



## > Yemen

# Enhancing Opportunities for Young People

CHF International's programs in Yemen focus on empowering young people by providing them with critical opportunities to stay in school, enhance their skills, and compete in the job market in a safe and sustainable way.

Many children from low-income families in countries throughout the Middle East and Africa suffer from inadequate access to flexible, low-cost and appropriate educational opportunities, putting them at risk of entering into exploitive labor situation. In addition, many "at-risk" youth are often drawn into illegal, fundamentalist, or tribal activities that contribute to instability and prevent young people from developing their skills for long-term employment. In response, CHF International has been working in Yemen to address these issues through unique programs that are investing in youth.

### Improving Access to Education

**Alternatives to Combat Child Labor through Education and Sustainable Services in the Middle East and North Africa (ACCESS-MENA)** was a four-year program specifically assinged to decrease the number of working young children and increase their numbers in school. A range of efforts focused on addressing both the direct and indirect causes that expose children to the worst forms of child labor.

ACCESS-MENA created awareness raising campaigns that mobilized the entire community, including families, civil society organizations, local sheikhs, Imams of mosques, and others on the issue of child labor and child trafficking that resulted in a wide coverage of child labor issues within the media and allowed for more open discussions amongst the public. The program also focused its efforts on training a large number of teachers creating a positive impact on students performance and retention as evidenced by the school records. School personnel were often overwhelmed by the magnitude of the problems in the public



Working with organizations, local governments, and low-income families, CHF International's ACCESS-MENA programs is helping to keep thousands of boys and girls in schools and out of the worst forms of child labor.

school system and sometimes did not know of alternatives or how to effect change. The project's many interventions have given them a different perspective on how these challenges could be addressed with changing methodologies and a few resources, including the creation of teaching aids from natural materials and remedial education opportunities for struggling students. Remedial education has become widely accepted by officials as a method that could be adopted on a larger scale and there was a commitment from the local authorities to continue and build on the system.

### ACCESS-MENA's specific objective was:

- > to withdraw 2,725 children from exploitive labor situations and prevent 3,005 children from entering into in-appropriate child-labor; and

### ACCESS-MENA was able to:

- > successfully withdraw 2,818 children and prevented 4,949 children from child-labor.

The ACCESS-MENA program is funded by the **United States Department of Labor** under the Child Labor Education Initiative. CHF International is proud to work with our partners in the Yemen program: **Charitable Society for Social Welfare**, **AMIDEAST**, and **Kidz Online**.

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### Continuing Improved Access to Education

The **Alternatives to Combat Child Labor through Education and Sustainable Services-Plus in Yemen (ACCESS-Plus)** program of Yemen will withdraw 4,100 children from the worst forms of child labor (WFCL) and **prevent 3,000 children** from entering WFCL, and provide them education and life developing services, in the governorates of Al Hudaydah, Taiz, Hajja and Aden. In addition, ACCESS-Plus will create a critical mass of awareness, support, and action within Yemen needed for a national effort to eliminate the acceptability of child labor in Yemeni society.

To achieve the ACCESS-Plus goal, CHF will:

- > Create Community Leadership Committees (CLCs) in each governorate in building sustainable support for the children through an outreach program and a national campaign to eliminate child labor;
- > Create safe employment opportunities for older children withdrawn from WFCL;
- > Upgrade facilities in 24 schools to allow for special resources and counseling needed for withdrawn children; and
- > Expand from 215 to 450 of the number of religious Imams who regularly support anti-child labor efforts during Friday services.

### Empower Citizenry

The immediate goal of the **Engaging Media and Civil Rights Activists in Rights-based issues in Yemen (EMCAR)** program, funded by the US State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL), is to increase the capacity of Yemeni media and civil society organizations (CSOs) to identify, address, and engage the public around social issues related to the rights of women and children. This will ultimately lead to the program's long-term goal of raising public awareness on these issues to empower citizenry to improve the status of women and children throughout the country.

The program focuses on three main objectives to increase the capacity of Yemeni media and CSOs:

- > enhance the ability of national and local media to provide accurate and gender-sensitive reporting;
- > develop the advocacy and leadership skills of CSOs, with a specific emphasis on engaging the media to disseminate their messages; and
- > promote national and local media campaigns on social issues to empower CSOs to disseminate their messages.

By the end of the program, 450 journalists, editors, and producers will be trained in advanced reporting methods on social issues, 60 CSO participants will be trained to engage the media, and 8 media campaigns will be implemented by CSOs.



In July 2005, 353 youth celebrated their graduation from YEDI's program, having completed training and apprenticeships in a range of areas including journalism, graphic design, sales, and marketing.

### Developing Youth Entrepreneurship

In 2005, CHF International's **Youth Economic Development Initiative (YEDI)** worked to increase employment opportunities for more than **500 young people** in the capital city of Sana'a by:

- > developing the necessary skills of young men and women to succeed in business and entrepreneurial activities;
- > promoting the development of employable skills;
- > facilitating the growth and development of micro-enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); and
- > enhancing the quality of life for youth in Yemen.

The program has established a Business Enterprise Center (BEC) through which young people can access vocational and computer training and other resources to develop their entrepreneurial skills. The BEC serves as a hub where young men and women can connect and liaise with successful business owners and trainers.

Supported by the **Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)** under the U.S. Department of State, and in cooperation with the **Girls World Communication Center (GWCC)**, the YEDI program has helped hundreds of young people enhance their business skills and gain valuable economic opportunities, while paving the way for future economic reform initiatives in Yemen specifically, and throughout the Middle East.