

UNDP-JAPAN Partnership in Yemen



In Yemen, in support of the Government of Yemen and the Yemeni people, UNDP and the Government of Japan:



Bridge the gap between youth and the private sector



Tackle the root causes of conflict in creating employment for Yemeni youth



Foster innovation and youth entrepreneurship



Elections Support for Enabling Change

Helping young Yemenis to fight unemployment



In Yemen, an innovative UNDP programme is helping young people to save money and start small businesses, while meeting their immediate needs and reducing the chances of a return to violence.

Taiz, Yemen: Twenty-five year old, Tahani walks along a row of trees that she and her work crew planted earlier in the day.

"It is good to have work," she says. "And planting trees makes me feel good. These will be here for many years to come."

But life hasn't always been so good for Tahani. Her father died many years ago, she must work to support her younger brother who has epilepsy - and the drugs to treat it are expensive. Although she left high school with an 86 percent pass rate she was never

able to achieve her dream of going to medical school.

However, a UNDP supported scheme that is contributing to the community, is also helping her to earn an income and save for the future. And one day, her dream may become a reality.

Tahani is part of the UNDP Youth Economic Empowerment Project, which follows the **"3x6 approach" that proved to be successful in Burundi**. The project is providing her and over 1,200 other Yemeni young people with two to four months of employment to improve rural access to water through the digging of wells; construct markets; contribute to environmental sustainability and reduced water consumption through tree planting and the creation of agricultural terraces; and rehabilitate infrastructure, such as school buildings, that was damaged by the country's recent conflict.

At the same time, the programme is training Tahani to open a sewing business. It's not medical school, but she says that the income she will make from her new business is a first step towards achieving this expensive goal.

One third of the salary that workers receive through the scheme is paid into a savings account at a micro-finance bank. When the temporary work ends, they are able to use this money, (which UNDP tops up), along with training and start-up advice to partner with other beneficiaries of the programme and establish small businesses. Besides sewing shops, young people are now setting up farms, welding and carpentry workshops, and catering kitchens, to name a few of the enterprises that have resulted from the scheme. Many of the businesses are giving women the opportunity to work in areas where they couldn't normally work in Yemen. Graduates of the programme have already established over 50 businesses, although the scheme only started seven months ago.

The scheme is also reducing the chances of further conflict in Yemen, where recent violence has led to a contraction in the economy and an increase in unemployment. Over 50 percent of Yemenis between the ages of 18 and 24 are unemployed, which could be a time-bomb for future violence warns Gustavo Gonzalez, UNDP Senior Country Director in Yemen.

"The protests and conflict in 2011 were led by young Yemenis demanding decent jobs, better livelihoods and more opportunities," he says. "Ironically, the short-term impact of the transition has been to increase unemployment. The conflict and instability were bad for the economy – and this of course increases the risk of further instability and violence in the near future."

Mr. Gonzalez' opinion is reflected in the street: "People are angry," says Taiz taxi driver Hassan Mohsen. "No-one likes violence – but rampant unemployment will set things off again and this could be a disaster for the country."

It is a repeat of the 2011 violence that UNDP is hoping to prevent through the scheme that Tahani is taking part in.

While she is saving for the sewing business, the approach has helped her and other women gain financial independence. "For the first time in my life I feel that I am not dependent on my aunt, as I am able to help with the household daily expenditures," she says. "The training I have received opened a new door and changed my life."

Highlights

- *Recent instability has left Yemen with a weak economy and a youth unemployment rate of over 50 percent.*
- *Over 1,200 young people have been trained through a UNDP project. Many are now more financially independent and able to start new careers and businesses.*
- *The approach is helping the community by giving them access to water, creating inclusive markets, rehabilitating schools and other infrastructure affected by conflict, creating agricultural terraces and planting trees.*
- *The project is funded by the Government of Japan, which contributed US \$2 million, and the Government of the Republic of Korea, which contributed \$200,000.*

UNDP-Supported Women Painters Fight Unemployment and Shake Gender Stereotypes

by Kawkab al-Thaibani



Woman Painters do not only fight unemployment, they also challenge gender stereotypes

At the far corner of the rigid walls of the 7 of July Girls School, 17 young women with blue jackets painting diligently these walls. Young women are engaged in a two-months painting activity and they are paid on a daily basis as part of a new approach called "3x6", launched by the GoY through its Youth Economic Empowerment Project with support from UNDP and the Government of Japan, which aims to create sustainable employment.

