

Youth Economic Empowerment Programme

United Nations Development
Programme Yemen



Youth Economic Empowerment Programme¹

Region	MENA
Country	Yemen
Organization	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Yemen
Name	Youth Economic Empowerment Programme (YEPP)
Category	Skills development
Start date	2012
End date	Ongoing (Phase II – scale-up of the programme)
Partners	Government: Social Fund for Development, Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Cleaning and Improvement Fund, Secretariat Capital, Environment Office Aden NGOs: For All Foundation, Vision Hope, Youth Leadership Foundation, Education for Employment, Millennium Development Foundation, 21 Century Forum, Rowad Foundation, Capable Youth Foundation, ZOA, SPARK MFIs: Al-Kuraimi and Al-Amal Banks Private sector: Yemeni Business Club, Chamber of Commerce, Arab Diaspora Association Singapore, Business Women Branch of the Federation of Chamber of Commerce.
UN involvement	UNDP
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1. Background and description

Yemen is one of the poorest and least developed countries in the Middle East and North Africa region and faces multiple political and economic challenges.² The economy is highly dependent on oil (27 per cent of GDP and 70 per cent of export revenues), yet this major source of revenue is rapidly depleting.³ Water scarcity has increased and the limited arable land has been affected by drought and flooding. The country's population growth of 3 per cent is outpacing its economic growth and, worryingly, is increasing food insecurity; the World Food Programme estimates that 41 per cent of the population is food insecure.⁴

1 Desk review (May-September 2014); Interview (12 November 2014); Internal validation (27 November-16 December 2014); Implementer validation (16 December-4 January 2014); Final validation (October 2015). N.B. All information collected and validated as of March 2015 is subject to change as UNDP's portfolio in Yemen adapts to a volatile political, economic and security context. Please visit www.ye.undp.org for the latest updates.

2 Yemen ranks 154 out of 187 in the Human Development Index (2013).

3 UNDP (2011).

4 World Food Programme – Yemen overview: <http://www.wfp.org/countries/yemen/overview> .



The State has been affected by prolonged armed conflict, high levels of corruption and weak governance. The participation of civil society, particularly youth and women, in public affairs is extremely low, but during the current political transition and structural changes to the Government, several initiatives have emerged with the goal of strengthening the engagement of all segments and groups in society, particularly youth and women. These groups are equally affected by the country's endemic poverty and face high levels of unemployment (52.9 per cent).⁵ The economic frustrations facing the youth materialized in the 2011 uprising which swept President Ali Abdullah Saleh out of office after 33 years of rule.

Against the backdrop of a rapidly growing population, endemic poverty, slow economic growth and rising levels of unemployment, there is an acute need to reignite economic growth and foster economic diversification by using the untapped force of unemployed youth and women.

Noting the sporadic investment in youth and livelihoods,⁶ in 2012 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Yemen launched the Youth Economic Empowerment Programme (YEEP) to support the Government in employment generation for youth during the transition period, providing improved livelihoods for people and contributing to conflict prevention by addressing the high unemployment rates that fuelled young people taking to the streets.

The project adopted and adapted the '3x6 approach', a methodology used in post-conflict Burundi for rapid, temporary employment generation while at the same time laying the ground for long-term

employment. Implemented in three phases – inclusiveness, ownership, sustainability – the method creates emergency, temporary employment for populations affected by conflict and in transition, while building the basis for sustainable and long-term employment. The project begins with temporary cash-for-work activities coupled with business and skills training, creation of saving accounts and business planning. Beneficiaries are supported in their business development with mentoring and grants, with the aim of developing sustainable businesses that can improve their livelihoods and generate further employment.

The 3x6 approach was adapted to the youth cohort and tested in three governorates of Yemen – Sana'a, Taiz and Aden – as part of the pilot phase (2012-2013). The midterm evaluation concluded that "the project is highly relevant and timely in meeting the needs of a growing body of vulnerable youth in Yemen"⁷ and that the 3x6 approach had been recognized by youth beneficiaries as "life changing".⁵ Phase II of YEEP was launched in April 2014 and seeks to scale up the activities to nine governorates. The project has also contributed to the Youth Employment Action Plan developed by the Government in 2013, and has been adopted by the national plan, which recommends the immediate implementation and upscaling of the 3x6 approach.⁹

5 Level of unemployment in Yemen is 29.2 per cent (ILO, 2013).

6 Interview with Ms. Caroline Lensing-Hebben and Ms. Bushra Al-Shirae (12 November 2014).

7 Bahnassi K. A. (2013).

8 Ibid. The midterm evaluation conducted focus group sessions with youth beneficiaries (n=73) as well as desk review and interviews with stakeholders (n=36).

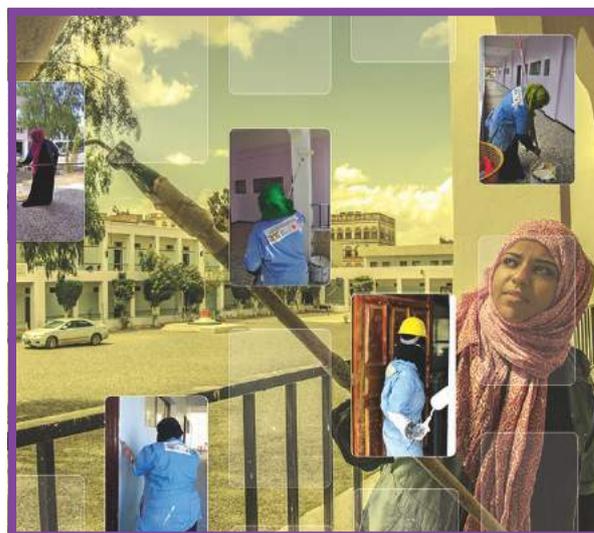
9 UNDP (2014).



