



**REPUBLIC of YEMEN**

**NATIONAL CONSULTATION WDR-2007  
And  
VOICES OF THE YOUTH: MENA YOUTH SPEAK**

Sana'a 13 and 14 February 2006

Organized and sponsored by SFD in Yemen in cooperation with



World Bank

## List of acronyms in alphabetical order

RH	Reproductive Health
SFD	Social Fund for Development
VT	Vocational Training
WB	World Bank
WDR	World Development Report
YER	Yemeni Rials, the local currency in Yemen (1 USD = 196 YER)

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## Summary of the Results and Deliberations

This report covers the results and the deliberations of two separate consultations of a one day each held in Sana'a, Yemen. The aim of the two consultations was to provide young Yemeni men and women with an opportunity and a venue to voice their opinions and perspectives on the pressing issues they face. The experiences, aspirations, reflections and priorities of young women and men raised during the two consultations will be documented in the WDR 2007, and will thus serve as an advocacy tool as well as a policy recommendation guide, helping national policymakers and international donors identify priority areas for youth-focused programs and operations.

The total number of participants in both consultations was 40 young men and women (aged 15 to 24 years) representing all the governorates of the Republic of Yemen. The participants were selected from diverse different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds across Yemen, paying specific attention to gender; disability; varying levels of educational backgrounds; most importantly youth who are hard to reach and vulnerable. The rural-urban, north and south contrasts were also highlighted in the participant selection.

The workshop started by self introduction of the WB staff, the facilitator and the participants as icebreaker. This was followed by agreeing on ground rules among the participants for the consultation to promote cooperation and foster teamwork among the participants.

During the two days national consultations, the youth have worked in small groups to discuss and share their main concerns and constraints they face ranging from: (i) lack of job opportunities for youth due to poor quality of education, non-responsive formal education system and vocational training, and due to corruption and nepotism and the influence of connections; (ii) lack of space to spend their leisure time; (iii) the high cost of marriage due to family demands for huge amount of money as a dowry; (iv) the low school enrolment and early dropouts particularly for girls in rural areas due to lack of separate schools for girls and severe shortage in female teachers; and (v) the social and educational barriers facing disabled. These concerns and constraints were portrayed by the participants in their individual interviews which are attached as an annex to this report.

The participants have also revealed their current coping mechanisms to deal with these constraints, and came up with suggested solutions to the challenges they face, but these solutions are beyond their reach.

The participants considered the two day consultation an opportunity to express their aspirations, and would like the World Bank (WB) to reflect them in the WDR 2007. Hoping that their needs and concerns will be mainstreamed within the WB development policy and practice for a better future for them and for generations to come.

## **1. Objective and Agenda**

The ultimate objective of the grassroots consultation is to listen to the voices of Yemeni youth and to highlight the experiences of youth without voice. This consultation is related to the two strategically aligned World Bank (WB) processes:

1. Voices of Youth Initiative in MENA
2. Consultations for the World Development Report 2007

The 'Voices of the Youth' (VoY) initiative in MENA aims at providing young men and women in the region with an opportunity and a venue to voice their opinions and perspectives on the pressing issues they face. Guiding this initiative is the belief that unless we hear the experiences, aspirations, reflections and priorities of the young women and men of our region, we will fail to design sustainable development plans and effective policies. The report will thus serve as an advocacy tool as well as a policy recommendation guide, helping national policymakers and international donors identify priority areas for youth-focused programs and operations.

The workshop agenda, attached to annex 1, was drafted with the aim of achieving the workshop objectives.

## **2. Characteristics of the Participants**

Two separate consultations of one day each was held in Sana'a. The total number of participants in both consultations was 40 young people (21 persons in the first day and 19 in the second day) representing all the governorates of the Republic of Yemen. The participants aged 15 to 24 years were selected from diverse different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds across Yemen, paying specific attention to gender; disability; varying levels of educational backgrounds from vocational, formal and informal education; experience in development and community-based activities; most importantly youth who are hard to reach and vulnerable. The rural-urban, north and south contrasts were also highlighted in the participant selection.

### **3. Working Groups and Discussion Outlines**

Participants worked in small groups to discuss and share their experiences, challenges they face, aspirations, reflections and priorities, and to voice their opinions and perspectives on the pressing issues of the World Development Report WDR 2007.

Instructions were given to all group members to express their views openly and that their names will not be quoted. In this respect, it was stressed at the beginning of each discussion session and throughout the workshop that all concerns and views of constraints will be documented to reflect the perspective of the Yemeni youth.

#### **3.1 Youth's main concerns / constraints, available resources and solution**

In the first consultation (13 February) the participants worked in groups divided along gender lines, but in the second consultation (14 February) the male and female participants preferred to work in mixed gender. Each group discussed the main concerns and constraints youth face in Yemen, the kinds of resources they have for a better future, and the solutions youth can offer to the challenges facing them. The discussions were guided by the following three questions.