"We enjoy our work. We really like painting," says one of the girls.

In Yemen, as in many Arab countries, women and men are usually separated and contact is very formal. Painting inside any household is not an easy process as the male painter has to be escorted at all times by another male from the family. It is therefore even more unusual to see women painting, an activity which is not culturally considered as women

profession. Jobs for women are usually restricted to gynecology and teaching in girls' schools.

The project targets young men and women to support them with a profession and sufficient income to start a new business. The project envisions the economic empowerment as an indivisible part of the economic recovery of the country's current transition.

The young women are glad to have a daily income as it makes a huge difference in their lives. The short-term impact of 2011 has affected the livelihoods of all Yemenis with women being affected hardest. The latest report of Oxfam International "Still Waiting for Change: Making the political transition work for women in Yemen," found that four out of five women from the consulted groups thought their living conditions had deteriorated dramatically after the uprising.

Yemeni women do not only face poor living conditions. Yemen is rated the lowest (130) in the Annual Gender Gap Report which measures the disparities between men and women for many critical areas, one of which being economic participation and opportunity. Yemeni women have an extra burden to carry when it comes to earning a living.

However, some social norms may sometimes be used to the advantage of young women. "I told some of my colleagues that they would be comfortable if a woman paints their houses and would not think to take a day off as an escort in case a man comes," said Abbas al-Falah, the painting trainer who has been working for 22 years in this field.

Another two young students from the schools concurred. They said that they could rent cheap houses, which are mostly unpainted, as women were not allowed to hire male painters. "My mother told us she wished we could paint," they say with sorrow. "But this was only a wish and when we saw those women paint; it was the first time to see something like this. Now, we think we can learn how to paint," they both said with enthusiasm.

The school was at first cautious and very skeptical of their ability to paint these walls. "We were surprised to see all of these beautifully painted walls," said a young student.

One of the participants is 18-year-old and divorced. "I am happy to learn this new skill so I can take care of my 3-year-old daughter," she stresses. She was forced into marriage when she was only 14 and divorced four years later. The bad economic conditions of her family pushed her to work to support her child.

Obviously, there were many suspicious and discontented opinions against those women painters. "I do not think women can do this job, it is for men, they are too delicate," argues one of the teachers. Also, some students were unhappy with what they took as a step against traditions. One of the participants herself admits that she will not take this as a profession but will use the skill for her house and her family.

The sight of women painting is not common one and regardless of whether they will be able to prove themselves in this profession or not, they have already succeeded in breaking a conservative stereotype and promoting a new approach. "It was hard to convince people by just talking, when they see them, it is different," says Shafiah al-Siraji, the principal of the school.

The sexist suspicious attitude towards women's capacities only served to spark a stronger feminist attitude. Some women believe they can perform any work just as well as men. "Why not, if I am not doing something wrong," says Intisar, a 24-year-old painter. She plans to take painting as a profession anywhere without imposing any limits to herself. "I will not stand in the street marketing myself but will do it in more suitable way," she adds.



Women painters during the training discussions

"It is the first time people see women painting walls to earn a living," says al-Siraji, "but it supports my arguments with many people that women can adapt to any situation. Actions speak louder than words."

Along with painting, the young women and men all alike receive regular basis business and life skills training to create ideas for their future business projects. During the current income-generating activity, third of their income is saved into a saving account. In phase 2 of the project, the project triples the savings through a grant for feasible business ideas and provides technical support and mentorship to the newly created micro-businesses.

Some of those women painters already identified projects and they are consulting with their trainers to make them viable to market needs.

One of them will open a library and stationary small shop in her remote neighborhood with some daily items. An other one, Intisar, plans to open a French fries shop nearby a community park where there are no other similar shops. Learning painting is still very useful to them on personal and professional level. Some of them say that if they do not work outside, they will utilize it within the family sphere. "When I have my own project, I will not drop painting; it is a good source of living. I acquired a skill, why should I waste it," says Intisar.

The "3x6 Approach" been successfully implemented by UNDP in post-conflict Burundi with support from the Japanese Government. YEEP is now implementing this new approach in Yemen to contribute to conflict prevention by addressing demands by youth for immediate and sustainable employment through implementation of three main components: inclusiveness, ownership and sustainability.