Organization profile

UNDP “partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone”.¹⁰

In Yemen, UNDP focuses on decentralization and local governance, elections, public administration reform, rule of law and employment for youth and women.¹¹



2. Goal and objectives

2.1. Goal

The overall goal of YEEP is to “socially and economically empower disadvantaged youth and women in market-oriented technical, entrepreneurial and managerial skills, confidence-building and empowering skills necessary to improve their access to productive resources and sustainable earning potential”.¹²

2.2. Objectives

- Produce immediate and short-term income generation activities for youth;
- Lay the foundations of long-term employment through skills and business training and entrepreneurship.

3. Target group

3.1. Age group

The project targets youth, defined as males and females ages 18 to 30 years.

3.2. Gender considerations

Women in Yemen continue to face economic exclusion and experience high levels of gender-based violence. The country ranks 82 of 86 countries in the Global Gender Index, and women account for just 0.6 per cent of the labour force.¹³ The project integrated a gender-sensitive strategy; however, no

guidelines on minimal representation of female youth beneficiaries were stated in the pilot phase, and the average female participation rate was 30 per cent.¹⁴ For Phase II, the gender component has been mainstreamed to increase labour participation and a gender focal point appointed.¹⁵ The project is deploying efforts to support female entrepreneurship by identifying suitable micro-business activities and enhancing women’s inclusion in the cash-for-work scheme. The midterm evaluation concluded that the programme had been successful in breaking stereotype barriers and introducing women into male-only professions such as painting.¹⁶

10 UNDP – About us: http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/operations/about_us.html

11 UNDP Yemen – What we do: <http://www.ye.undp.org/content/yemen/en/home.html>

12 UNDP (2014).

13 ILO (2013).

14 Bahnassi K. A. (2013).

15 Interview with Ms. Caroline Lensing-Hebben and Ms. Bushra Al-Shirae (12 November 2014).

16 Bahnassi K.A. (2013).



3.3. Ethnic / disability considerations

The project does not outline any particular strategy for targeting ethnic groups or youth and women with disabilities.

3.4. Targeting the most marginalized / most at risk

YEEP targets disadvantaged young men and women. During the first phase, the implementing partner NGO, For All Foundation, conducted community-based targeting based on the criteria of 'jobless', 'poorest', 'vulnerable' and having 'entrepreneurial spirit'. The midterm evaluation strongly recommended a more refined selection mechanism. YEEP partnered with the Social Fund for Development (SFD), which uses a deprivation index based on seven proxy poverty-related indicators to identify the number of deprived people by governorate. The procedure is complemented by participatory rapid appraisals.

Because the SFD measurement targets communities and not individuals, and for budgetary reasons not all SFD beneficiaries can be enrolled in the programme, UNDP introduced additional steps to hone the number of participants selected in the first round:

- Presentation of the 3x6 approach in the selected communities and establishment of an enrolment process through which interested youth signed up;
- Youth were tested and interviewed to assess their potential and interest for entrepreneurship: (1) a Tamheed test (<http://www.tamheed.org/>) was developed for the Arab world by Silatech, a UNDP partner, to assess the entrepreneurial potential of individuals; (2) the interviews involved a multi-stakeholder panel comprising representatives of UNDP, local

authorities, governorates or ministries, and an entrepreneurship expert. Criteria for ranking the participants were developed by a technical committee.¹⁷

Phase II has thus refined the targeting of youth in order to reach the groups most at risk and internally displaced persons in Aden and Abyan. The preparatory stages of the 3x6 implementation have been rolled out successfully in these two cities and the methods employed have included partnerships with SFD and the Social Welfare Fund; contracting ACTED¹⁸ and the For All Foundation for the assessments; and conducting regular field visits, community outreach and district targeting. In September 2014, the first round of beneficiary selection took place, including interview panels and identification of women-specific cash-for-work opportunities to effectively encourage women's empowerment and entrepreneurship.

3.5. Human rights programming

As part of the mission of UNDP, the project is grounded on human rights principles and focuses on the promotion of equity and women's empowerment.¹⁹

3.6. Youth involvement

Phase II systematically incorporates past youth beneficiaries to support the recruitment of new beneficiaries. This is done by training them as monitors and mentors to future participants.²⁰

¹⁷ Targeting mechanism (unpublished).

¹⁸ ACTED is a non-governmental organization with headquarters in Paris, founded in 1993. The programs implemented by ACTED (more than 390 per year) in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean aim at addressing the needs of populations affected by wars, natural disasters and/or economic and social crises. www.acted.org

¹⁹ UNDP (2014).

²⁰ Interview with Ms. Caroline Lensing-Hebben and Ms. Bushra Al-Shirae (12 November 2014).



