



# Promoting Youth Civic Engagement

## Quarterly Report, July 1 to September 30, 2013

Cooperative Agreement No. 279-A-00-10-00060-00



*Cover photo: Youth participants warm up for basketball training at Jazizia School for females in Sana'a*

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## **Promoting Youth Civic Engagement (PYCE) Program Summary**

The PYCE project is designed to support USAID's objective of increasing Yemen's stability through targeted interventions in vulnerable areas by (1) improving community-based institutions and mechanisms to ensure active participation in governance and locally driven solutions strengthened; and (2) improving access to and the delivery of quality services.

To support this USAID objective, since 2010, the PYCE project objectives have sought: to strengthen the role of moderate religious actors in positively influencing Yemeni youth, and to establish and support youth sports and recreational programs. In response to changes in Yemen's political and socio-economic context, which has been influenced recently by the Arab Spring that led to the Yemeni Revolution, a new Transitional Government, and an ongoing process of national reconciliation and priority-setting known as the National Dialogue, the language of these objectives has been enhanced. These objectives have been expanded to foster a more diverse set of program components that can accomplish the overarching objectives of USAID in a new Yemen. The proposed, enhanced objectives are: 1) strengthen and increase interaction between youth and influential community actors, including moderate religious actors; and 2) empower youth to positively affect their local communities through sports, recreational programs, and other community-based engagement activities.

AMIDEAST and its proposed partners Peace Players International (PPI) and the National Organization for the Development of Society (NODS), in cooperation with the Ministries of Youth and Sports (MoYS), Endowments and Guidance (MoEG) and Education (MoE), will adopt a technical approach to accomplish these objectives that will support strengthening youth participation in their communities via civic engagement. In conjunction with community stakeholders and mentors known as Steering Committee (SC) members, the PYCE Program has trained more than 230 male and female youth between the ages of 18-30 in the principles and methods of civic engagement. PYCE leadership and development training has included the Community Engagement (CE) Workshop, Training of Trainers (TOT) Program and Sport and Activity Coordinator (SAC) Program, along with ongoing monitoring and experiential learning opportunities. These activities advance skills in peer-facilitation, community needs assessment, program development, formation of community teams and leagues, evaluation of participant learning, and gathering long-term support for community programs. These youth, known as Peer Network (PN) members, are expected to identify and train other youth, thereby increasing the impact of the PYCE Program and promoting the sustainability of youth-led and youth-centered activities after the program ends.

### **Peer Network Activities**

Peer Network activities are implemented as Community Grants and encompass awareness, sports and recreational and community service activities. Awareness sessions are developed to provide life and vocational skills training, as well as personal and character development. Peer Network sport activities are based on the sport-for-development model, which utilizes sport, physical activity and play to achieve development goals in sectors such as education and health.

Community service activities will be performed to augment PYCE solar system renovations and upgrades, such as repairs to windows and doors, cleaning and painting, planting gardens and

removing debris. The solar systems, in turn, power lights and fans, which prevent otherwise frequent disruptions of activities when power outages occur, thereby enabling the Peer Network to extend activities into the evenings, where youth can become positively engaged. Solar system renovations reduce operational costs for youth centers, promote natural resource conservation and serve as an educational tool that supports science and technology curricula. These events directly improve the capacity of youth centers and address critical needs. They are implemented at PYCE-supported youth centers and their affiliated spaces and can be held in conjunction with local charities to maximize awareness and outreach efforts. Youth centers are supported by Peer Network Activity Council (PNAC) members, who play a key role in maintaining solar systems, organizing and promoting youth activities, and liaising with ministry officials, moderate religious actors and business leaders to facilitate continuous community buy-in and support. As their activities and involvement increases, Peer Network members can internalize their role as youth leaders and become more confident in their ability to promote positive behaviors, increase access to and quality of services and contribute to the development of locally driven solutions. They can also re-imagine their neighborhoods as thriving and unified spaces, where they can contribute to a more stable and democratic society.

## Achievements

With strong community support, PYCE has conducted activities in the governorates of Aden, Marib, Lahj and Sana'a. Despite the fluid security environment and ongoing social and economic challenges across the country, PYCE has met or exceeded all except 1 program target ahead of the December 2013 timeframe. The following tables illustrate the achievements of program objectives during this reporting period.