All of the young women participated with the aim of improving their living conditions through work to secure a sustainable income.

Thanks to these young women's determination, a new understanding and a momentum seems to have developed. "In the beginning we just laughed "ha, they think they can work like men" but then we saw the beautiful work they do," admitted one of the students, "really, I now believe that there is no difference between men and women."

She believes women have the potential to upgrade this profession. Intisar is a strong feminist who studies geology because there are so few women in this department.

She constantly aspires to change the common perceptions towards "men-only-jobs."

"In geology, many female graduates are now in high demand and I am sure it will be the same with painting," she says confidently. Although some women still doubt the idea of women taking up painting as a source of living, there are others who think they will make it. "I know they will find work, especially now that they have proven themselves in the school," says al-Siraji.

"Women as painters" is a new challenge implemented in Sana'a by the Youth Economic Empowerment Project (YEEP) in partnership with For All Foundation.



Intisar believes women in Yemen can work as painters exactly like men

The Struggle for Enfranchising Women for Yemeni Elections

UNDP targeted voter education for women across Yemen for the Early Presidential Election of 2012



An elderly woman casts her ballot in a voter registration in Marib, as part of the UNDP-supported Early Presidential Elections in Yemen for 2012.

SANAA, Yemen — Elham Sarhan wears a badge of courage underneath her hijab. A small bump sits atop her forehead. It is a scar that is indicative of the reality faced by women here in Yemen, and the conviction that Mrs. Sarhan brings to her work as head of the Women's Unit at the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum.

The story of the scar is in many ways the story of the struggle for women's rights in Yemen. Mrs Sarhan in coordination with UNDP set about a rural governorate tour last January 2012 prior to the Early Presidential Elections scheduled for February 21, 2012, in order to prepare women for the first crucial electoral event after almost 33-years of Ali Abdulllah Saleh rule. She found herself in Mahaweet with a group of women, whom at the time believed, they were meant to write-in "Ali Abdulllah Saleh" on the new ballots.

Mrs. Sarhan with her soft yet commanding tone told the group that in fact their ballots would be discounted if that indeed took place and explained to the women that the Gulf Cooperation Council Agreement had planned for a one-man vote and it had been agreed that then Vice-President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi would be that candidate as the country transitioned. The women took note and thanked Mrs. Sarhan for the information and the outreach bags filled with information on what identification would be needed for the vote, and how the vote would happen.

As Mrs. Sarhan stepped out of the training session, representatives of the General People's Congress, Saleh's party, and incidentally Abd Rabbuh Mansour's, approached her. They were angered by the information that Mrs. Sarhan had imparted on the women, and just as she was preparing to leave, one threw a rock at her head, injuring her and scarring her forehead with a bump that still exists to this day. Rather than discontinuing work for the day, Mrs. Sarhan pressed on to other trainings in the area, where she led more training sessions with women. "Nobody stops me," said Mrs. Sarhan. "This isn't just a job, this is a rights issue. I take these issues very personally, not just because I'm a woman, but because they are human rights as well as women's rights issues."

Women in Yemen face a myriad of complex issues barring them from partaking in the public sphere like their male counterparts. Women in rural areas, and particularly areas very dear to Mrs. Sarhan's heart, face even more compounded issues. More than 65 percent of rural women are illiterate, and educating them is often empowering them. Through programs supported by UNDP, and run by Mrs. Sarhan the goal is to educate as many women as possible to seize their rights and enfranchise them for elections.

"Education is key," said Mrs. Sarhan.

More than 4 million women are registered voters in Yemen, and more than a quarter of those voted in the Early Presidential Election of February 2012. It was much of the hard work of Mrs. Sarhan and the Women's Unit that propelled many women to the ballot boxes. A directed campaign through the Joint Electoral Assistance Programme and the project for Support to Elections during the Transitional Period targeted women with television, radio, billboards, bags, and outreach activities that were unseen and unheard of in previous electoral events. It was often men and women lumped into one category, Mrs. Sarhan said, and in a country like Yemen "women need to be empowered through direct, rather than indirect messaging."