4. Strategy and Implementation

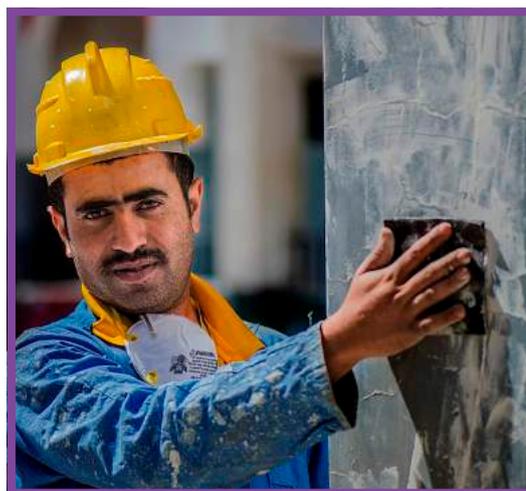
4.1. Strategies / theoretical approaches /methodologies

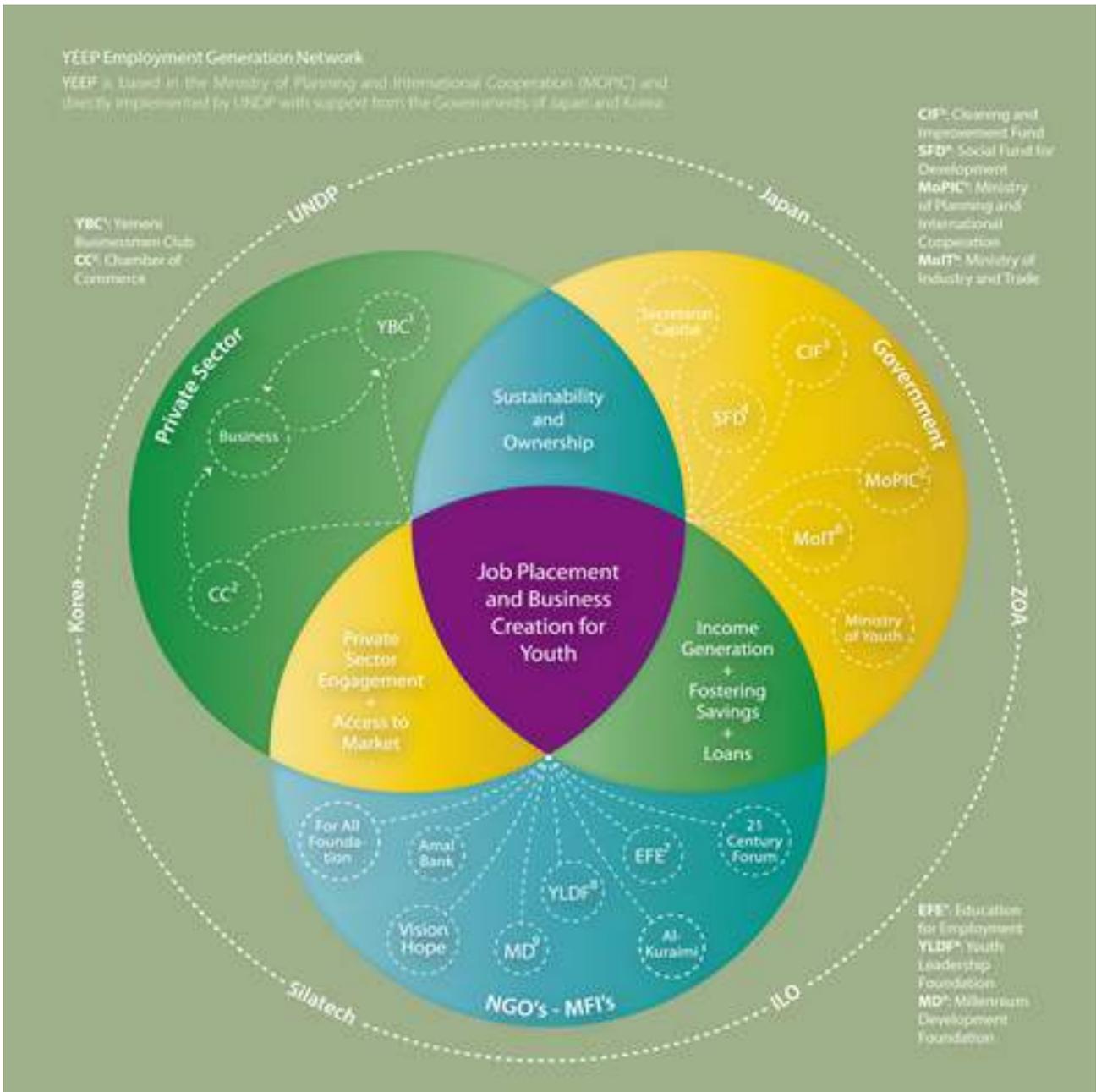
The project adopts a market-driven, gender-responsive and community-based strategy. It involves multiple stakeholders and establishes strategic partnerships involving the private sector and NGOs, local authorities and community and religious leaders.

YEEP has been implemented in two phases. Phase I (the pilot phase) served as the stage for building the capacity of partners, kick-starting activities on the ground and consolidating the scale-up strategy with the Government, the private sector and the NGO partners. The lessons learned from the pilot phase were systematically integrated in Phase II,²¹ which was launched in April 2014 and is making a significant leap towards scale-up and national ownership.