1. What are the main concerns and constraints young men and women face in Yemen?
2. What kind of resources do youth have for a better future?
3. What solutions can youth offer to the challenges they face?

#### **3.2 Youth's reflections on the five transitions in the WDR 2007**

Following the presentation of the WDR 2007, the participants worked in small groups on one or two of the following five transitions based on their preference.

1. TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL: CONTINUING TO LEARN BEYOND PRIMARY
2. TRANSITION TO A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE
3. TRANSITION TO FAMILY FORMATION
4. TRANSITION TO WORK
5. TRANSITION TO CITIZENSHIP

## **Annexes**

## Annex 1: Agenda during the two day consultation 13 & 14 Feb

8:00 - 8:30	<b>Registration, opening, and Introductions</b>
8:30 - 8:45	<b>Formation of focus groups</b> 5 groups of 5 young people will be formed. Each group decides on a reporter to take notes and one facilitator. {All members are encouraged to take down notes if they like, but one will be responsible to capture the main points of the discussions. The discussions will be recorded but the reporters' notes will be translated immediately -flip charts will be required for each group}
8:45 - 11:00	<b>In-depth FG discussion on the 3 questions</b> -- concerns and constrains; available resources and solutions to offer-- and group discussion to prioritize among the issues arise.
11:00 - 12:00	<b>Report to plenary on the prioritized issues and plenary discussion</b>
12:00 - 13:00	Lunch break
13:00 - 15:00	<b>Peer to peer Interviews</b>
15:00 - 15:15	Short break
15:15 - 15:30	<b>Presentation on the World Development Report</b>
15:30 - 16:30	<b>Working Groups on Key Themes / Transitions</b> Participants will split up in small groups to discuss the WDR transitions identified in "Annex D"
16:30 - 17:30	<b>Presentation of the Results of Discussions + Plenary Discussion</b> Each group will report back to the plenary with main outcomes of their discussion.
17:30 - 17:45	<b>WDR Survey</b> (self administered questionnaire)
17:45 - 18:00	<b>Evaluation of the workshop and concluding remarks</b>

## ANNEX 2. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY THE WORLD BANK TEAM

Good morning. We are very privileged to be working with the Yemen Social Fund for Development.

I want to welcome all of you on behalf of our team and tell you how very excited we all are to have this opportunity today to talk with you and hear your VOICES.

Our initiative is called VOICES OF THE YOUTH: MENA YOUTH SPEAK. This title, we believe, should and will reflect spirit of our discussions today and tomorrow. Therefore, I will keep my remark very short and will leave the floor to you.

Let me briefly introduce our project and the reasons why we have gathered here today. At the WB our job is to contribute to sustainable and equitable development of the countries we work in. In our region, the Middle East and North Africa, where 60 % of the population is under 30 years old, we know that the only way to achieve this goal is to INCLUDE YOUTH and address youth concerns in all of our policies and programs. But what we don't always know is what you, the young people, are facing in your lives, we don't know your concerns, your expectations, your experiences and what you would like to see happen in your lives.

It is this lack of knowledge and our need to learn, which is the main motivation for this exercise. Throughout today and tomorrow, we would like to hear you talk, discuss with your peers about your experiences, opportunities you may and may not have, and solutions you would like to see. We will carry these discussions in small groups and then individually.

At the end of the day, we will collect your voices and perspectives, organize them and include them in two major World Bank documents.

- The first is called Voices of the Youth and is part of a Regional Youth Strategy
- The second is the World Development Report which we will hear more about later
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We will also change all of your names to maintain your anonymity so please feel free to speak your minds – your real names will be changed in the final reports.

This is your opportunity to influence these very important documents and maybe to influence future policy.

In that spirit, please remember that there are no right answers or wrong answers to any of the questions we will be discussing today. We want to hear about your experiences no matter how small or big, no matter how successful or unsuccessful – all of your stories are valuable.

We are here to listen to you and will do our best to capture your **voices** loudly and clearly in the work we do here in Yemen and in the rest of the region.

## ANNEX 3a. RESULTS OF DISCUSSIONS OF WORKING GROUPS on 13 Feb

### Session 1: Concerns/constraints, available resources, and proposed solutions

In this session the participants were split into four small groups. Each group discussed the main concerns and constraints facing youth in Yemen, the kinds of resources they have for a better future, and the solutions youth can offer to the challenges facing them. The discussions were guided by the following three questions.

1. What **are the main concerns and constraints** young men and women in the region face?
2. What **kinds of resources do youth have** for a better future?
3. What **solutions can youth offer** to the challenges they face?

Instructions were giving to all group members to express their views openly and that their names will not be quoted. In this respect, it was stressed at the beginning of each discussion session and throughout the workshop that all concerns and views of constraints will be documented to reflect the perspective of the Yemeni youth.

