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**Middle East Educations, Research,  
Training, and Support (MEERS)**

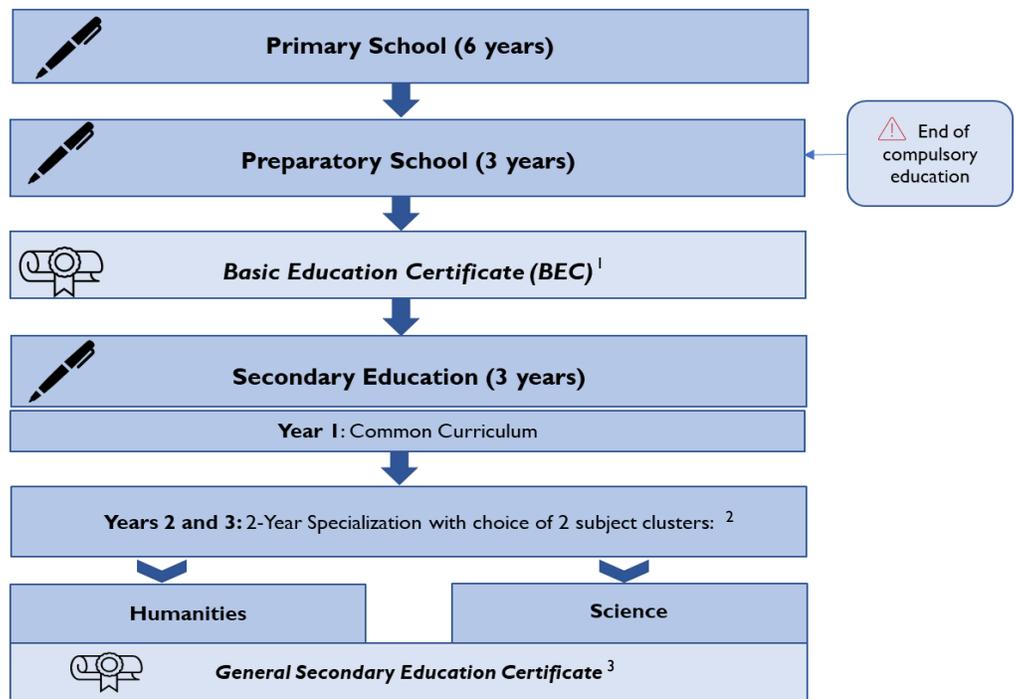
 **YEMEN**

**SECONDARY SCHOOL TRANSITION SNAPSHOT**

This brief is part of a larger study investigating interventions that support lower and upper secondary school aged youths' transition through school to higher education (HE), to technical and vocational training (TVET), and/or to prepare youth (including out of school youth of secondary school age) to pursue career and livelihood pathways in 11 selected countries across the MENA region. This research does not examine the quality of education, but rather, the knowledge and skills needed to make successful transitions. Therefore, this study focuses on support that wraps around general and technical education curricula.

**PROGRESSION AND DECISION-MAKING POINTS**

**GENERAL EDUCATION**



**TECHNICAL EDUCATION.** TVET programs begin at the upper secondary level (Grade 10) and include two- or three-year vocational programs, which offer training in the fields of industry, engineering, commerce, business, agriculture, and crafts. The three-year vocational secondary program provides access to a post-secondary technical program at a community college for two or three years offering training in different fields, including Information Technology, industry, commerce, agriculture, hotel and tourism, etc.<sup>4</sup> In addition to

these “formal” TVET training opportunities, there are “non-formal” training, which are any training outside the above progression through formal TVET, including short-term courses and dual training (theoretical and practical) that combine training at a TVET institution and in the workplace. The TVET sector is nascent compared to other countries in the region, as The Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training was only established in 2001. As noted in the key statistics below, **as of 2016, less than one percent of Yemeni**

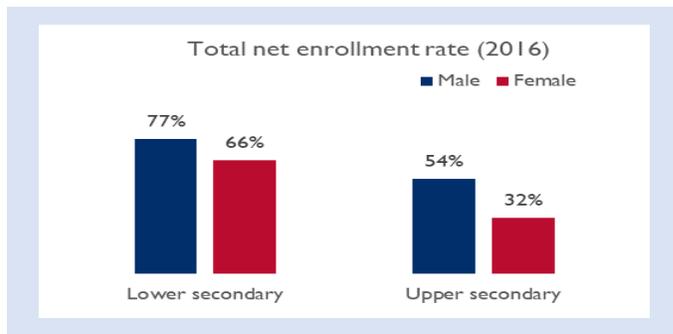
students are participating in Vocational education.<sup>5</sup>

**CAREER COUNSELING.** An assessment of the challenges faced by the young people of Yemen in their transition from education to employment conducted in 2013 by Mercy Corps found that there were very few resources focused on career guidance, and those identified operated exclusively at the university level.<sup>6</sup> Young people felt that schools did not give them the skills demanded by employers and they had no guidance on how to enter the labor market.<sup>7</sup> The assessment suggested that NGOs could assist universities with training university staff to ensure students have some guidance on available jobs, interview techniques, building a CV. The study also suggested that NGOs could support the creation of offices of career services in schools and build on previous experience, *Engaging Youth for Stability in Yemen (EYSY)*, in developing mentoring and job readiness workshops and curricula.<sup>8</sup>