Key stakeholders of the project are:

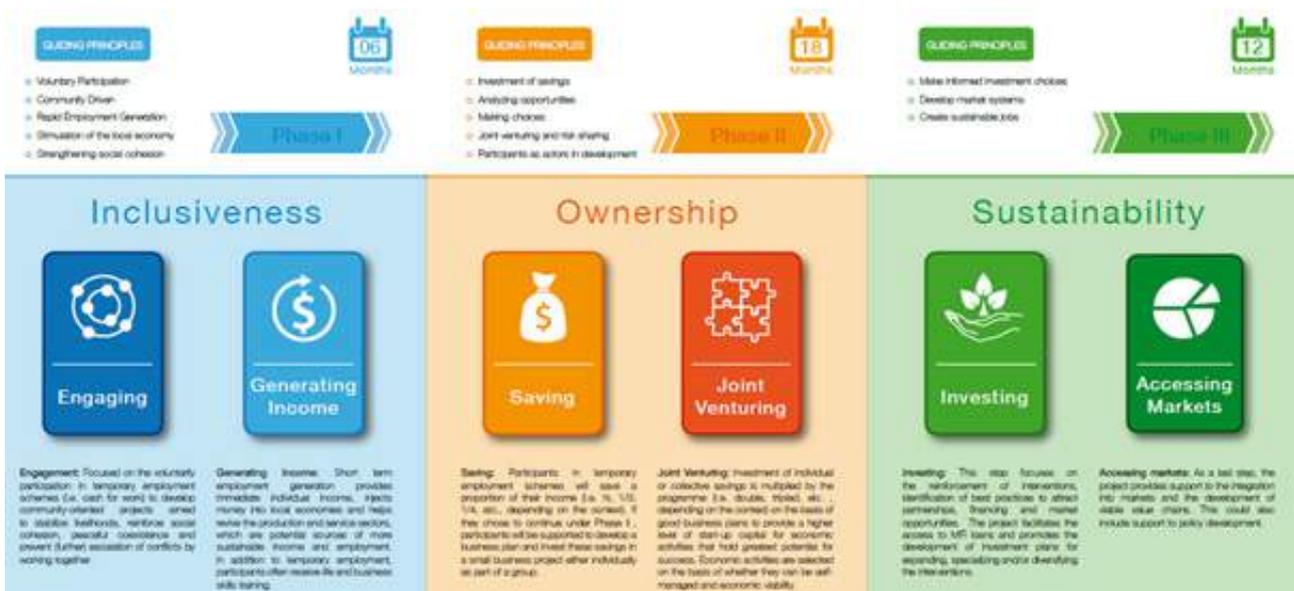
- Government representatives from the governorate and national levels;
- Local council members and community leaders;
- NGOs and microfinance institutions (MFIs), for strengthening of capacities and support for delivery of project activities;
- Youth and women;
- The private sector, which potentially will benefit from the participants' new business skills – a stronger and more skilled labour force – and development of linkages with new entrepreneurs and producers.





YEEP Network, UNDP Yemen 2014

The 3x6 approach uses the skills of individuals, local resources and expertise to provide immediate economic opportunities to individuals affected by conflict and poverty, coupled with the creation of conditions that enable long-term employment opportunities.



UNDP 3x6 approach

Communication and advocacy have been strong components of the project from the outset, and have focused on raising awareness about the importance of youth economic empowerment in Yemen and an entrepreneurship culture.

Knowledge transfer is underway with the preparation of a global toolkit on the 3x6 approach which provides operational guidance and is based on the lessons learned from the pilot phase in Yemen and the subsequent adaptations to refine the project. The toolkit is foreseen to be released in mid-2015.

4.2. Activities

The 3x6 approach activities

1. Inclusiveness: (a) engaging and (b) income generation.

(a) Engaging: The aim is to generate immediate income and build the capacity of youth through employment. In parallel to the cash-for-work activities, participants receive life-skills and business training twice a week for two months (16 days in

total).²² National trainers were selected to deliver the training based on a curriculum ('My Chance') developed by the For All Foundation, a local NGO. For the second phase of YEPP and upon recommendation of the midterm evaluation, a new and more comprehensive curriculum has been introduced, developed in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO). The current curriculum of 44 hours²³ includes life- and business-skills training and is tailored to the educational level of the vulnerable youth. Additional feedback from the business advisers recommended a more interactive and 'hands on' manual with case studies, visual aids and ideas for generating business.

(b) Income generation: At the end of the training, youth present a business plan and connect with a business adviser who assesses the feasibility of the plan and determines whether the participant can receive the grant. If the project does not meet the criteria, the adviser provides one-to-one counselling to improve the

²² 3x6 toolkit. UNDP (2014).

²³ The authors of the curriculum are Samih Jaber and Rania Bikhazi, ILO.

business plan. The income-generation activities include community works and rehabilitation of socioeconomic infrastructures (such as water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)) and are aligned with the needs of communities.

