



**Quarterly Report:**

**Basic Education Support and  
Training Project (BEST)**

**July 1 to September 30, 2008**



**Academy for Educational Development**

*4<sup>th</sup>  
Quarterly Report*

**Submission: October 2008**

## **Table of Contents**

### **List of Acronyms**

### **Overview**

### **BEST Mission and Objectives**

#### **1. Administration and Operations**

- 1.1 Official launch of the BEST-Yemen project hosted by GOY
- 1.2 BEST-Yemen project staff members participate in the AED Regional Finance Training in Jordan
- 1.3 Staff retreat
- 1.4 Donor presentation
- 1.5 Project Advisory Board holds first meeting

#### **2. Technical Approach: Themes, Activities, Challenges, Accomplishments and Lessons Learned**

- 2.1 Governor of Mareb formally opens Five BEST Yemen activities in Mareb
- 2.2 Initial field visited to Hodaida and Raymah Governorates (16-19 of August 08)

##### **Training Activities**

- 2.3 Training of 32 maths subject trainers
- 2.4 Training of 55 headmaster trainers

##### **Community Participation Activities**

- 2.5 Community participation evaluation workshop successfully completed in Amran
- 2.6 BEST Yemen supports summer activities in 12 schools in Amran and Shabwah

##### **Adult Literacy Activities**

- 2.7 BEST-Yemen project promotes adult literacy support among local authorities
- 2.8 Developed adult literacy “Reading Manual” level II of the reflect methodology
- 2.9 School renovation component completed variety of task in service to targeted governorates from July to September.
- 2.10 Education Management Information Systems activities focus on Mareb Governorate during July to September

#### **Statement of Scope of Work for Subsequent Quarters**

## List of Acronyms

<b>AED</b>	Academy for Educational Development
<b>AL</b>	Adult Literacy
<b>AWP</b>	Annual Work Plan
<b>BE</b>	Basic Education Project
<b>BEST</b>	Basic Education Support and Training Project
<b>BEDS</b>	Basic Education Development Strategy
<b>COE</b>	College of Education
<b>COP</b>	Chief of Party
<b>CP</b>	Community Participation
<b>CPF</b>	Community Participation Facilitator
<b>DCOP</b>	Deputy Chief of Party
<b>DOE</b>	District Office of Education
<b>EFA</b>	Education for All
<b>EMIS</b>	Education Management Information System
<b>FC</b>	Fathers' Council
<b>FFS</b>	Fully Functioning School
<b>GOV</b>	Governorate
<b>GOY</b>	Government of Yemen
<b>ICT</b>	Information Communications Technology
<b>LAEO</b>	Literacy for Adult Education Organization
<b>MC</b>	Mothers' Council
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MFC</b>	Mothers and Fathers Council
<b>MFS</b>	Minimally Functioning School
<b>MOE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>MPC</b>	Multipurpose Center
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>PC</b>	Parent Council
<b>PMP</b>	Performance Monitoring Plan
<b>SSW</b>	School Social Worker
<b>STTA</b>	Short Term Technical Assistant
<b>TTI</b>	Teacher Training Institute
<b>TEP</b>	Teacher Education Programs
<b>ToT</b>	Trainer of Trainers
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children's Fund
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>WB</b>	World Bank
<b>WP</b>	Work Plan

# USAID/YEMEN BASIC EDUCATION SUPPORT AND TRAINING (BEST) PROJECT

## Overview

This 4th Quarterly Report for the Basic Education Support and Training (BEST) Yemen Project covers the period of July 1 to September 30, 2008. BEST was officially launched in July and resumed activities in Mareb Governorate, which had stopped due to security issues and the hijacking of the BE project vehicle early this year. During this quarter, the project made its first formal presentation to partner donor agencies at a meeting which was attended by eight major donors in Yemen and representatives from the Ministry of Education (MOE) Technical Office. Other highlights of the quarter include a staff retreat in August; participation of three key administrative and finance staff in a regional AED training on Human Resources and Internal Financial Controls; a 14-day training of trainers (TOT) for 32 mathematics subject trainers and 55 headmaster trainers from Amran, Mareb and Shabwah governorates; a Community Participation Evaluation Workshop; 9 summer camps in 12 schools in Amran and Shabwah governorates; finalization of the Reading Manual (Level II of the Reflect Methodology) and a two-day adult literacy workshop in the governorates of Amran, Mareb and Shabwah.