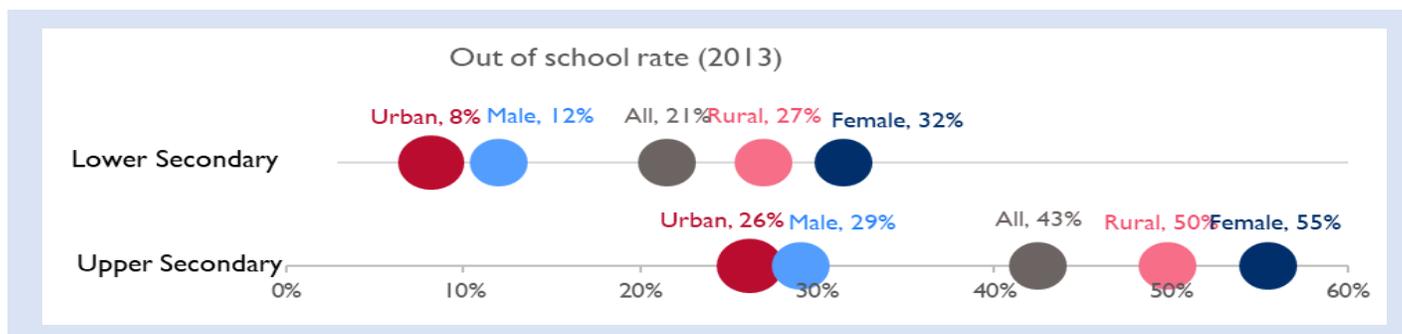
Career guidance in vocational education is provided by projects that involve international donors and funding, in an effort to increase employability of Yemeni workforce. For example, the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) has been involved in some career guidance activities. There is a good example of a video on YouTube: [Career Guidance and Labor Market Orientation for School Students – Aden, Yemen](#). Another example is the Yemeni Leaping into Working Life program, detailed in the intervention list below. The career guidance element is small in scale and specific to the project and will have little impact on the education system unless it is scaled up and institutionalized.

**KEY STATISTICS.** Despite a humanitarian crisis and turbulent economy, about 90 percent of Yemen's schools are reported to be open, with the government trying to continue the education of over 5 million children and

youth, 73 percent of the student population.<sup>9</sup> For the students who are able to get to school, there may not be a teacher there to greet them. Over 170,000 teachers, or two-thirds of the teaching workforce countrywide, have not received a regular wage for four years. As a result, many teachers have changed careers, leaving a teacher shortage in places like Dhubab.<sup>10</sup> As of 2016, there were over 20 percent more boys and 30 percent more girls enrolled in lower secondary school compared to upper secondary. Upper secondary school girls have the lowest net enrollment rate at only 32 percent.<sup>11</sup> The out-of-school rates, which date from before the civil war, show a similar trend where rural and female students appear to be the two most disadvantaged groups with upper secondary out-of-school rates of 50 and 55 percent, respectively.<sup>12</sup>



**TVET STATISTICS.** According to data from 2016, vocational education is not widespread in Yemen with less than 1 percent of Yemeni students are participating in vocational programs.<sup>13</sup>



Numerous **systems-wide factors impact youth transitions and the interventions designed to support youth through this period.** Notable strengths and weaknesses related to the general and technical education systems include:



## Strengths and Weaknesses of General and Technical Education Systems

### Strengths



Yemen has a strong diaspora in Saudi Arabia that provides significant remittance and support to the education system through NGOs, though remittances are not evenly distributed across the country.



TVET is a promising sector and many donors such as UNDP, GIZ and ILO are investing in revitalizing this sector.

### Weaknesses



Civil war is draining the country's resources and creating setbacks in government and donors' efforts to improve education.



Significant damage to educational infrastructure and human resources, thousands of schools have been destroyed, partially damaged, or utilized for non-educational purposes. Teaching staff have been irregularly paid since 2016, resulting in significant dropout of the profession.<sup>14</sup>



High unemployment rate increases dependency on donors and remittances.

Macro-environment factors impact the lived experiences and decision-making of secondary-aged youth, including the political and economic context, conflict/crisis, demographics, environmental constraints, etc. A selection of key factors include:



## Opportunities and Threats of the Macro-Environment

### Opportunities



Promising agriculture (coffee and honey) and fishery sectors could absorb large numbers of youth — if TVET sector is matched to these opportunities.



Investing in green energy is also promising given Yemen's solar energy potential, but education and training need to be tailored to match this opportunity.



Potential for home-based technology repair (i.e., cell phone repair) could be a space for women-run small businesses, if opportunities for training are provided.

### Threats



“Brain drain” — talented teachers and educators have fled during the civil war.



Common use of Khat (an Arabian shrub with leaves that act as a stimulant when chewed) is a destructive and costly social norm that impacts the performance of students and teachers.