### Results of discussions of group one

#### ☐ Concerns and constrains

- 1- Poverty: Low family income
  - youth labor and child labor.
  - university fee and expenses
- 2- Inflation
  - the high cost of living
  - the high cost of education (the cost of books stationeries)
  - lack of access to computers, electronics, and especially internet being the gateway to the new era
- 3- The Bribery (corruption) and nepotism the influence of contacts and connections
  - scholarships are sold and given to those who do not deserve.
  - civil service post are sold for money paid under the table
  - exam papers are secretly revealed before the exam date for those who pay money
  - falsifying exam results
  - accepting some students with low qualifications to enter into some academic studies that require high educational attainments
- 4- Poor public services and infrastructure:
  - a. The school
    - overcrowding (high number of students in one class) in urban schools
    - lack of school buildings in some areas, and lack of commitment of relevant authorities in constructing schools
    - old and ruined schools are not renovated or upgraded.
  - b. Teachers
    - shortage of male and female teachers, particularly in rural areas.
    - some teachers are assigned to teach subjects for which they were not qualified for or specialized in.
    - teachers overload students with heavy homework

- students are obliged to bring things beyond their financial ability.
- absence of talent in teaching

c. Health, electricity and transportation.

- lack of health facilities in most rural areas, and in existing health facilities there is shortage of staff, particularly female staff
- most rural areas in Yemen does not have public electricity supply
- poor roads make the trip to and from rural areas very difficult

5- Psychological aspect

- psychological frustration
- inundated traditional future plan for youth as illustrated in the following frame:

Study then start going to work then get married
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- interference of parents and relatives in youth decision without giving youth the opportunity to express themselves.

6- Leisure time

- youth do not have the opportunity to discover their talents
- there is no support for youth to show their creativity and innovation
- lack of sports clubs, cultural forums and cinemas
- low morality
- lack of theaters and cinemas.

As a result of the above factors, youth chew *qat* and smoke tobacco to spend their leisure time under the statement “how do we spend the time?”.

7- Family problems (i.e. divorce)

**□ Resources and Coping Mechanisms**

The way in which we deal with these constraints and the resource depends on the types of constraints and the circumstances in which they occur:

**a. Poverty**

- First of all, we seek refuge and support from God
- We seek support from a better off relative.
- We look for work
- We seek assistance charitable organizations

**b. Abusing the use of influential contacts and paying lubrication fee**

- No shelter to run to, because such behavior is done secretly and within the legal gaps in the law

**c. Public Services and infrastructure**

- Schools and teachers.
  - school administration (management).
  - education office.
  - the governorate.
- Health, electricity and transportation.
  - we go to the respective authorities

**d. Psychological frustration.**

- The relatives who has the influence on the cause of frustration within the family.
- A friend.

## □ **Suggested solutions**

- 1- Providing job opportunities for the youth by the state.
- 2- Effectively eliminate double posts and goats employees where an employee has more than one civil service post
- 3- Enacting critical penalties to put an end to bribery and abuse of contacts.
- 4- Qualifying teachers.
- 5- Training teacher in appropriate teaching techniques to make learning enjoyable.
- 6- Building more schools.
- 7- Provide the minimum standards of public services to the deprived areas
- 8- Raising family awareness through:
  - Using the media with various communication channels.
  - Field visits
- 9- Creating a suitable environment for youth innovation and talents starting from schools.
- 10- Building special places for creativity and innovation.

## Results of discussions of group two

### ❑ **Concerns and constrains**

- 1- The vital leisure time is not utilized, because summer activities such as supports are no longer held
- 2- Youth talents are not encouraged.
- 3- Tribal problems do not encourage students to continue studying.
- 4- Some youth could not continue studies because of their low income and the high cost of schooling.
- 5- Some youth are unable to reach better level due to political affiliation and contacts' influence
- 6- Family break-ups due of polygamy.

### ❑ **Resources**

- 1- At first we seek shelter and refuge from almighty God, and then we go to the Sheikh of the area or the parents, or businessmen who are able to solve the problem.
- 2- Seriousness, determination and self-reliance.

### ❑ **Solutions**

- 1- Taking things seriously and self-dependence.
- 2- Solving tribal problems in order to enable boys to continue schooling without interruption due to the conflicts
- 3- Arranging and resuming summer courses.
- 4- Creating job opportunities.
- 5- Responding positively to youth the needs (employment, schools, and qualified teachers particularly in rural areas).
- 6- Helping illiterate people to undergo literacy education
- 7- The group members suggest seeking help and looking for support from the respective development actors such as SFD and WB... etc.

## **Results of discussions of group three**

### **❑ The main problems**

- 1- Unemployment and lack of job opportunities
- 2- Financial circumstances to meet the costs of education.
- 3- Health problems that constrain youth's living conditions.
- 4- Frustration among youth due to lack of job opportunities.