2. Ownership: (a) savings; and (b) joint ventures.

(a) Savings: two thirds of the money generated through the cash-for-work program are placed in a savings account, preparing participants for the second phase;

(b) Joint ventures: The savings accumulated during the first phase are utilized to invest in the business plans proposed by the youth, either individually or as part of a group. The business plans are reviewed and the businesses with the potential for self-management and economic viability are established as either individual or joint ventures, so the investment is multiplied. The aim is to provide more start-up capital and increase the potential for success.²⁴ The type of ownership depends on the type of economic activity being pursued, the match between the participants' skills and interests and the needs of the community, identified through a market assessment using the REACH methodology.²⁵

3. Sustainability: (a) investing; and (b) accessing markets.

In the third and final phase, the individuals or groups are given access to loans from MFIs. Projects are supported in their expansion, specialization or diversification stages.²⁶ The sustainability is grounded on the nurturing of

individuals and groups with the capacity and interest to develop both entrepreneurial skills and sustained economic activities, which in turn support sustainable employment and community economic growth. In this phase, the project provides investment support to the small- and medium-sized enterprises and access to the local market economy, and facilitates market expansion.²⁷

The 3x6 self-employment approach is complemented by: participatory market needs assessments, which inform demand-driven training; partnerships with the private sector for the implementation of the job placement scheme and business development centres; and activities related to the promotion of youth entrepreneurship.

Participatory market needs assessments

Three market needs assessments were conducted in the governorates and participatory workshops organized to discuss the findings.²⁸ The reports are meant to inform market opportunities and training needs. Results from the assessments were disseminated to 'My First Business' certified trainers in order to transfer the knowledge to the beneficiaries and orient their business creation.

Partnerships with the private sector: job placement scheme and business development centres

The job placement scheme has been established in partnership with the private sector, thus aiming to match supply and demand. The youth receive demand-driven training using, among others, the International Financial Corporation 'Business Edge' tools and the curriculum of the Capable Youth Foundation. UNDP facilitates job placement with either an internship or paid employment (see figure below).

²⁴ 3x6 toolkit.

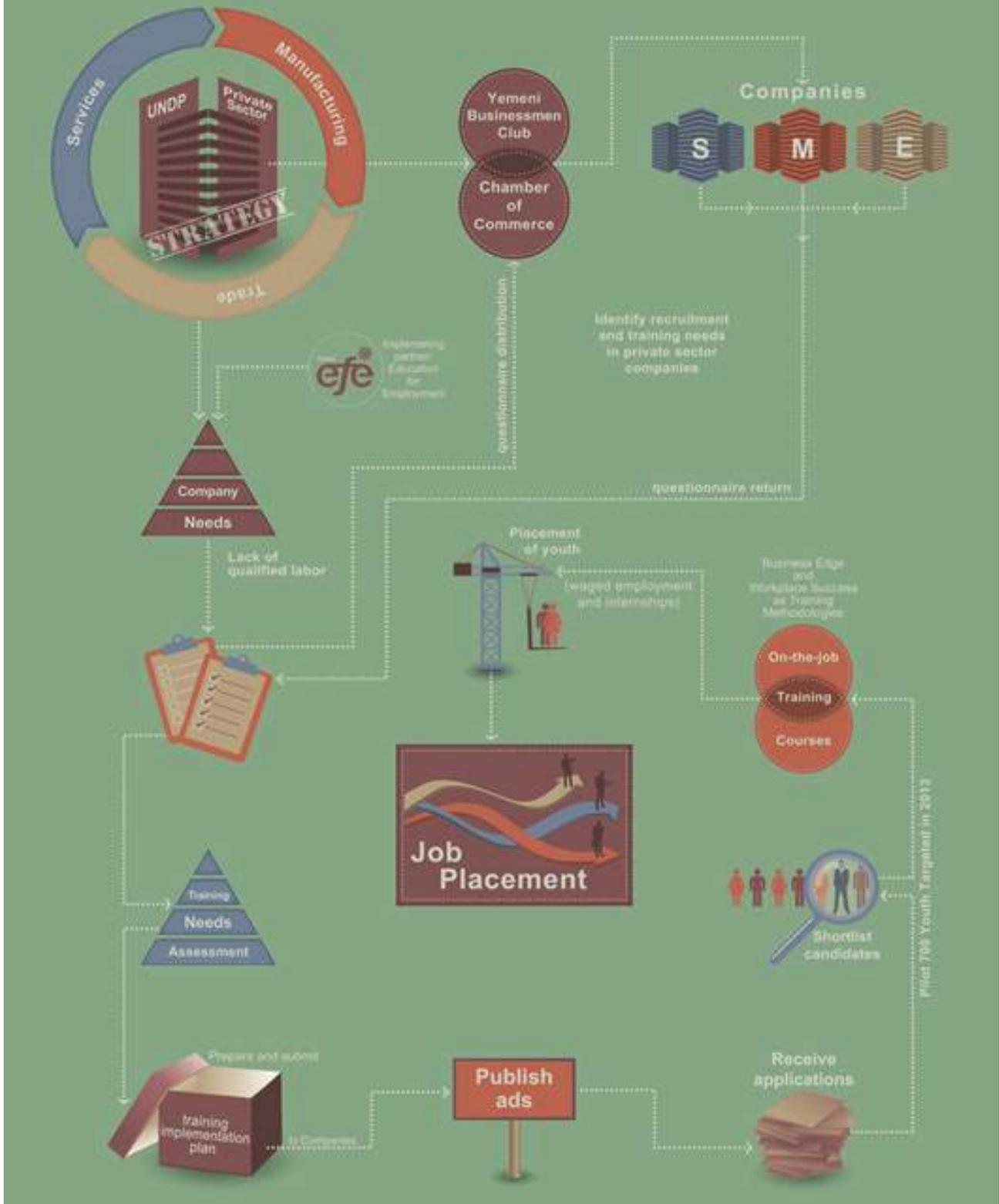
²⁵ REACH was "born in 2010 as a joint initiative of two INGOs (IMPACT Initiatives and ACTED) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) Operational Satellite Applications Programme UNOSAT). REACH's purpose is to promote and facilitate the development of information products that enhance the humanitarian community's decision making and planning capacity for emergency, reconstruction and development contexts, supporting and working within the framework of the humanitarian reform process: www.reach-initiative.org

²⁶ 3x6 toolkit.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ UNDP (2014).