## BEST Mission and Objectives

BEST is operating within the broad framework of the Government of Yemen's (GoY) Basic Education Development Strategy (BEDS) which emphasizes:

- Access for Yemeni children to basic education
- Equity of opportunity for females and males to education services
- Quality improvements that place the student and the teacher at the center of the education system
- Improved capacity and internal efficiency of the Ministry of Education at all levels
- Sub-national participation in the improvement of education

Given this framework, the Mission Statement for the BEST Project is *“bridging the gap between development activities and systems-building by increasing the relevance of policies, especially as related to achievement of gender objectives”*.

While building on the experience and achievements of the BE project, BEST is expanding its work in consultation with the MOE and other donor partners so as to ensure sustainability of successful approaches and innovations. The work plan for BEST has been aligned with that of the MOE for 2008 and for successive years through the life of the project. The rationale for doing this is to effectively "mainstream" our work plans with GOY's own educational development plans and implementation strategies and ensure complementarity. BEST is making every effort to simultaneously collaborate strategically with other related donor projects so as to create critical masses within and across programmatic areas for effectiveness, desired impact and optimum sustainability

within the targeted communities, districts, governorates and over time, elsewhere in the nation.

Against this background, the central goal and key objectives of BEST are expressed below.

*BEST Goal Statement: To strengthen the capacity of communities, schools and the Ministry of Education to sustain educational improvements for their children and their children's children.*

Statement of BEST Objectives:

- *To enhance the capacity of targeted MOE units at all levels to support educational improvement consistent with the national decentralization policy*
- *To expand work on improvement of Education Management Information Systems (EMIS), learning environments, teacher training, Mothers' and Fathers' Councils (MFCs), learning materials and adult literacy in the schools and communities*
- *To develop, with the MOE, a community school policy to address the issue of parity between boys' and girls' enrollment and retention in schools*
- *To support development of policies and actions that result in recruitment and retention of female teachers.*

The quarterly performance report period from July through September 2008 can be summarized as one of completion of the transition of staff and material resources from BE to BEST and setting stage for having all systems in place for full operations. The project will continue premiering the US Government support for the Basic Education sector in Yemen through an increased focus on long-term educational policy as well as provision of direct support to basic education schools and systems in targeted communities. The activities, accomplishments, challenges and lessons learned during the report period are covered in the remainder of this document in the categories of Administration and Operations followed by Technical.

## **1. Administration and Operations**

### *1.1 Official Launch of the BEST-Yemen Project hosted by GOY*

The Yemeni Ministry of Education held a ceremonial event in July to officially launch the Basic Education Support and Training Project. The Minister emphasized that he has high expectations for BEST-Yemen as a follow-up project to the highly successful Basic Education (EQUIP1) Project which ended on the 23 of July.

### *1.2 Participation of three BEST-Yemen Project staff members in the AED Regional Finance Training in Jordan*

A major support to the administration and finance systems of the project was offered by AED, Washington in August when three key project staff members were sent to Jordan to participate in a three-day regional training on Human Resources and Internal Financial Controls. The purpose of the training was to build the capacity of the trainees in project financial management, compliance with internal policies, rules and regulation contractually mandated, and help AED establish consistency throughout the organization. Specific topics covered in the training included i) Orientation to AED

Organizational Structure Management Structure by Group/Center ii) Ethics and Compliance, 3) Roles and Responsibilities of Home and Field Office Management 4) Financial Reporting: Monthly Cost Reports and Billing Process 5) Human Resource/File Management and 6) Material Finding from Field Office Reviews/Operational Reviews/Internal Audit and Red Flags. The rest of the BEST-Yemen Project team members were briefed on the training during the staff retreat in Ibb.