### **❑ How to deal with such conditions**

- 1- The youth accept any job outside their field of work
- 2- Searching for a job even if it is on a daily pay

### **❑ To whom the youth can go to get assistance**

- 1- Using contacts as a mediation to solve this problem

### **❑ Solution**

- 1- Creating job opportunities for the youth each in his/her field.
- 2- The outputs of education must be according to market needs. At the moment university graduates are have not been able to find a job while universities and institutes still continue to teach the same courses
- 3- The state must help poor families to enable youth to continue university studies.
- 4- (Free education), because some youth are unable to pay the university fees

## Results of discussions of group four (Female Group)

### □ The main problems

#### 1- Girls Education

##### 1-1 Girls are not encouraged by their families to continue her education

- Traditions and customs (girls do not go out of their homes for education, and family discrimination between boys and girls).
- There are no schools for girls in some rural areas.
- Girls' early marriage (girls do not continue their education once they get married).

##### 1-2 General health for girls (girls' early marriage)

- High rate of births which leads to health deterioration.
- Taking and accepting family responsibilities very early.
- Sustained income generating is not available to improve girl's living conditions.
- The difficulties and constraints faced by handicapped girls due to:
  - lack of provision of a ramp in schools to enhance their mobility in the school and their integration within the education system
  - the stereotyped attitudes of the community towards disabled girls where some people sends negative criticisms, while other people look at disabled with sympathy, which undermines their ability and can undermine their confidence

### □ Solutions

#### 1- As far as education is concerned.

- Raising parents' awareness about the value of girls' education, and the need for equality between boys and girls.
- Obligating the concerned offices to fulfill the commitment in providing schools with books, curriculum, and qualified teachers

#### 2- Concerning health.

- Raising parents' awareness of the consequences of early marriage for the girl's health and mental status
- Implementing seminars and workshops, particularly in rural areas, to familiarize people with modern contraceptive methods

#### 3- Improving girls' income in YER/ month.

- Creating job opportunities for girls through legislation to pay particular attention to girls employment
- Taking the necessary measures to assist educated girls to find jobs.
- Encouraging handicrafts work and providing girls with needed materials.

#### 4- Disabled girls

- Obligating the concerned offices to have special ramp to improve the mobility of the disabled within the school.
- Raising people's awareness about handicapped, and how to deal with handicapped people.
- Creating job opportunities on condition that such vacancies can consider their cases particularly in rural areas.

## Session 2: Youth's reflections on the five transitions in the WDR 2007

### 1. TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL: CONTINUING TO LEARN BEYOND PRIMARY

The group discussed youth's concerns regarding the basic education (elementary and intermediate) as well as the constraints facing youth in secondary education.

#### Basic education

In basic education the problems encountered by youth as highlighted by the group include the followings:

1. Improve the current schoolbooks

How they are now	How they should be
Boring and static	It should be very interesting
Do not take into account the individual differences among students	The content of the schoolbooks should be up-to the level mental level of the students. At the same it should not undermine student's mental ability
Does not apply recent modern teaching	The book should contain recent terminologies

2. Provide qualified teachers and supply teaching aids and learning materials
3. Supply schools' libraries with various books
4. Organize cultural events and sports activities
5. Make school fieldtrips
6. Make open discussion lessons
7. Build friendly and well equipped school
8. Monitor and follow up talented students
9. Introduce and teaching English language from elementary classes.

#### Secondary education

The following challenges are faced in secondary education, which are a result of the problems encountered during basic education

Current status of secondary education	How it should be
There is no support to and encouragement to talented and outstanding students	guiding talented students towards the appropriate fields
Students do not know basic of computer	introducing computer courses as a compulsory subject
Students are not used to make the researches	students should be encouraged to make basic academic research
Students tend to memorize the topics without understanding and analyzing. Others tend to cheat during exams	Learning should be based on modern educational requirements.

## 2. TRANSITION TO A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Current risky behavioral practices	How to achieve a healthy lifestyle
Excessive spray of pesticide and insecticide on plants particularly on qat leaves leading to a potential risky to human health such as cancer in the throat. Youth, male and increasingly female, are chewing qat when doing their homework, studying for exams or during their leisure time. Besides this harmful practice, qat is quite expensive and it is bought at the expenses of other nutritional status	Putting proper solutions for non usage such harmful acids.
Materials are not sterilized	Sterilizing materials before being used such as shaving blade
Using medicine without a instructions from a doctor	Physicians should draw people attention not to use medicine without a prescription.
The high prevalence of bilharzias because of swimming in polluted water	Youth should be advised not to swim in stagnant polluted water, and should avoid defecation or urination in or near water sources.
Keeping youth away from means which cause moral delinquency, which leads to practicing illegal sex and destroying values and principles. Such behavior can cause serious diseases such as HIV/AIDS	Making best use of mass media and broadcasting moral programs and raising religious awareness
Health facilities are not available everywhere. Officials keep promising, but their promises do not always materialize	For example, an x- Minister of Health once put the foundation stone for the construction of a health unit (HU) around 10 years ago. To-date the HU has not yet been constructed
Fruits are not washed before eating	Fruits must be washed up before eating.

