopolization of groundwater, uncontrolled overextraction, pollution affecting vulnerable communities, the weaponization of water resources, and weak enforcement of existing regulations.

The number of CSOs working in the water sector has increased in response to state weakness and humanitarian collapse. Yet, their role largely remains limited to project implementation. The findings of this report indicate that the majority have little to no role in the formulation of related legislation, policies, and strategies, which continue to be dominated by official authorities and the international donor organizations that finance these interventions. Insights from the data collected for this report underscore the need for participatory governance approaches that empower local communities and CSOs. The importance of CSOs lies not only in their

participation in project and policy implementation but also in their engagement in policy formulation processes that reflect on-the-ground realities and amplify the voices of local communities.

A lack of transparency and the absence of structured policymaking frameworks constitute the primary obstacles to the effective participation of CSOs in policy processes and the advancement of water justice. By addressing these critical legislative and institutional gaps, encouraging equitable collaboration among all stakeholders, investing strategically in sustainable water practices, and leveraging valuable local knowledge and adaptive capacity, Yemen can pave the way for a more just and resilient water future.

Yemen's water crisis cannot be solved through technical interventions alone. It requires a governance shift toward inclusive, participatory, and accountable water management systems that consider conflict realities, climate change impacts, justice, sustainability, and intergenerational equity. This is not only a commitment by concerned parties but also a moral and legal obligation, aligning with the principles enshrined in the UN Sustainable Development Goals of Clean Water and Sanitation – SDG 6 and Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions – SDG 16.

The path forward will be arduous, requiring some

technical solutions, a fundamental reevaluation of existing power dynamics, a commitment to equitable access and distribution of this vital resource, and recognition of water as a human right and a cornerstone of peace and development in Yemen.

Based on the key informant interviews, survey results, and the insights from the four workshops held in Yemen, the following evidence-based, actionable policy recommendations are proposed to advance a just and sustainable transition in Yemen's water sector. These recommendations are structured to address the identified governance gaps, empower civil society, and foster resilient water management practices, thereby aligning with the study's overarching objectives.

4.1. Enact Legislative and Governance Reforms

- Update and activate key legal frameworks, including Yemen's existing water laws, strategies, and policies, such as the National Water Policy, the Water Law, and the National Water Sector Strategy and Investment Program. These revisions must align with current realities of conflict and climate change, as well as with the principles of water justice and equitable transition.
- Transition from having laws and policies merely on paper to ensuring their effective enforcement and practical implementation, addressing existing legislative inertia and institutional dysfunction.
- Strengthen oversight and accountability mechanisms to control unplanned and unsanctioned well drilling and groundwater pumping and impose stricter penalties for violations. This involves ensuring that licenses fully comply with the required conditions and that enforcement is effective.
- Address influential actors, elite weaponization, and the monopolization of water resources; establish clear lines of accountability for resource management; and reactivate basin committees and water user associations.

4.2. Institutionalize Participatory Policymaking

- Promote participatory water governance by transitioning from centralized, top-down management of water resources to inclusive, collaborative platforms, such as councils, advisory boards, and joint committees. This approach requires the active involvement of local communities, including vulnerable populations, CSOs, water user associations, and basin committees at all stages of water resource planning, implementation, and oversight.

4.3. Empower Civil Society and Multistakeholder Collaboration

- Improve CSOs' capacities and ensure transparent access to information by making significant investments in technical, administrative, and legal capacity building. To do this, facilitate transparent and unrestricted access to water-related information, data, and specialized studies, much of which is currently monopolized by state institutions. This can be achieved by establishing open-access water data platforms, setting technical standards for collaboration between the government and CSOs, and updating hydrological and climate monitoring systems.
- Develop strategic and coordinated partnerships among government institutions, CSOs, and international organizations. This includes shifting from short-term emergency response to long-term recovery and aligning donor priorities with national and local priorities, ensuring that development and humanitarian projects are designed in close coordination with local needs and official policies. Such coordination is vital to avoid duplication, enhance effectiveness, and build sustainable local capacities.