### *1.3 Staff Retreat*

The BEST- Yemen Project organized its first annual project staff retreat from 21–23 August. The main objectives of the retreat were (1) Professional development and capacity building of staff 2) Technical information exchange and training, and 3) Interpersonal and professional management skills development to strengthen the team spirit and communication among all BEST Staff. The retreat which was mandatory and attended by all the 37 BEST-Yemen staff members and included group and individual sessions aimed at enhancing and improving staff personal and professional skills such as: a) Team Building b) Communication Skills Development c) Interpersonal Relations and Communications, and d) AED Policies and Procedures. The retreat was highly successful and gave staff the opportunity to understand one another better and work more effectively as a team. Staff learned how to better manage time, understand AED policies and procedures as well as new IT skills needed in the workplace. (A detailed report is available upon request.) Just before Ramadan, the first “mini-retreat” planned and implemented as a focused follow-up activity to the total staff retreat was conducted by the Chief of Party (COP) with the Community Participation Component team. Mini-retreats are planned for each of the project key units: Administration, Finance, Training, Adult Literacy, School Renovations, EMIS and the Heads/Coordinators of each key unit.

### *1.4 Donor Presentation*

On August 12, the BEST-Yemen Project held a day-long meeting, which was attended by donor organizations such as GTZ, UNICEF, JICA, DFID, World Bank Dutch



Embassy, researchers from the Japanese Embassy, Save the Children-Sweden, USAID/Y and Technical Office representatives from the Ministry of Education. The meeting gave the Chief of Party and key staff the opportunity to introduce themselves and provide an overview of the mission, objectives, programmatic themes and other aspects of the project. Participants discussed donor

concerns and activities accomplished to date while addressing means of further enhancing collaboration in order to avoid duplication of activities in the sector and optimize results for the nation’s basic education schools.

### *1.5 Project Advisory Board holds first meeting*

On September 10, the Advisory Board to the project held its first meeting at the Ministry of Education. In addition to providing information on the functioning of the Board, members discussed the status of the process in the selection of new governorates for the project by reviewing the draft trip report on visitations completed to Rayma and Hodaida Governorates in August. The Advisory Board is a small body of representatives from the MOE, USAID/Y and the Academy for Educational Development. The Board is chaired by the Deputy Minister of the Projects Section in the MoE. The remaining representatives from the Ministry are from each of the sectors in which BEST-Yemen is closely involved: Technical Office, Girls' Education, Teacher Training and Qualifications, and Adult Literacy. It is planned that an individual will be selected from one of the new governorates. Additional individuals will be invited to the Board meetings in the future depending on topics and issues scheduled for discussion. Meetings are to be scheduled on a quarterly basis. Follow-up to the first meeting was completed in the same month.

## **2. Technical Approach: Themes, and activities accomplishments**

### *2.1 Governor of Mareb formally opens five BEST activities*



Mr. Naji Ali Al-Zaidi, the governor of Mareb formally launched the opening of five BEST-Yemen activities in Mareb. The opening ceremony was attended by a number of representatives from the local governing councils, the GOE, DOE and LAEO office at the district and the governorate levels. Main activities included i) Training of 28 headmaster trainers ii) Formal opening of the EMIS unit at the Government Office

of Education in Mareb iii) Community Participation Evaluation Workshop iv) Training of 11 GOE's officials from the newly formed EMIS Unit, and v) Initiation of a workshop to support adult literacy activities in the field. The Governor thanked USAID for its continuous support to the communities in Mareb and stated that it is the only donor to have provided a complete package of services to schools, which has and will continue to contribute to improving the quality of education in Yemen, particularly in Mareb.



## *2.2 Initial field visited to Hodaida and Raymah Governorates in August*



The BEST Yemen project team, along with representatives from the MOE and USAID, conducted a four-day field visit to Hodaida and Raymah governorates to investigate potential schools and communities. The team visited 26 schools and communities in 8 districts. They also briefed the local GOE and DOE officials and local governing council representatives about the BEST-Yemen project objectives. Potential districts were surveyed in terms of accessibility, needs,

aspirations, available resources, and other significant factors. Reports and briefings as well as recommendations have been made and details of this field visit report were discussed with USAID and the MOE. (A copy of the detailed report is available upon request.)