UNDP YEEP job placement initiative in partnership with the private sector: demand-driven skills development



YEEP Job Placement Scheme, UNDP Yemen



The project has also introduced the concept of business development centres, which provide free advisory and mentorship support to the start-ups emerging from the project. The Yemeni Business Club – a group of leading Yemeni entrepreneurs and businessmen – is leading this component. YEEP is seeking to expand its private sector strategy to include the Yemeni diaspora, in particular in Saudi Arabia and Southeast Asia. To that end, UNDP management and the Arab Diaspora Association in Singapore held two meetings in Singapore, in November and December 2014.

Promotion of entrepreneurship

Youth Innovation and Creativity Award

Entrepreneurship was promoted through the Youth Innovation and Creativity Award ('Afkār', Arabic for 'idea'), which aimed to mobilize young Yemenis to submit innovative business ideas. The winners received business development training in marketing and sales, human resources, accounting and personal production and were assigned private sector mentors. The award was promoted through:

- 13 awareness sessions in universities, technical colleges and institutes;
- Launch of the website www.yemenyouthaward.com (Afkār first edition);
- Launch of Afkār second edition – www.afkaryemen.com – with over 2,500 submissions to date and a focus on solar energy projects, and which was declared a national priority by the Minister of Industry and Trade;
- Distribution of 9,000 flyers by 34 volunteers;

- Media campaign: broadcast of a video on public TV, two radio ads, radio interventions, a Facebook page, Twitter and a newspaper add published in three main national newspapers;
- 1,000 outdoor ads.

Business radio programme, 'Turning Point'

In Phase II, YEEP has launched the first youth-run radio programme in Yemen dedicated to youth economic empowerment.²⁹ Running since October 2013, the programme is on every Sunday for one hour. So far, it has interacted with 250 youth and reached 10,000 people on social media. The broadcast is available to residents in the area of Sana'a, but the programme has now begun a live online broadcast to expand its outreach.³⁰ YEEP supported the opening of a Yemen Times Radio branch in Aden, and 'adenized' the business radio programme, which has been broadcasting since December 2014.

Sensitization and information campaigns – increased engagement of the public and private sectors.

As part of the activities to strengthen the linkage with the private sector, YEEP Phase II organized a sensitization and information campaign. A conference in Washington D.C. brought together 24 Yemeni key stakeholders from the public and private sectors to discuss the role and opportunities for the private sector. Beyond the participation approaches of social corporate responsibility and mentoring, the project is exploring specific entry points

29 UNDP (2014).

30 Ibid.





for youth in the private sector value chain. Recently, a training needs assessment conducted with 34 private companies led to the placement of 600 youth.

4.3. Innovativeness

The 3x6 approach and the elements it introduced in the Yemeni context were innovative. For instance, in the ownership phase, youth are introduced to savings and the creation of a financial identity. The project has been particularly innovative in the introduction of women to the cash-for-work component and into male-only professions.³¹ As part of this approach, an entrepreneurship culture is being promoted as an opportunity for economic recovery and diversification for youth.

4.4. Cost and funding

Phase I of YEEP was co-financed with \$2.5 million from UNDP, the Embassy of Japan, the Embassy of South Korea.³² The positive results from Phase I enabled the mobilization of additional funds for Phase II, which has a budget of \$10.5 million.

The project's running costs are less than 30 per cent as mandated by UNDP principles. The strategy for minimizing costs has been to cost share some of the project activities with national partners (no cost sharing agreement signed with national partners per say, but in kind contributions, like in the case of Taiz).

The significant increase in the budget from Phase I to Phase II is due to the scaling up of the programme – the expanded geographic scope, increased number of beneficiaries and institutional framework – as well as a larger pool of donors.

4.5. Sustainability

Capacity-building of national partners

The project has focused on building the capacity of national NGO partners in view of building ownership and preparing the way for scaling-up. The partners have been trained on: delivery of entrepreneurship training; compulsory saving modalities; selection of target groups; and preparation of reports and orientation of youth on the 3x6 approach.³³ The programme has been working closely with the Government in preparing a gradual transfer of responsibilities, accompanied by capacity-building. A former implementing partner, the national NGO Youth Leadership Foundation, delivered the initial capacity development training which contained a mix of project management and items specific to the 3x6 approach to empower NGOs for rolling out the approach with or without the involvement of UNDP, thus supporting greater national ownership. Further trainings are planned for 2015 and will be extended to national institutions such as the SFD so they may fully embrace the implementing role for all phases.