4.4. Ensure Sustainable Water Resource Management.

- Invest in non-conventional water sources and efficiency measures, such as rainwater harvesting and wastewater treatment and reuse, particularly for agricultural purposes. The focus should be on promoting low-cost, locally maintainable solutions that enhance water security and reduce the unsustainable reliance on depleting groundwater resources. This aligns with the principle of water security as foundational to food and energy security.
- Protect and rehabilitate critical water and sanitation infrastructure that has been directly affected by prolonged conflict and a lack of maintenance. This includes rehabilitating existing infrastructure and exploring strategic, long-term projects such as seawater desalination, mainly for coastal areas.
- Integrate the principles of water justice into all sectoral policies and development plans. This involves a fundamental shift in perspective, moving beyond viewing water as a commodity to recognizing it as a fundamental human right and a common good, essential for all aspects of life and development.

4.5. Knowledge, Awareness, and Community Engagement

- Bridge data gaps by establishing research centers, expanding the network of rain and climate monitoring stations, and commissioning specialized studies to build a comprehensive and reliable evidence base for water management and policy. This will enable informed decision-making and adaptive management strategies.
- Implement targeted, sustained awareness campaigns to educate communities about their water rights, promote sustainable water-use practices, and highlight the vital role of CSOs in water governance and advocacy. This fosters a culture of responsibility and empowerment.
- Document, share, and expand community-led initiatives in water management, conflict resolution, and climate adaptation. Analyze their success factors, share lessons learned, and establish clear mechanisms for scaling these local, knowledge-based solutions to other vulnerable areas in Yemen. These local innovations are invaluable assets for building national resilience.

Appendix 1: Online Survey

1. Full Name of the CSO:
2. Year of Establishment:
3. Governance Structure: (e.g., Board of Directors, Executive Director, etc.)
4. Operational Location: Primary District and Governorate of your headquarters.
5. Legal Status: Is the organization officially registered with the relevant authorities?
6. Licensing Details: Please provide your License Number and the date of issuance.
7. Digital Footprint: Official website or primary social media links (Facebook/X/LinkedIn).
8. Staffing Levels: Total number of full-time employees.
9. Gender Balance: Breakdown of staff (number of male vs. female employees).
10. Volunteer Network: Total number of active volunteers currently supporting your mission.
11. Internal Frameworks: Do you have written internal policies (HR, finance, procurement)?
12. Technical Specialization: Does the organization have a dedicated department for water or environmental themes?
13. Primary Sectors: In which specific thematic areas does your CSO operate?
14. Implementation Strategy: On what basis do you select and implement projects (e.g., community-based needs, donor calls, or government priority)?
15. Main Water Projects: List your major water-related projects (implemented individually or jointly).
16. Intervention Modality: What was the specific type of intervention for each project (e.g., infrastructure, policy, or relief)?
17. Project Specifics: Provide brief details or a summary of these interventions.
18. Partnership Map: List the donors or partners involved in your water-related projects.
19. Project Scale: What is the average financial size/budget of your individual projects?
20. Reach: Total estimated number of beneficiaries across all your water-related programming.
21. Geographic Coverage: List the specific regions/governorates where your projects were executed.
22. Strategic Vision: Does the organization have a current written strategic plan?
23. Technical Development: Do you have a dedicated team for proposal writing or project design?
24. Accountability: Does the organization utilize a formal monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system?
25. Total Annual Turnover: Estimated total budget for all projects during the last fiscal year.
26. Sector Spending: Estimated annual budget specifically for water-related projects.
27. Funding Ratio: What percentage of your total organizational funding is allocated to water?
28. Revenue Streams: Who are your main current funding sources?