## *2.3 Training of grades 4-9 mathematics subject trainers completed successfully, July 18–31, 2008*



The BEST Yemen project conducted a 14-day training of trainers (TOT) workshop to prepare 32 maths subject trainers from Amran, Mareb and Shabwah governorates who will then train 357 maths subject teachers for grades four through nine. This training was implemented by a team of four master trainers who have participated in the development of the training manuals at the national level. This 14-day training was considered significant because it a) provided the trainers with modern strategies for teaching maths, with child-centered approaches b) improved the trainers' training skills c) enabled them to train maths teachers to enhance the learning and thinking abilities of their students d) helped improve the communication skills of the trainers so that they can effectively document and evaluate the training. Participants were provided with practical methods



on how to produce instructional aids and maths equipment from locally-available materials while introducing them to modern training methodologies that mainly depend on practical applications of cooperative learning, educational games and acting out what trainers learned during training. This extensive training helped the trainers gain

skills that will enable them and the teachers they are going to train to analyze student test scores and interpret the results in a way that would further enhance student performance.

On successful completion of the training workshop, the trainers expressed in their assessment that the training was very helpful, especially the skills they gained in producing educational aids from locally-available materials. They said that the training prepared them to effectively convey learning to classroom teachers and apply modern strategies in teaching mathematics to children in grades 4 – 9. The training also helped increase their knowledge and expertise in a variety of day-to-day assessment strategies such as questioning, observation, analysis, and assessing the children’s understanding during the teaching-learning process.

**Grades 4-9 Maths Subject Trainers Training Statistics summarized as follows:**

Targeted group	Venue for the training	Duration of the training		Participants				No. of Training halls & Master Trainers	
		To	From			F	Total	No. of training halls	Master Trainers
Training of grades 4-9 Math’s subject trainers	Higher Institute for Training	19-07- 08	31/07/08	Amran	16	-	16	2 training halls	4 Master Trainers conducted the Training
				Mareb	8	-	8		
				Shabwah	8	-	8		
					32		32		

*2.4 Training of 55 headmaster trainers (Part III training) in Sana’a and Mareb, August 2-14, 2008*

A twelve-day training of the 55 Headmaster trainers from Amran, Mareb and Shabwah took place from 2-14 August and was divided into two groups: 1) the first group training conducted in Sana’a (Higher Institute for Training) trained 27 headmaster trainers ( 24 Males and 3 females) from Amran and Shabwah governorates, who in turn will train 200 school headmasters in all the districts in these respective governorates and 2) the second group training carried out in Mareb trained 28 headmasters from Mareb who are responsible for training 344 school headmaster in all the districts in Mareb. This is a Part III training which had its antecedents in the Basic Education Project and mainly focused on providing the trainers with skills required for effective school management such as: a) the ability to function as a positive team player and constructive colleague, encourage spirit of optimism, enthusiasm, self-motivation and create a positive attitude within the school environment (paying special consideration to the handicapped) b) use of alternative ways for punishment and avoiding corporal punishment, and c) preparing strategic management plans.



Activity	Duration of the training	Amran			Shabwah			Total		
		M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Training on headmaster ( Part III training)	2- 14 /08/08	13	2	15	11	1	12	24	3	27

Activity	Duration of the training	Mareb		
		M	F	Total
Training on headmaster ( Part III training)	2- 14 /08/08	25	3	28

#### **Lessoned learned from training of trainers event**

- Summer vacation is clearly the best time of the year to conduct training of trainers' workshops because it ensures optimum attendance of the trainers as they usually have no other work engagements. Hence, they will be better prepared and free to attend any training activity.
- Proper coordination with the Central Ministry of Education as well as the local authorities in the governorates contributes to the success of training events because it demonstrates respect for their position and enables them to attend and supervise the training events.
- Direct supervision of the training events by the project field office team leaders ensures that the training activities go smoothly. This helps to prevent some difficulties and solve others in time, contributing to the success of training events.