The Hothi-Sunia divide is manifested in almost all aspect of Yemeni life including curricula, teachers' mobility and students' livelihood opportunities.



Yemen ranks 155 out of 156 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index, which assesses progress towards gender parity.<sup>15</sup>

## **Interventions targeting the secondary school age group in Yemen focus on:**

**EDUCATION, LEARNING & VOCATIONAL TRAINING.** Interventions focused on student supplies for education and reconstruction of schools. Programs aimed to develop career guidance as a subject offered to secondary level students and for vocational training subjects to focus on employability skills and entrepreneurship. Programs aim at strengthening resiliency and quality of the education system.

**ADOLESCENT & YOUTH RESILIENCY, PROTECTION & PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT.** Programs aimed to build youth resiliency to cope with the impact of the civil war and to enable them to pursue livelihood activities. This was done through formal and informal education and vocational training, by offering psychosocial services — such as helping youth develop positive coping mechanisms. Programs also identified and enrolled children in accelerated learning, self-learning, remedial learning spaces, or non-formal education for children in high-risk areas who could not otherwise continue in school.

**SKILLS, TRAINING & LIVELIHOODS.** Programs provided stability, peacebuilding, livelihood opportunities and protection for vulnerable groups. This included developing community groups, such as, the “Father and Mother Councils,” which function like Parent-Teacher Associations. Programs also offered courses to develop life skills, employability, communication, leadership, and resume writing.

The following tables provide a non-exhaustive **list of general education and TVET-focused interventions targeting secondary school aged youth in Yemen.** *Several programs noted below ended in the past decade, and the implementation of current programming has been challenged by the conflict in Yemen.*

## **KEY GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION AND FOUNDATIONAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS**

### **Empowering Yemeni Youth towards Peace, UNESCO & UN Peacebuilding Fund**

- Using an inclusive and participatory approach, the project aims to empower youth with the skills, knowledge, and tools to create information, content, and dialogue in support of peace building. In practice, the program strengthened youth access to information — through safe spaces for dialogue — including online and on the radio, which increased their knowledge and ability to make informed decisions.
- 18-month program ended in 2019.<sup>16</sup>

### **MENA Youth Employment Strategy (MENA-YES), U.S. Department of Labor**

- Program built linkages with private sector to determine needed skills, then provided demand-driven training, which covered financing, market development, business management, and entrepreneurship, to prepare youth for specific labor opportunities.
- Provided both technical training and work-based apprenticeship and internship placements and connected youth with credit opportunities.
- Not exclusively focused on secondary aged youth, targets youth ages 15–25, but emphasized women and disadvantaged youth.
- Operated by Global Communities in Jordan, Lebanon, and Yemen between 2013-2016.<sup>17</sup>

### **UNDP Yemen Livelihood and Protection UNDP**

- Enhanced peacebuilding efforts and provided livelihoods and protection opportunities.
- Targeted the most vulnerable groups (not exclusively secondary school aged youth) in Aden and Lahj Governorates by providing them with livelihood opportunities, protection mechanisms, vocational training and small in-kind grants to start micro-businesses in their communities. Also supported people who were traumatized due to the conflict by providing protection means, capacity building, and psychosocial support.
- Program operated 2016-2019.<sup>18</sup>

### **USAID Gateway to Education**

- Supports four key areas: safe and equitable access to education; improved teaching and learning; improved facilities and supplies; and strengthening institutional capacities.
- Includes development of father and mother councils to engage parents/guardians in basic education students' academic success.
- Program operating 2019-2024.<sup>19</sup>

### **USAID Yemen Basic Education/ Emergency Crisis Response Project, with United National Children's Fund**

- Aims to increase enrollment in schools, ensure an environment conducive to learning, support children in high-risk areas to continue their education — including a back-to-school campaign, and includes measures to help children overcome trauma and ensure that schools remain safe spaces for children.
- Program operated 2016-2020<sup>20</sup>

### **USAID School Doors**

- Supports getting out-of-school children back in school, through accelerated learning and remedial learning spaces, and nonformal education options.
- Program operated 2018-2021.<sup>21</sup>

## **KEY GENERAL SECONDARY-LEVEL TVET AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS**

### **Yemen Leaping into working life, GIZ**

- Supports the Ministry of Education in developing careers education as part of the curriculum for secondary level students to be offered in future.
- Focuses on a range of vocational subjects, including employability skills and entrepreneurship.
- Offers agricultural training for girls to enable them to generate income from related small-scale enterprises.
- Program operated 2015-2020.<sup>22</sup>

### **USAID ECONOMIC RECOVERY & LIVELIHOODS PROGRAM (ERLP)**

- Multi-faceted program, which includes activities that support macroeconomic stabilization and enhancing private-sector competitiveness enhancement.
- Builds on Yemen Economic Stabilization and Success (YESS) Program, which expanded employment opportunities for youth (not exclusively secondary school age), through job creation and placement and livelihood support.
- Program operating 2020-2023.<sup>23</sup>

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