Project aims to prepare Yemeni youths for future

By Maram Alabassi

This past week, the United Nations Development Programme paid a field visit to the Salim Al-Sabah School to see what participants in the Youth Economic Empowerment Project, in partnership with the For All Foundation, had achieved.

The For All Foundation had been working for a month and a half, training and supervising the youth's public works. A number of young men and women had been chosen to participate in the Youth Economic Empowerment Project, as a sample of youths perceived to be economically disenfranchised or unable to find employment.

This Youth Economic Empowerment Project aims to train and provide opportunities to desperate and hopeless youths, thereby enabling them to begin productively planning for their futures.

Yemen's Minister of Youth and Sports, Japan's Ambassador to Yemen, the Deputy of Sana'a's Mayoral Office, and UNDP Senior Country Director Gustavo Gonzalez accompanied the field visit and listened to the



Photo by Maram Alabassi

youth's comments about their planned future projects.

Through the project initiative, young women and men have received training and painted more than 10 schools and public places. During the meeting, the youths described ideas they had been developing in biweekly training sessions.

In the second phase of the project, their businesses ideas will be implemented using their own savings, the result of UNDP contributions. The project has engaged microfinance institutes which are ready to provide additional finances for the business ideas by way of loans.

Yemen's youth unemployment rate, which now sits at about 60%, represents an alarming reality for both government and society, and a significant challenge for a country in the midst of a trying transitional period.

Sabah Badri, the Chair of the For All Foundation, described the mechanism which is used to both create job opportunities and ensure that the jobs are lasting.

"Cash for work is a great strategy," said Badri. "These young people are given 2500 rials daily and they are only allowed to take out one thousand at most. This is done to teach them how to save."

Program participant Nojood Al-Khawlani said to the visitors, "This program has changed our way of thinking. We didn't know about saving, but now I can say that I am able to plan my future project, for a cafeteria, the right way."

The Japanese Ambassador told the National Yemen that "I am impressed, and my reaction is positive. I enjoyed the visit and encourage the program because it provides further job opportunities."



Photo by Maram Alabassi



With still months away, preparations for Yemen's February elections are underway. An electronic voter registration system will be used and though these school children won't be participating in the 2014 parliamentary and Presidential elections, they have already begun learning about the process. How will the country be sure that when Yemenis go to the polls—in the first full elections since the 2011 uprising—each vote is counted? Turn to Page 3 for more.

Electronic voting system coming to Yemen

Mohammed Al-Hamadi

Thousands of school children in the capital of Sana'a are learning about the new electronic voting system for future national and presidential elections. Propaganda of the technology says that an electronic system, as opposed to the manual system used now, will be used in Yemen as it transitions to democracy.

The computerized system is said to be implemented in Sana'a, and proponents say it will make the process more secure and eliminate the risk of fraud.

The data is entered into a computer and a photo of the voter is taken, along with his or her fingerprints, electronically. The system uses scanners, digital cameras, fingerprint recognition software, and computers, biometric data for electronic registration for elections and national head Mohammed Al-Hamadi said.



Yemeni school children learned first hand how the new electronic system would work.

and female students from Rabeeh Al-Adwiah and Baghdad Schools played the role of voters. Twelve teachers and 10 students from the computer science department of Sana'a University evaluated the devices for performance, El-Eryani said.

Representatives of the three international companies from France, Belgium, and the

When the Yemeni government fell short of the sum needed, the United Nations and other donor countries stepped in to provide funding.

UNDP elections coordinator Darren Nance told Yemen Times that Yemen is the first Arab country to implement the electronic registration system.

By using fingerprints, the system will help guard against fraud.

Aref Al-Anesi said that though fingerprints and iris scans cannot be forged, those who insert the data can manipulate the system. Fingerprints can be registered to a deceased person, allowing underage and other unqualified people to cast votes.

However, Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) spokesperson Mohammed Al-Mansour said that mistrust of



Though not without its faults, electronic voter registration will be used in Yemen as the country transitions into a democratic system.




Innovative

3x6

APPROACH

YOUTH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROJECT



1

Inclusiveness

1

Engaging in rapid employment for youth and women

2

Generating income

2

Ownership

1

Promote savings

2

Fastening

3

Sustainability

1

Investing in business ideas

2

Accessing market











Bringing innovation to
youth employment generation:

The **3x6 Approach** *Inclusiveness, Ownership and Sustainability* in Yemen

3x6 has been successfully implemented in post-conflict Burundi over the past years with the support from the Japanese Government. The UNDP "Youth Economic Empowerment Project" is implementing this new approach in Yemen.