#### **2.5 Community Participation (CP) Evaluation Workshop completed in Amran in July**

A Community Participation Evaluation Workshop took place in Amran to evaluate the CP activities in the field. This workshop was attended by heads of fathers and mothers councils, school headmasters, school social workers, community participation specialists and secretary generals of the local governing councils. They (a) discussed major problems faced by the fathers and mothers councils and administration in schools, (b) reviewed all the activities accomplished by the community participation department at the GOE and the DOE level as well as the activities accomplished by the

fathers and mothers councils during the school year 2007/2008, and (c) addressed ways of activating the roles of fathers and mothers in schools during the summer vacation.



### **Challenges**

- Some local authorities and communities are still not aware of the importance of community participation activities and its role in improving the quality of education.
- Social workers have difficulties doing their job as fulltime social workers since most of them work as teachers and have a heavy workload throughout the week.

### **Lessons learned**

- Successful councils are only present in communities that are cooperative and value the importance of education.
- Improving school facilities and the classroom environment creates greater interest and trust among the communities and encourages the members and other public sector representatives to cooperate and provide more help and support through different means.
- Supporting summer activities is very crucial as they contribute to the successes of other CP activities in the field and basic education in general.

### *2.6 BEST-Yemen support summer activities in 12 schools in Amran and Shabwah, July through August*

The idea of summer camps was first introduced by the BE (EQUIP1) project in 2006 soon after the successful formation of father and mother councils in the targeted schools. Summer activities were replicated at different schools by the fathers and mothers councils and school administration with their own initiative in the summer of 2008. These activities were conducted in eight schools in Amran and four schools in Shabwah with a total of twelve camps for boys and seven camps for girls, serving 1082 boys, 380 girls and 168 mothers. These summer activities contributed to (a) establishing links between the community and the schools (b) creating linkages between summer activities and community needs (c) raising health and environmental awareness especially among mothers and female students (d) discovering and developing talents of female students and mothers (e) raising the awareness of out of school youths, girls and mothers of the importance of education (e) teaching mothers and girls new skills such as handicrafts to help improve their standard of living, (f) developing motor skills of students through sports activities, and (g) learning teamwork through playing as a member of a team. The closing ceremony of these summer activities took place on the 27 of August and was attended by the Deputy

Governor of Amran, other authorities of the governorate and the BEST-Yemen Project COP. An exhibition was organized that showed a full array of the products produced by the students and mothers during the summer activities.



### **Challenges**

- Some fathers and mothers councils were not aware of the importance of summer activities
- Carelessness of some school administrations in supporting the summer activities and not opening the schools for such activities during the summer vacation, despite the requests and involvement of the father and mothers councils.
- Reluctance of some district offices of education to conduct summer activities since they believed that summer camps are the responsibility of the Ministry of Youth and Sports.
- Unavailability of trainers to train and supervise a great number of summer camps which caused a lot of pressure on the few trainers available who helped serve and train a number of schools during the same period.
- Limited ability to or lack of incentives for authorities in charge to follow up and monitor summer activities.
- The delays in some activities due to factors such as the lack of CP training materials such as the manual which will not be available from the Girls' Education Sector until November and, in general, the conditions in the field during the Holy Month of Ramadan.
- The inability of some fathers and mother council to work as teams, thinking that work should only be accomplished by certain people and not the whole team.

### **Lessons learned**

- Fathers and mothers councils helped contribute to the success of the summer activities, by preparing some food products and handicrafts.
- Alternative plans need to be in place in anticipation of possible conditions during Ramadan and Eid that may delay essential activities with perhaps options before or after these holidays.
- The support that was provided by the project to the summer activities helped to activate and encourage the community to provide more support
- Summer activities have also helped the project know the strengths and weaknesses of councils based on the voluntary work carried out during these activities; hence, providing valuable input for follow-up orientation and training.
- It is very important to support these activities annually due to the benefits generated on behalf of the children and the communities served.