**Result 1:** Strengthen and increase interaction between youth and influential community actors, including moderate religious actors

Activities this quarter	Target	Achievement this quarter	Total for the entire project
Number of community actors engaged in governorate level meetings	250	347	1,369
Number of Steering Committee meetings	25	9	57
Number of meetings for PYCE participants at youth centers	27	7	42
Number of Community Grants awarded to Peer Network members	18	15	36

**Result 2:** Empower youth to positively affect their local communities through sports, recreational programs and other community-based engagement activities

Activities this quarter	Target	Achievement this quarter	Total for the entire project
Number of activated and involved teams that work with PYCE	16	14	67
Number of participants trained by Peer Network members	1,350	3,659	4,383

Number of channels of communication by Peer Network	90	7	31
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With successful outreach and collaboration, PYCE has conducted meetings with 347 community and religious actors and held 9 meetings with Steering Committee members this quarter. Seven meetings of PYCE participants were also conducted. Newly trained Peer Network members implemented 15 Community Grants and other engagement activities, which included the training of 3,659 at-risk youth.

Fourteen teams were activated and Peer Network members utilized 7 channels of communication to disseminate information about their activities. In addition to these achievements, PYCE has successfully promoted the designation of female-only spaces and increased activities for women and girls at youth centers. These accomplishments stimulated a dramatic increase in the number of female youth participants.

More than 40% of all PNAC and PN Members are female. Nearly 60% of participants in both the Summer Connections Program and subsequent back-to-school PN activities through September 30, 2013, were also female. Indeed, out of more than 4,300 youth trained by PN Members, nearly 2,400 or 55% were female. PYCE has also encountered the highest levels of attendance from females in Lahej. For workshops and educational sessions in July, some events included nearly 100 female youth participants, with additional activities added the following week, to accommodate females who could not participate because the center was filled to capacity.



Youth participants clean the courtyard of Bilquis Club



Figure 2:  
Figure 3: Female students from Jazizia and Mutahar bin Zaid in Sana'a, female schools in Sana'a, were trained in basketball.

Ongoing crises in terms of the political, social and economic status of Yemenis influenced the pace with which activities could be implemented. Protests, roadblocks and acts of civil disobedience at times caused activities to be rescheduled. Further, another organization did not adhere to cultural expectations in Lahej and conducted an event which was poorly received by some members of the community. Activities in Lahej were briefly delayed, while the appropriate actions could be taken. Despite these challenges, the following noteworthy gains have also been made:

- Established frameworks of collaboration to promote gender equity, safety and natural resource conservation among PN members, youth centers, local and international organizations to enhance impact

- Supported drop-out prevention efforts in K-12 schools through educational competitions and recreational activities which promote learning such as chess and internet instruction
- Successful programming with minority groups such as the *muhamasheen*, a group of people who are considered foreigners in Yemen and have no path to citizenship or the benefits it entails
- Garnered widespread coverage of activities through *Yemen Times* Newspaper, *14 October* Newspaper, Aden TV and other outlets

## Upcoming Activities

PYCE is supporting additional Community Grants and will continue to increase the capacity of youth centers with solar system installations and structural enhancements. Most notably, PYCE will promote its youth centers as safe spaces where youth can feel connected. The Peer Network is embracing this goal and has begun to strengthen partnerships with local organizations, participate in broadcasts and media events, and increase educational activities. Upcoming activities include:

- Workshops on fire extinguisher, emergency preparedness and first aid
- Workshops on soil cultivation, desertification and greening
- Advanced Training of Trainers (TOT) Program for PN members in Aden, Lahej, Marib and Sana'a October-November 2013
- Conclude program activities in Sana'a in October 2013 and Marib in December 2013
- Expand program activities in Mansourah, Aden in October 2013
- Support gardens and green spaces at youth centers and K-12 schools
- Establish community sports teams and leagues
- Construct bus stops/shades for older persons and those with special needs who require public transportation
- Designate study areas and libraries at youth centers to counter learning declines
- Regular PN and SC member meetings at youth centers