## 3. TRANSITION TO FAMILY FORMATION

### Current situation

- 1- Family formation differs from one place to another within the country. For example, there is a high prevalence of early marriage in rural areas. Such rates depend on socioeconomic conditions. Early marriage in cities is lower than in rural areas and that seems to be due to the fact that girls in urban areas continue their education.
- 2- Early marriage in rural areas has devastating effects on youth (boys and girls). Some of these effects include:
  - Damaging effect on the girl's health.
  - Low level of education and dropout of school, especially for girls.
  - A woman takes responsibility too early and she is not well prepared and unaware of what she has to do to care for the family.
  - The woman loses hope and can not improve her wellbeing, because she is not educated and thus not qualified to work.

### Proposed solutions

The government should take a number of measures to ensure that this situation is redressed. Such measures can include the followings:

- Exerting real efforts to create job opportunities for secondary female school leavers and offering them chances to join universities, in particular rural girls.
- Conducting awareness raising sessions and workshops for parents and local community members to promote girls right to education.
- Conducting training courses such as handicrafts, sewing, and designing clothes and literacy classes.

#### **4. TRANSITION TO WORK**

##### **□ Current constraints and their impact on youth:**

1. The high illiteracy rate and the low level of education
  - The low awareness among youth about their constitutional rights as stipulated in the laws
  - Limited job opportunities for youth
  - Youth are not able to join technical and vocational training institutes
2. Lack of vocational training institutes at district level

##### **□ What needs to be done?**

1. By the youth
  - To focus on their education and avoid school dropouts
  - To focus on building their capacities and their technical skills
2. By the local council
  - To build basic and secondary schools at village and district level
  - To setup technical institutes at district level
  - To increase and encourage investment that will create job opportunities
  - Provide job opportunities for youth according to their qualifications

#### **5. TRANSITION TO CITIZENSHIP**

1. Bringing up children in a way that will make them experience a sense of and loyalty to Yemen to become active citizens.
2. Building up the child personality with confidence and literal encouragement to be able to take decisions in order to build their self identity.
3. Bringing up children away from violence from their early age.
4. Keeping children away from tribal revenge
5. Parents should encourage their children to have freedom of speech and to express their opinions in a responsible way so that they can in future be able .
6. Building the child's personality to enable him to be able to take decisions and be self reliant.
7. Elections and voting should be promoted among children at basic schools and among youth at secondary schools. The democratic process should start at schools where students should be free to select their class leader.

During the plenary session, a number of critical issues were raised related to citizenship. The first issue is related to the current democratization process in Yemen and the need for its genuine reinforcement. Yemeni citizens currently enjoy free elections of their representatives for parliament at national level, and the elections of their representatives at local council level. However, there are currently no mechanisms for citizens including youth- to demand their rights for health, education and other constitutional rights. Moreover, there are no mechanisms to make officials accountable to fulfill their declared commitments. There is thus a need to learn from the experience of other countries in how officials and members of the local councils and citizens can communicate regularly to discuss issues and concerns.

## ANNEX 3b. RESULTS OF DISCUSSIONS OF WORKING GROUPS on 14 Feb

### Session 1: Concerns/constraints, available resources, and solutions offered

The participants of the 14 February consultation were split into four groups of five members in each group. Each group discussed the main concerns and constraints facing youth in Yemen, the kinds of resources they have for a better future, and the solutions youth can offer to the challenges facing them. The discussions was guided by the following three questions.

1. What are the main concerns and constraints young men and women in the region face?
2. What kinds of resources do youth have for a better future?
3. What solutions can youth offer to the challenges they face?