**No. of participants in summer activities in Amran governorate  
(Students, Trainers, Teacher volunteers and Mothers)**

School name	Students		Trainers		Teacher volunteers	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Al-Anwar	100	100	8	3	4	3
Ahmad Yasyn	55	80			3	3
Al-Tholaya	174	0	10	4	9	0
Al-Jeel Al-Jadeed	70	50			2	2
Al-Hosain ben Ali	70	20			2	2
Al-Salam in Al-Sheem	110	40			4	4
Al-Tasheeh	0	100			0	2
Al-Farouq	100	0			2	0
Al-Hajar	55	0	6	7	18	5
Al-Baihani						
30 November						
Quban (Students)						
Total	1082	390	24	14	44	21
	1472		38		65	

**No. of fathers/ mothers councils participated in summer activities in Shabwah:**

School name	Type of parent council
Quban (Mothers)	Mothers only (49)
Al-She'b (Mothers)	Mothers only (17)
Al-Shejn (Mothers)	Mothers only (21)
Al-Qwaibel (Mothers)	Mothers only (21)
Total of (Mothers)	108

**No. of fathers/ mothers councils participated in summer activities in Amran:**

School name	Type of parent council
1 Al-Anwar	Fathers Mothers
2 Ahmad Ysin	Fathers Mothers
3 Al-Thulaya	Fathers -
4 Al-Farouq in Al-Ayn	Fathers -
5 Al-Jeel Al-Jadeed	Fathers Mothers
6 Al-Tasheeh	- Mothers
7 Al-Hosain ben Ali	Fathers Mothers
8 Al-Salam in Al-Shem	Fathers Mothers
9 Qaban	Fathers

School name		Type of parent council	
10	Al-She'b	Fathers	Mothers
11	Al-Hajar	Fathers	
12	Al-Baihani	Fathers	
13	30 November	Fathers	
<b>Total</b>		<b>12 Father's councils</b>	<b>7 Mother's councils</b>
		<b>19 Fathers &amp; Mother's councils</b>	

### 2.7 BEST-Yemen project promotes adult literacy support among local authorities

The Adult Literacy Component Team of the BEST Project conducted a two-day workshop for 79 local officials to promote support for adult literacy among local authorities in each of the governorates of Amran, Mareb and Shabwah. The participants



included the Director Generals (DGs) for Education from the district and governorate levels, and DGs from the Literacy for Adult Education Organizations (LAEO). Also DGs from the health sector executive governorate and district level governing council and heads of the father and mother councils participated in the workshop. The purpose of the workshop was to promote understanding while furthering support for adult literacy among the populations

served, especially among the new communities supported by BEST-Yemen. Due to the importance of this workshop, it was formally opened by the Governor of Mareb, while in Amran and Shabwah, the workshops were opened by the Deputy Governors. Key topics addressed included activating the role of authorities in supporting adult literacy and creating a plan on how to raise the awareness of the communities regarding the importance of education, especially for women and girls.

### Challenges

Some of the local authorities do not recognize the importance and benefits of adult literacy for their communities. Neither do they understand the supportive role they could play in promoting AL. There exists a belief among some members of the local governing councils that it's not their duty to support such activities.

### Lessons learned

- Be in close contact with the local authorities and communities as they are key in encouraging women to register in the adult literacy programs
- Make available locations for adult literacy classes
- Proper selection of Adult Literacy Facilitators is essential as they play a key role in the success of adult literacy programs
- Convincing Imams from the mosques to be supportive as they play a very influential role in making the community aware of the importance of education and eradication of illiteracy

- Good coordination with field office team leaders helps to solve problems that might arise during the implementation of AL activities in a timely manner or they could hinder the implementation process
- Develop strategies to effectively orient local authorities to their role and the benefits of Adult Literacy programs in the communities.

### *2.8 Developed Adult literacy “Reading Manual” level II of the reflect methodology.*

The Adult Literacy Coordinator finalized developing the Adult Literacy Reading Manual (Level II of the REFLECT Methodology) that aims to empower adult women and improve their reading ability using interactive teaching and learning methodologies and ensuring that the content is relevant to their daily lives. The manual is targeted at women who participated in the six months Level I training of the REFLECT Methodology carried out under the BE (EQUIP1) Project. This Reading Manual helps adult women to write texts that are useful in their everyday lives. It also encourages self study and composition writing mostly about things and incidents experienced in life. The Level II Reading Manual has thirty units, requiring five units of training per month for a period of six months.

