



EQUAL
ACCESS

Inform. Educate. Inspire



EMPOWERING YEMENI YOUTH

"Young people should be at the forefront of global change and innovation. Empowered, they can be key agents for development and peace. If, however, they are left on society's margins, all of us will be impoverished. Let us ensure that all young people have every opportunity to participate fully in the lives of their societies."

Nelson Mandela

Equal Access is committed to informing, educating and inspiring youth. This is particularly crucial in a country such as Yemen, which has a high level of youth unemployment and limited positive social outlets for young people. Although Yemeni youth constitute almost 50% of the population, youth struggle to find their voice and face limited opportunities for expression when they do.

Equal Access has designed an innovative project combining radio programming and mobilized action to educate youth about their rights, provide a forum for them to express their views and empower them with tools, knowledge and encouragement to become engaged and active citizens. As young women in Yemen are particularly marginalized, Equal Access has committed to ensuring that 40% of the youth participating in such activities as trainings and youth listening and discussion groups are female and that girls' and women's issues are represented throughout all activities such as the community forums and radio and documentary series. Additionally, to further ensure that marginalized voices are heard, Equal Access is now reaching youth in governorates that reside further outside major urban centers.

Through this RIGHTS initiative, supported by the U.S. Department of State, Office of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), Yemeni youth are learning how to effectively contribute to the ongoing national dialogue and build their capacity to exercise their rights effectively through such activities as youth leadership and Community Reporter trainings, community roundtable forums, a youth Changemaker video documentary series, video production trainings, a national youth radio series and facilitated youth listening and discussion groups. Below we are excited to share with you in more detail about these important activities.

Youth Leadership Trainings



*Leadership Training
participant in Sana'a*

"I learned how to be a leader since my job requires leadership skills. I am responsible for my neighborhood, and from the training, I learned how to make decisions, distribute tasks, plan and manage time."

Leadership Trainee from Taiz

Youth leaders from six governorates are being trained to become local or national level youth leaders. Some of the main objectives of the leadership trainings include encouraging and empowering youth by providing leadership and other skills that will promote and enhance the quality of life for themselves, their communities and the country,

enhance awareness and discussion regarding the social, economic and environmental issues they face, and address the achievement gap among youth by developing their leadership skills so they are better prepared to work in partnership with adults.

Key topics covered in these trainings include management skills, leadership ethics, regional and international perspectives and managing conflicts. To enhance the participation of youth, trainings include multiple interactive sessions, group work, role playing, games and relevant leadership films. Results from pre- and post-tests following the trainings continue to support that these trainings are having a positive impact on participants. These successful trainings are also being featured and highlighted in local media, including newspapers and online new sites.



Leadership Training discussion session in Sana'a

Youth Community Reporter Training

"I am so grateful to Equal Access because they gave me this opportunity. It is very challenging to be a girl in my community and to go around and interview males. Even my father did not agree at the beginning, but when I insisted, he allowed it, but he also said, "Do not make any mistakes." I worked very hard and developed many relationships. Now everyone knows me and respects me. I really love this job."

Female Community Reporter Trainee



Community Reporter in action

Equal Access trains Community Reporters in radio production techniques and local audio collection, as well as basic journalism skills such as what an interview is, what makes a good vox pop and reporting ethics on neutrality. Through these trainings, youth learn the power of expression and access to the public sphere to create change in their communities, and ultimately, their country. Community Reporters serve to safeguard freedom of expression for all, including young women and other marginalized groups, through access to local and national radio.

.Community Roundtable Forums

Equal Access' Community Roundtable Forums provide an additional avenue for youth to participate as engaged citizens. Equal Access' Youth Leadership trainees participate in designing and organizing these forums within their own communities. These events include a panel discussion and debate, bringing together community leaders, religious leaders, active youth groups, various political parties and NGOs within the districts to discuss topics identified by the participants. These forums help to generate awareness about what is going on at the national level and also help local participants, particularly youth, understand how their needs (social, political and economical) fit within the national dialogue and what they can do to ensure their input.

Youth “Changemaker” Video Documentary Series



Equal Access is producing a series of short Changemaker videos highlighting inspiring, positive stories of Yemeni youth, many who come from different backgrounds and have worked to initiate constructive changes in their communities and society. These youth may be working on issues ranging from political actions to youth advocacy. These videos are aired by local and national television channels and widely distributed through DVDs, YouTube, Facebook and other social networking sites.

Among some of the inspiring people chosen to be featured for a Changemaker video is Muna – a direct beneficiary of Equal Access’ programs. Once illiterate, Muna was inspired by Equal Access’ programs and worked to change the direction of her life, pursued her education and participated in life and leadership skills trainings. However, Muna didn’t stop there. She formed her own radio listening group and conducted regular facilitation sessions to educate her female peers on important issues raised by the radio programs. Today, Muna has succeeded in enrolling girls from her village into school and has learned various technical skills to support her community members.

Basic and Advanced Video Production Training

Equal Access designed a video production training for youth interested in this field in order to build their capacity to work on short documentary films. These trainings include the concepts of audio-visual production with the use of equipment such as a video camera, microphones, lights and editing software. Trainings are divided into two phases, basic training and an advanced training for short documentary film production. In a recent training, 50% of the trainees were women.



Equal Access Video Production trainees with their trainer and Equal Access Program Officer

Production and Broadcast of National Radio Series

Equal Access is leveraging its unprecedented access to the airwaves and established listening audience to create a national and interactive conversation through the youth-produced radio series *Let’s Be the Best Together*. These radio episodes are broadcast through seven national and local broadcasting stations and educates youth about such topics as legal rights, human and civil rights, early marriage, economic development and youth, and racial discrimination. Youth who are part of Equal Access’ Community Reporter trainings also contribute to the audio content of the radio.

In keeping with Equal Access’ commitment to direct community engagement, SMS polling of youth opinions relating to the radio episodes is being conducted to provide real-time feedback. Equal Access is also utilizing social media and updating it with the radio episodes as they are broadcast, which is garnering significant traffic.

Youth Listening and Discussion Group Meetings

Youth listening and discussion groups provide a unique outlet and forum for youth to listen to Equal Access’ radio programs and then share their views on importance issues that affect their lives and their country with a trusted group of peers. Discussing how these issues impact their daily lives, these groups will also identify local actions they can take to make positive changes within

their communities. Trainings are conducted for a select group of youth who will facilitate these meetings and ensure that all participants have an opportunity to share.

Equal Access is Empowering Yemeni Youth to Make a Difference

Through the RIGHTS initiative, Equal Access is providing information, education and training to empower the voices of Yemeni youth and build their capacity so that they can more effectively contribute to the ongoing national dialogue and play a pivotal role as engaged citizens helping to make Yemen a more participatory society. Since this initiative has been started, over 2,000 listening and discussion group meetings have taken place, over 6,600 youth participants have been involved, with 50% of participants initiating civic engagement projects, and 90% of listeners surveyed noting that Equal Access' radio program created a positive impact, including greater support for female education and raising the legal marriage age.

With your generous support, together we can continue to make a difference in the lives of Yemeni youth!