#### Results of Discussions for Group One

Concerns and constraints	How youth deal with it	Proposed solutions
1. high unemployment among youth due to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of job opportunities</li> <li>• some people have two government salaries (corruption)</li> <li>• no job vacancies as old/senior employees remain in post, because retirement system is not applied</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• seeking or approaching friends to discuss the problem and to identify solution for it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide job opportunities according to qualification and specialization</li> <li>• advocate on behalf of the youth</li> </ul>
2. low percentage of girls in rural areas go to school due to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• early marriage</li> <li>• busy doing domestic work and doing work outside the house</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• find a solution, if any found</li> <li>• raise awareness of the family of the importance of education, especially girls education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• construction of schools particularly for girls to continue their education</li> </ul>
3. high dowry claims by the bride's family due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• greediness of the family</li> <li>• lack of religious morale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• raising awareness of the family</li> <li>• leaving tribal rules behind</li> <li>• agreeing on a social contract to put a limit on the dowry by the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• this phenomena should be alleviated in any possible way</li> </ul>
4. school drop-out due to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of awareness by the family</li> <li>• there is no family follow up</li> <li>• lack of income</li> <li>• youth are busy, especially in rural agriculture</li> <li>• families can't afford the cost of schooling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• raise family awareness on the value of education</li> <li>• find a balance between work and the school</li> <li>• provide school requirements (books, fee, uniform etc)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encourage youth to continue education and reduce drop-out</li> </ul>
5. youth do not have training opportunities to improve their skills due to : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• low family income</li> <li>• no vocational training in rural areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• youth who are in need require to seek raise family awareness on the value of education</li> <li>• request the construction of vocational training centres in remote rural areas</li> <li>• encourage youth to go for training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the government and donor agencies should be attention to the improvement of the situation of youth to become more productive</li> </ul>

## Results of Discussions for Group Two

### Concerns and Constraints

The group identified and discussed the following constraints:

- The high cost of marriage especially in the northern and eastern governorates
- Lack of job opportunities for youth
- The difficulty in finding a suitable partner to marry
- A marriage by substitution (*when a family arrange for the marriage of their son from a family and in return their daughter gets married to one of the sons from the other family without paying the dowry to any of the two wedded girls*).
- Family interference in the personal life of the partners (i.e. the married couple)
- Low financial income
- Misunderstanding among the two married couple
- The newly married couple are often forced by financial constraints to live with their extended family
- Illiteracy of the mother and father

### Proposed solutions

The following solutions were proposed by the group:

- To remind families of their religious values
- The government should adopt small enterprises / projects to provide job opportunities and reduce unemployment
- To raise community awareness on the importance of disregarding their wrong cultural ethics that are restricting the choice of the partners
- The government should build residential compounds for the newly married couple and to charge them symbolic costs to be paid in installments
- The partners should try to understand and accept each other
- Spreading awareness through the media
- Setup literacy training programs

## Results of Discussions for Group Three

### ❑ Concerns and Constraints

The group identified and discussed the following constraints:

- The unemployment problem
- The low level of education especially for female in rural areas
- Women lack the opportunity to get education and employment
- Assessing the candidate's entry into a particular field of studies in higher education on the basis of the grades obtained at secondary education.
- The youth are marginalized by the government
- The significant marginalization of specific groups such as the disabled and other vulnerable groups
- Using personal and family contacts to gain personal interests
- There is no encouragement to talented and outstanding students in their areas of interest specially when it comes to allocation of scholarships
- The schools does not provide the appropriate educational materials for students with special needs (such as disabled), and for other students
- The dowry asked by the family of the bride-to-be for the marriage of their daughter is too high for the male youth. This leads to the girl being a spinster, which can lead to mental and psychosocial pressure for the girl, and can lead to immoral behavior (*illegal sex*) among young men and women
- Tribal system of some areas in Yemen (revenge, carrying guns, wrong intolerance)
- The government is neglecting the role of youth in the manufacturing industry, whether on small scale or large, including the technical education and vocational training, and there are institutions specialized in this.
- There are not provisions for people with special needs in public infrastructures, which causes obstacle to the people with disability
- Family problems which can lead to divorce
- Sport's activities including its staff is not given in attention by the Government
- There are a shortage of some institutions in some governorates
- Week religious awareness, and the replacement of some of the wrong ideas from the west

### ❑ The resources which youth have for a better future

- Youth have remarkable intellectual abilities
- Ability to work in difficult working conditions
- The multiple talents within one person
- The relatively high educational qualifications

### ❑ How youth deal with their current concerns and constraints

- Personal approach (not to give up, coping with financial and social circumstances, searching for a job, which (s)he believes will be best at.
- Setting up micro-enterprises that have proven to be successful in other countries
- Preparing proposals which are submitted to high officials in the government
- Requesting financial support or access to micro credits free of interests
- Religious awareness: not to increase the dowry, making arrangements for multiparty weddings for a number of couples at the same time.

❑ **With whom the youth share their concerns and constraints**

- They keep them to themselves
- They discuss the problems with their families
- They share the problems with their friends
- Approaching an influential person to solve the problems
- Approaching the media
- Approaching the public facilities
- Approaching international organizations

❑ **Proposed solutions**

- Providing micro credits to families
- There is a need to provide appropriate and up-to-date teaching aids for disabled
- The government should focus on vocational training especially for none youth who do not complete their education
- Give disabled the opportunity to be involved in public employment
- Integrate disabled people in the society
- Organize training and refresher courses
- Establish centres for literacy classes
- Provide scholarships for higher education to those youth who deserve them
- Raise the awareness of the youth of the importance of their role in serving and developing the society