In Yemen the approach has been tailored to contribute to **conflict prevention** by addressing demands by youth for immediate and **sustainable employment** through implementation of three main components: Phase 1 Inclusiveness - income generation and building of capital by youth through rapid employment activities. During this first phase (2-6 month), participants receive **business development training** twice a week in complement to their income-generating

activity (e.g. public works). Half - two thirds of the **income will be saved** and deposited into saving accounts at micro-finance institutions with whom YEEP is partnering. Phase 2 Ownership - begins during the period of temporary employment, individuals are encouraged to initiate a business plan, or to form a group with others in joint ventures for the **implementation of a sustainable economic activity**. Phase 3 Sustainability - the individual's/group's saved capital is tripled through a grant. A feasibility study will confirm that any proposed project ideas are economically viable and access to a local market is ensured. UNDP thus provides **micro-SME's** with investment support and facilitates **market expansion**.

3x6 Approach *for Sustainable Employment Creation*

1 Inclusiveness

- Rapid employment creation for youth and women
- Stimulate local economy and contribute to economic recovery
- Immediate peace dividends

- 1 Engaging
- 2 Generating income

2 Ownership

- Promote savings - a key element of the approach
- Access opportunities
- People as actors of their own development
- Business Creation

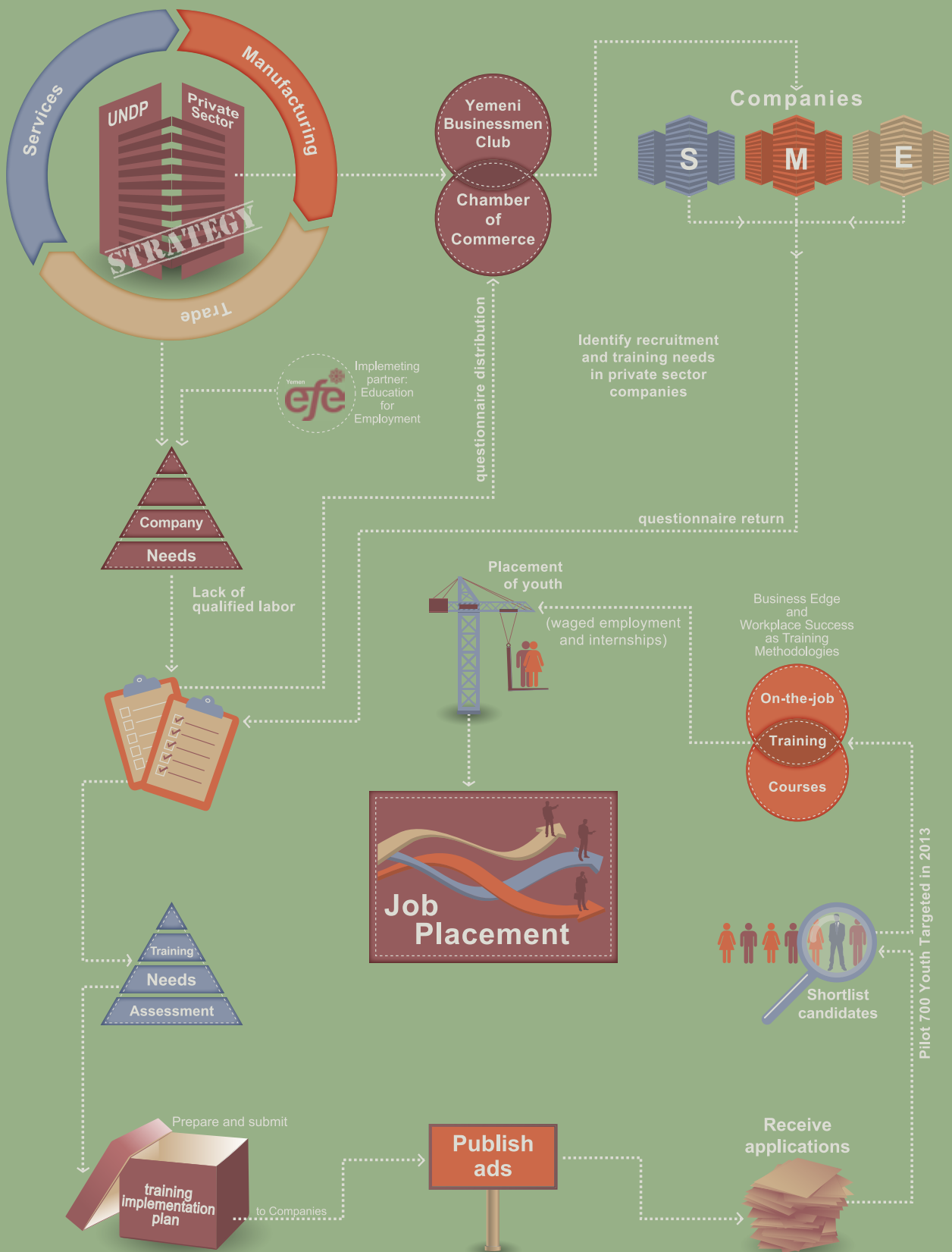
- 3 Saving
- 4 Business Venturing

3 Towards Sustainability

- Make informed choices
- Create sustainable jobs
- Private sector engagement
- Resilience, Conflict Prevention and Sustainable Livelihoods

- 5 Investing
- 6 Accessing Markets

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





UNDP YEMEN: Innovative Approach Launched to Support Youth Employment, National Stability

The Government of Yemen, through its Youth Economic Empowerment Project (YEEP) implemented with support from UNDP and the Government of Japan, launched the "3x6 approach" on 30th of December, aiming to create sustainable employment for young disadvantaged Yemenis.

The project was named after its structure as it has three main milestones; each has two sub components making up the 3x6 conception. The three milestones of the approach are stabilization, ownership and sustainability. It will be implemented for the first time in Yemen in partnership with For All Foundation, a Yemeni national NGO. This approach has been tailored to be consistent with the Yemeni context targeting youth in particular. As UNDP has successfully implemented this approach in Burundi as a response to the war grievances aimed at the economic integration of the conflict-affected