Building ownership of businesses and mentorship for youth

The project introduces risk-sharing and thorough mentorship as part of the efforts to build ownership of the micro-businesses and contribute to their sustainability. Risk-sharing refers to the investment of the youth's own savings into the project and mentorship occurs as the youth are linked with national businessmen and advisers. During the pilot, mentorship was set to last for six months but Phase II has extended the period to a full year.³⁴ During the pilot phase, paid consultants provided mentorship to youth. However, because this is not sustainable, a business development centre was established in Sana'a to provide guidance to the youth and create a relationship with the businessmen which goes beyond the

31 Interview with Ms. Caroline Lensing-Hebben and Ms. Bushra Al-Shirae (12 November 2014).

32 Bahnassi, K.A. (2012)

33 UNDP (2014).

34 Interview with Ms. Caroline Lensing-Hebben and Ms. Bushra Al-Shirae (12 November 2014).



project.

National ownership

The project has developed strong linkages with the Government as part of its exit strategy. It has partnered with the SFD, the government agency that is main source of funds for the cash-for-work activities. The SFD annually targets 50,000 households with its cash-for-work scheme, and the project is investing in building the capacity of SFD with the aim of its adapting and implementing the 3x6 approach as its methodology.

The 3x6 approach has also been adopted as part of the national Youth Employment Action Plan and has been recommended for scale-up.³⁵

4.6. Replicability

The 3x6 approach adopted in Yemen is a replication of the model first implemented in Burundi with the purpose of reintegrating ex-combatants into the socioeconomic life of the country. In Burundi, the 3x6 approach had a strong social cohesion component, while in Yemen, it was adapted to meet the economic demands of the youth.

YEEP is currently scaling up activities implemented during the pilot (Phase I) of the project. The aim is not only to expand to other governorates and reach more beneficiaries, but also to strengthen both the strategies and capacities of government and partners and the work conducted at the policy level. The ultimate goal is to incorporate the 3x6 approach as a national tool for addressing youth unemployment, improving livelihoods and building the resilience of communities through self-employment mechanisms which boost the economic life of the community and of

individuals.³⁶

In Lebanon and Jordan, the 3x6 approach is being analysed to assess its potential for application in the context of the Syrian crisis and resulting unemployment.

5. Evaluation of effectiveness

An independent, external midterm evaluation conducted in August 2013 concluded that the employment-generation strategies implemented by UNDP and partners had been “life changing for the youth beneficiaries”.³⁷

The pilot phase yielded the following key results:³⁸ 521 youth were enrolled in immediate income-generation activities coupled with life-skills and business training. The activities in which the youth have been involved are based on community needs and include:

- Creation of agricultural terraces in Taiz rural areas;
- Rehabilitation of 13 schools in Sana'a;
- Installation of 1,870 water filters to address water scarcity issues in Aden.³⁹

The midterm evaluation concluded that the training had been judged by the participants as “very beneficial” and youth reported to have been greatly engaged with the business world. The youth also reported increased knowledge and skills in business development, highlighting field trips which allowed them to understand the market and interact with business owners.⁴⁰

The activities in which the youth participated have contributed to building of community assets and to a change of mindset which now views youth as active economic actors.⁴¹ The impact on indirect beneficiaries has not been

35 UNDP (2014)

36 UNDP Yemen Quarterly Progress Report – Economic Empowerment Project Phase II, 2nd Quarter 2014.

37 Ibid.

38 Figures were retrieved from the final project report, UNDP (2014), but the findings on impact were summarized from the midterm evaluation report, Bahnassi K. A. (2013).

39 UNDP (2014).

40 Bahnassi K.A. (2013). 41 Ibid; UNDP (2014).



thoroughly measured, but in the case of the rehabilitated cisterns in Arhab, for example, an estimated 4,200 individuals and 600 families have benefited from improved access to water.⁴²

The midterm evaluation highlighted that the training received by the youth had caused a “change in their enterprise and individual behaviour, as well as providing access to credit to a smaller group but growing cohort of training beneficiaries”.⁴³ It is also noted that the youth engaged in the income-generation activities and trained in parallel had registered increased business revenues or expansion of operations.⁴⁴

Through the savings component, these youth acquired for the first time a financial identity, accumulating 34,434,400 Yemeni rials. In Yemen, disadvantaged youth are not familiar with saving accounts and access to finance is limited or even non-existent. The matching grant from the project provided these youth with seed capital and laid the foundation for longer-term income. As a result of Phase I, 283 micro-businesses were established (individual and joint ventures) resulting in 448 employment opportunities for vulnerable youth. The youth-driven businesses are linked to community needs, particularly in rural areas. The businesses created included carpentry, grocery shops, beekeeping, animal breeding, internet cafes, bakeries, lending libraries and dressmakers.⁴⁵

As part of the business development services that have been established, youth are linked to a business adviser. The midterm evaluation noted that youth expressed “immense satisfaction about this service as it provides essential help in operating and managing their business”.⁴⁶

The job placement initiative enrolled 703 youth, trained 641 beneficiaries, 43 per

cent of them females, and placed 459 in internships and 98 in jobs.

As part of Phase II, 106 youth received a 16 hours of financial literacy training through a partnership with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ).⁴⁷ This new component is planned to be delivered to all youth beneficiaries in the scale-up process. To measure the skills gained, a partnership was established with ILO, which designed the evaluation tool for the training that has been incorporated into the monitoring and evaluation of the project.

Some 10,000 youth were reached through awareness-raising sessions and traditional and social media as part of the entrepreneurship award. Overall, 2,300 youth registered, 767 submitted innovative business ideas and 28 winners were selected and are now receiving the support they won as part of the award.⁴⁸

The midterm evaluation concluded that the pilot phase was successful in introducing a new paradigm for the significance and role of youth, making them active economic players. The project has also been able to introduce a culture of saving among participants and raise their awareness of entrepreneurship.