## Results of Discussions for Group Four

### ❑ Concerns and constraints

- The spread and increase of poverty
- The high illiteracy and low awareness of parents to encourage their sons and daughters to continue education
- The long distance for students to reach schools in rural areas
- The shortage of qualified teachers
- Lack of technical institutes and colleges in rural areas
- Lack of attention of and opportunities provided by the Local Council for youth to upgrade and develop their talents
- Low awareness of the risks of carrying guns
- Lack of health units in rural areas
- Dowry is high for youth to afford

### ❑ The resources which youth have for a better future

- The aspiration and willingness to change

### ❑ How youth deal with their current concerns and constraints

- Consulting their friends and discussing their concerns with them

### ❑ With whom the youth share their concerns and constraints

- The youth approach their friends, a member of the local council (an elected local leader), or the Aqel (a locally appointed leader at neighborhood or village level).

### ❑ Proposed solutions by youth

- Setting up a legal framework (an organization, or a forum) with the aim of solving their problems
- Assist youth to reach and be able to:
  - identify their problems and needs
  - approach their parents to discuss their problems
  - report all agreements with the parents to the local authority
- There is a need to build schools at *Ozlah* level (sub-district level) from basic level (elementary) to the secondary level.
- Establish technical institutes and sports and cultural clubs
- Construct health units and health centres especially in rural areas

## Session 2: Youth's reflections on the five transitions in the WDR 2007

The participants were asked to split into smaller groups of members each to work on one of the following five WDR transitional themes based on their experience and interest: to be checked

1. TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL: CONTINUING TO LEARN BEYOND PRIMARY
2. TRANSITION TO A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE
3. TRANSITION TO WORK
4. TRANSITION TO FAMILY FORMATION; AND
5. TRANSITION TO CITIZENSHIP

### 1. TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL: CONTINUING TO LEARN BEYOND PRIMARY

#### Current constraints

- Parents do not invest and encourage their girls to continue their education
- The low family income means that the family can not afford to spend any money on their child to continue his/her education
- Very few secondary schools in rural areas and they are too far for some communities
- Very few separate schools for girls to continue their education
- The increase in tribal disputes and revenge in rural areas
- Family breakup forces the student to skip or dropout from school
- Negative peer influence, often friends who fail in their education
- The government does not give any attention to talented and outstanding students
- Lack of laboratories for science and other related subjects
- Early marriage can be a barrier for education and advancement, particularly for girls
- Shortage of specialized cadre

#### Appropriate solutions

- Raise parents' awareness in the benefits of education
- The government should look after poor families and provide them with basic needs
- The government must build secondary schools especially in large villages
- The government must construct separate schools for girls
- Penalizing those who cheat in exams and who are involved in bribery
- Students should retry and not give up
- The government should redress and resolve the disputes between rival tribes
- Mitigate the consequences of divorce and solve the problems among married couples
- Parents should watch out that their youth are not badly influence by their peer friends
- Provide qualified cadre according to specialization
- Encourage youth to postpone marriage and build their future
- Provide laboratory for science and other related subjects
- Improving the level of education from childhood and introducing early childhood development (nursery, and kindergarten), for having a positive effect on the mental development.
- Activating the role of mental, physical and cultural lessons in schools (drawings, arts, theatre, different forms of sports), and setting up libraries for science and literature in schools.
- Provide female teachers in rural areas to encourage families to send their girls to school
- Construct special schools for persons with special needs in the governorate and special classes in a number of rural schools
- Reduce child labor through legislation and enforcement of the law.
- Enforce free education for all
- The secondary school curriculum should focus more on discussing issue related to reproductive health in a sensible way.

## 2. TRANSITION TO A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Concerns and constraints	Proposed solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maternal health (the causes of mother's ill health: early marriage and the consequences of the weariness and fatigue during work and during delivery and beyond)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a need for abolish girls early marriage, or the law should demand a medical examination of any girl to get married below the age of 18 to check her ability of her body to bear the consequences of marriage</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a need to raise awareness of the benefits of breast feeding and the nutrition of pregnant women which will contribute to the growth of the neonatal and the infants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We thin the government is responsible for the awareness by delivering health messages through various media and communication channels, in addition to organizing a number of workshops and formative research for girls between now and then</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School health is currently dormant and does not provide any health awareness to students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a need to strengthen the role of those responsible for school health through the Ministry of Education and also Ministry of Health with the aim of providing all the needs, at least first aids in all schools</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The health of youth is currently neglected, giving the various illnesses associated with the age group 10 to 16 due to natural changes in the body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important to consider the need for this according to the different needs from one place to another</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify a health insurance based on a modernized central mechanism (database network)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This can be through identifying a central electronic unit linked to health facilities that are spread all over Yemen</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unequal distribution health facilities in rural and urban areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The construction of health facilities should be based on population density in different areas of Yemen</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setup a centre for controlling epidemics and diseases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We need a special unit to control epidemics and diseases spread all over Yemen due to climatic changes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health campaigns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The way health campaigns are being executed need to be reconsidered after the failure of the government to announce Yemen free from Polio and the other six child killing diseases</li> </ul>

## 3. TRANSITION TO WORK

Statistics show that there is a high employment among youth. According to a report by the government in 2000, there was an urgent need to provide 200,000 job opportunities to reduce unemployment. If we compare the need in 2000 with the need today, it means that there is currently an estimated one million persons unemployed. The number of unemployed people is on the rise. The group work and the plenary discussions have come up with the following reasons for lack of employment.