tripled by a loan, supported by UNDP. UNDP thus provides projects with investment support and facilitates market expansion. A feasibility study, in cooperation with Al-Amal Bank, will be conducted to confirm that any proposed project ideas are economically viable and access to a local market is ensured.

"Yemen is witnessing a new era and the inclusion of youth in development and in economy is very essential to ensure a successful transition," says Dr. Mohammed Saeed Al-Sadi, the Minister of Planning and International Cooperation.

The project aims at supporting the economic recovery of the country as it is part of the nation's transition process. "Creating employment opportunities for youth is not only a matter of economic growth, it is also a question of stability," says Caroline Lensing-Hebben, the Chief Technical Advisor of the project. Reigniting economic growth, generating employment, providing tangible improvements in livelihoods are prerequisites for a successful transition in Yemen and will contribute directly to conflict prevention.

The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and the Capital Secretary of Sana'a patronized, and attended the launch, along with some 70 beneficiary youth to mark the kick start of the new-born model.

The project aspires to socially and economically empower disadvantaged youth and women in Sana'a, Taiz and Aden on technical, entrepreneurial, managerial and confidence building skills.



Support to elections during the transitional period



MDBF

*Multi-Donors Basket Fund
in support of Elections in Yemen*



Within just 45 days from the signing of the GCC Agreement in November 2011, UNDP was able to assist the national body in charge of the elections – the Supreme Commission on Elections and Referendum – and establish a Multi-Donors Basket Fund (MDBF) to conduct the elections and support Yemenis in their transition to democracy.

The Photos

UNDP-JAPAN
Partnership in Yemen

Japan present in the field to support youth
employment generation in Yemen



BRIDGING THE GAP



BRIDGING THE GAP



BRIDGE THE GAP



BRIDGE THE GAP



TACKLE THE ROOT



TACKLE THE ROOT



TACKLE THE ROOT



TACKLE THE ROOT



TACKLE THE ROOT



TACKLE THE ROOT



FOSTER INNOVATION





Elections Support for Enabling Change



ENABLING CHANGE



ENABLING CHANGE



MDBF

Ministry of Education and Higher Education
Saudi Arabia
Ministry of Education and Higher Education
Saudi Arabia



MDBF

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ENABLING CHANGE