While the introduction of cash-for-work for women has not radically changed gender relations—this is indeed a long-term process – the component has demonstrated good potential for gender equality. It has introduced women into male-only sectors and enabled them to engage for the first time in paid work. New areas for income generation and employment have opened up.⁴⁹

Monitoring and evaluation

42 UNDP (2014). 43 Bahnassi K.A. (2013). 44 Ibid. 45 UNDP (2014). 46 Ibid.

47 Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit.

48 UNDP (2014).

49 Bahnassi K.A. (2013); UNDP (2014).

50 UNDP (2014).





Phase I of YEEP was evaluated by an independent external evaluator in August 2013. The ongoing Phase II, which comes to an end in December 2015, has been selected by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) as a candidate for a randomized evaluation by the MIT Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab. Evaluating the project's quantitative impact on beneficiaries will be part of this study.

As part of efforts to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of Phase II, an M&E officer was recruited, baseline data were collected in all targeted governorates, an M&E framework was finalized and training was delivered to partners. Monitoring reviews are circulated on a quarterly basis to donors and the Government, and a qualitative survey was conducted to assess the economic impact of the 3x6 approach. In view of the scaling-up of the project, an integrated M&E framework has been developed in partnership with ILO.⁵⁰

6. Strengths and opportunities

The 3x6 approach creates the bridge between emergency employment and long-term sustainable income activities. The saving of income stimulates individual ownership of projects, thus contributing to the sustainability of projects. As the business activities are grounded in community needs, it also supports the resilience of communities.

In the case of Yemen, the linkage with the private sector has been accentuated in view of constructing a model that can be transferred to and sustained by national stakeholders.

An entrepreneurship culture is nearly non-

existent in Yemen, yet it is a source of opportunities for unemployed youth and has the potential to drive the recovery and diversification of the economy.

7. Challenges

The midterm evaluation of the pilot phase highlighted a series of challenges which were addressed during the planning and implementation of Phase II. Key obstacles observed in Phase I included limited participation of youth in the design of project activities; a curriculum which was difficult to understand by some beneficiaries; the criteria for selecting the youth; and delays between the end of the training and the grant disbursement, which caused disengagement among some youth.

A core challenge which has continued to affect the programme is the political instability in Yemen. For instance, activities had to be halted in Arhab due to the armed conflict.

8. Next steps and the way forward

The scaling-up of the programme began in October 2014. Preparation for implementing the programme have been initiated in Taiz with the establishment of a working relationship with SFD and the implementing partners. In Hadramout, a multi-agency effort – involving UNDP, the International Organization for Migration and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations – is being undertaken to finalize operational roll-out as part the activities of the Peacebuilding Fund. Focusing on WASH, the 3x6 implementation in Hajjah has begun with the preparatory stages, which include multiple UNDP field visits, the establishment of partnerships and the





selection of the NGO implementing partner. In the area of policy interventions, YEEP continues to support both upstream and downstream interventions to ensure effective linkages and the mainstreaming of youth employment within policy initiatives and debates. It has supported the institutional implementation of the Youth Employment Action Plan and provided advice on the establishment of a functional secretariat, in addition to a feasibility study on the introduction of a National Employment Guarantee Scheme.

9. Lessons learned and recommendations

The lessons learned from the pilot phase were integrated in the second phase and addressed to the extent possible to enhance the project's effectiveness.

An M&E system has been created with the support of ILO, as well as a baseline survey and constitution of control groups.

The project is now involving youth as mentors and training them in M&E.

A new curriculum was developed with ILO as a response to the limitations of the one used during the pilot phase. To date, 50 Yemeni trainers have received training-of-trainers instruction.⁵¹

A gender focal point has been established and identification of cash-for-work opportunities for women is underway to increase the gender equality of the programme.

The project partnered with SFD and adopted a poverty index indicator, coupled with additional criteria to test the potential and willingness of the youth in entrepreneurship.

Youth will receive financial literacy training

in partnership with GIZ and Silatech, and mentorship with the business advisers has been extended to one year in order to provide follow up support to the beneficiaries.

Recommendations which have emerged from the previous and current phase are to:⁵²

- Build strategic alliances to strengthen programming and achieve cost-effectiveness;
- Work with the formal and informal sectors at the community level, particularly in rural areas;
- Increase and enhance awareness-raising and orientation sessions with community leaders to explain what the programme is about;
- Involve the Government from the outset and ensure its buy-in of the project; projects like 3x6 have the potential to be institutionalized through existing government structures. At the same time, develop the capacity of the Government to sustain, scale and replicate the model;
- Work at the upstream and downstream policy levels (in progress).

10. Components to consider for scale-up in MENA

- Demand-driven training and adaptation of skills curriculum to this training.
- Support and follow-up with participants on skills development and entrepreneurship programmes after completion.
- Building of strategic alliances with all key stakeholders and engagement with the private sector in the scaling-up process. Scale-up cannot take place without joint efforts.
- Risk-sharing through cost-sharing and

51 UNDP (2014).

52 Interview with Ms. Caroline Lensing-Hebben and Ms. Bushra Al-Shirae (12 November 2014).



partnerships.

11. Resources

- 3x6 toolkit.
- 3x6 training curriculum.

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