- Transition to work is linked with the two previous transitions (*transition from school and transition to a healthy lifestyle*). Transition from a school does not equip children and consequently youth with the necessary skills related to their daily life, and the capacity related to career development such as the ability to speak and read English language fluently, and vocational skills training based on market needs. Moreover, youth are hampered by their health problems, or those of their family members which they feel obliged to contribute to support they have to support as part of the solidarity in absence of any form of formal insurance. Therefore without investing in basic and secondary education and vocation training as well as investing in health to ensure that youth have good quality education and are enjoying better health, we as youth would otherwise lose out.
- Lack of foreign investment and tourism industry in the country due to weak infrastructure, land disputes, and the perceived lack of security in the country as result of the few hijacking incidents which finds propaganda through the international media. There is thus a high need to improve the infrastructure roads and electricity and water, provide land-free- dispute, and improve Yemen's in internationally.

#### **4. TRANSITION TO FAMILY FORMATION**

##### **❑ Constraints**

- The intricacy of the high cost of marriage including the dowry especially in the northern and eastern governorates
- Lack of job opportunities
- The customs of some Yemeni tribes do not give partners the freedom of choice to select their partners
- The difficult of finding the right partner
- Marriage by substitution (a boy would marry a girl and in return the brother of the girl would marry the sister of the boy to avoid paying the dowry)
- Family interference in the private life of the married couple
- The low socioeconomic status of the newly married couple forces them to live with the extended family of the husband
- The illiteracy of the mother and father

##### **❑ Proposed solutions**

- Religious / spiritual awareness
- The government should initiate small projects to provide job opportunities and reduce unemployment
- Raise awareness of the society in order to eliminate the old-fashioned traditions and customs of the parents power in imposing marriage partners on their sons and daughters
- The government should construct housing projects for newly married couples and to charge them symbolic costs to be paid in installments
- Raise awareness through the media
- Setup more centres to literacy programs

##### **❑ Age transition (and social requirements)**

- There is a need for parents to be more open with their daughters and sons at the age of adolescence, and to hear their views and opinions related to the natural changes that occur to their bodies as a result of their growth.
- There is a need to raise parents' awareness of the importance of avoiding imposing their views when discussing different issues related to their life.
- There is a need to setup projects that aim at reducing the high dowry
- Youth should listen to spiritual/religious leaders on social issues to be aware of these issues from a religious perspective

#### **5. TRANSITION TO CITIZENSHIP**

- There is a number of political parties and extremist factions, which in their agenda undermine national identity. It is therefore important to strengthen national identity
- Raise the awareness of citizens in their constitutional rights to express their views within the law
- Raise the youth's awareness on the need to possess and carry their identification cards (ID), and their rights to get an ID at the age of 16 years
- Raise the youth's awareness of the positive effects of the various elections (parliament election, local councils election, presidential election, and the importance of the peaceful handover of power through a democratic process
- Raise the awareness of youth of the negative consequences for all those who sell their electoral votes for a personal financial interest.

## **Annex 4: Evaluation of the two day national consultation**

The two days consultation adopted participatory techniques such as small group discussions, plenary discussions, brainstorming, and open ended interviews. These techniques rely on the interaction with participants.

Workshop evaluation took place at the end of the second day, but there was no evaluation took place at the end of the first day, because the workshop scheduled main sessions were completed at 6:30 in the evening. By that time it was already too late for the participants, particularly female participants, to stay late away from home in a venue at a hotel.

The evaluation at the end of the second day was done in a plenary session. During this session the participants were asked to stand in a circle. The facilitator gently threw a small ball to one of the participants and asked the participant to mention one thing (s)he liked during this consultation and a thing (s)he did not like. The participant who had the ball would then throw it to another participant. The process continued until the ball was passed over to all participants once at a time. The facilitator recorded the responses of the participants openly on a flipchart. The results was as follow:

### **Things which the participants like during the consultation:**

- The topic was enjoyable and very interesting
- The workshop was very nice
- The breaks between the sessions
- Working in groups and knowing each other
- The way the participants were dealing with each other
- Listening to youth's concerns
- The idea is good
- The facilitator was good and cheerful
- The nice hospitality

### **Things which the participants did not like during the consultation:**

- The time was too long (5 participants mentioned this)
- The side conversation by some participants