#### **Challenge**

- The ability of adult participants to read and write was very weak.
- Adult women, especially those who missed some classes due to agricultural work, or health and family issues, retained very little of the skills acquired during Level I of the REFLECT methodology.

### *2.9 School renovation component completed variety of task in service to targeted governorates from July to September*

From July through August, the School Renovation Component followed up on BE (EQUIP1) activities that required attention in Mareb and Amran Governorates. In Mareb at the Helhelan School in the Majzer District the initial delivery of the school was completed. The monitoring of the work in progress which involved installing movable partitions for the Abdulrahman Baker School in Amran City was also completed.

The component team coordinated activities with the MOE in September in planning and conducting the workshops for school building basic maintenance which targeted the maintenance committees in 77 schools. The total number of participants was 231 covering the governorates of Amran, Mareb and Shabwah.

In July, based on the Horn of Africa Civil Affairs Team request, a structural engineering firm was sent to Althawrah Boys’ School in Hareeb, Mareb to evaluate the quality of the construction of 16 classrooms. A report was prepared and presented by the head of the School Renovation Component as requested. Later in the report period, another engineering firm was sent back to the school to inspect the foundations of the school building. This team under the oversight of the BEST-Yemen Chief Architect conducted a community assessment for the same school community regarding the school and its construction. This report was also completed and presented in a timely manner to the USAID/Y Mission.

## *2.10 Education Management Information Systems activities focus on Mareb Governorate during July to September*

Although the Coordinator for the EMIS continued consultations with the Central Ministry and completed three trips to each of the governorates of Amran, Mareb and Shabwah during the report period, significant emphasis was placed on activities in the Mareb Governorate where activities were suspended for some time earlier in the calendar year due to security risks. Key activities completed in Mareb included the official opening of the Mareb EMIS Unit at the Governorate Education Office which was presided over by the newly elected Governor. In addition, the first step in setting the foundation for basic networking and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) was completed with the training of ten (10) trainees from the Mareb EMIS staff in Mareb City. This basic computer instruction covered operating systems, word processing, speed sheets, basics of databases and Internet.

### **Challenges**

- Finding a computer training center venue in Mareb was demanding given the limitations of such facilities and the presence of other conditions such as security issues that inhibit project staff total involvement.
- Most of the EMIS personnel in Mareb and the other two targeted governorates are not specialized in this or related fields of study.

### **Statement of Scope of Work for Subsequent Quarters**

The scope of work for the remainder of this calendar year is spelled out in detail in the approved May to December 2008 Work Plan. Emphasis throughout the critical October-December quarter ahead will, of necessity, be balancing the completion of the essential technical activities for each of the components while laying the foundation for the Life of Project (LOP) and detailed 2009 Work Plans. The planning, while already underway, requires a concerted effort and common understanding among all involved stakeholders. By the end of October, the plans for finalizing the fieldwork and data gathering fundamental to planning for the new Governorates of Rayma and Hodaida as well as the southern region of Amran must be completed. November will basically be dedicated to this fieldwork phase and initial data analysis in order for well-founded plans to be shaped during December. As part of the planning process, a Performance Management Plan and a monitoring and evaluation plan are to be designed and developed to review the progress of the project in a formative mode and incorporated into the overall work plan for the life of the project. In order to complete the process, upfront the project staff will need to apply its knowledge and experience wisely to make certain that the 2009 Work Plan is aligned with the Annual Work Plan of the MOE. In doing so, this plan and the LOP WP will need to apply the building blocks expressed in the approved BEST-Yemen Project Application for Assistance so as to ensure sustainability and optimum impact for the remainder of 2008 through the anticipated completion date of December 2012.

In closing the report for the period of July to September 2008 while looking ahead to subsequent quarters, plans will also need to be in place so as to minimize the impact of challenges such as the security risk that remains, the current and anticipated increased use of schools and school personnel in preparation for the April 2009 national elections, and the strains and stress on project resources required to straddle the planning, work and reporting to be satisfactorily completed in the governorates targeted under the BE Project, while fully engaging in the comprehensive, complex process of initiating new basic education development activities in at least two new governorates.