29. Water Sector Niche: Within the water sector, what is your primary focus (e.g., solar pumping, sanitation, IWRM)?
30. Justice Perspective: How does your organization define or approach “environmental” or “climate justice”?
31. Resource Equity: Do your projects actively ensure equal access to resources (water, energy, food) for all community members?
32. Social Inclusion: How do your interventions specifically include vulnerable groups (women, IDPs, coastal communities, etc.)?
33. Local Climate Context: What are the most significant environmental/climate impacts currently affecting your area of operation?
34. Collective Action: Is the organization a member of any local or international networks/alliances?
35. Alliance Names: Please list the names of the networks or alliances you belong to.
36. CSO Cooperation: Describe the nature of your relationship with other local organizations (e.g., collaborative, competitive, or informal).
37. Institutional Relations: Does the organization coordinate with local or national government authorities?
38. Nature of Coordination: Describe the level of cooperation with these authorities (e.g., MOU-based, data sharing, or project approval).
39. Operational Barriers: What are the key challenges you face in implementing water and environmental projects?
40. Institutional Gaps: What specific capacity-building areas does your organization need support in?
41. Policy Recommendations: What are your general recommendations for improving environmental work in Yemen?
42. Map Contributions: Please share any specific data or recommendations you would like highlighted on the public interactive map.

Appendix 2: CSO Workshops Concept Note

Background and Objectives

CSOs play an important role in supporting water-related projects, representing local communities' voices, and advocating for equitable and inclusive policies. This workshop serves as a participatory platform for CSOs to discuss policies in coordination with official stakeholders and decision-makers. It aims to integrate policy analysis with field-based knowledge and enhance opportunities for the practical implementation of fair and sustainable water policies.

The workshop primarily seeks to examine the role of CSOs in water initiatives and policies, equitable access to water, and how to empower these organizations to develop a shared narrative and clear priorities for future policy dialogues.

Objectives

- Discuss the concepts of water justice and a just environmental transition.
- Analyze the current status of water access and related policies (CSO and official policies).
- Document civil society roles and initiatives related to water justice and identify challenges and responsibilities in a just transition process.
- Identify pathways for effective integration of CSOs into policymaking processes related to water and environmental justice.
- Develop practical recommendations to enable CSOs to contribute meaningfully to policymaking and promote good governance and sustainable accountability in water resource management.

Participants

CSOs working in the water and environmental sectors, and decision-makers or representatives of official or government entities.

Methodology

Facilitated discussions, breakout working groups, brainstorming sessions, and collective drafting of recommendations.

Main Discussion Themes

Role of CSOs in Policy

- How can CSOs contribute at the policy level to achieving a just environmental transition, particularly in the water sector?
- Analyze mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion of CSOs in water policymaking.

Documenting Initiatives and Challenges

- Document successful local initiatives in water justice.
- Identify challenges faced by CSOs in fieldwork and advocacy.

Needs and Empowerment

- Identify material and nonmaterial resources required by CSOs.
- Explore pathways to build strong alliances among organizations.

Recommendations for Donors

- Identify practical, politically feasible steps to facilitate meaningful CSO inclusion in policymaking and to achieve water justice.

Workshop Agenda

Time	Session	Details
9:00 – 10:30	Registration and Opening Session	Welcome, introductions, overview of agenda, and presentation of the conceptual framework (Water Justice and a Just Environmental Transition in Yemen).
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee Break	
11:00 – 12:30	Working Groups (1 & 2)	Discussion on current water realities, manifestations of water injustice, affected groups, policy gaps, and CSOs' inclusion/exclusion mechanisms in policymaking.
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch Break	
13:30 – 15:00	Working Groups (3 & 4)	Role of civil society in water justice, successful initiatives, challenges, and recommendations for policy inclusion.
15:00 – 16:00	Presentation of Group Results	Each group presents findings followed by a plenary discussion.
16:00 – 16:30	Closing Session	Drafting actionable recommendations, identifying areas of agreement/disagreement, and concluding remarks.

About the Arab Reform Initiative

The Arab Reform Initiative is an independent Arab think tank working with expert partners in the Middle East and North Africa and beyond to articulate a home-grown agenda for democratic change and social justice. It conducts research and policy analysis and provides a platform for inspirational voices based on the principles of diversity, impartiality, and gender equality.



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