

President's International Education Initiative Expanded Education for the World's Poorest Children Yemen Fact Sheet

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Education Overview

Yemen's education indicators are among the worst in the Middle East. Fewer than half of Yemenis are literate, and the literacy rate for women is particularly low, at 29%. Primary school attendance is 40% for girls, with only 13% of them going on to secondary school. More than 32% of the children in Yemen are out-of-school.

Key Elements of the Fast Track Initiative (FTI)

The FTI framework is at the heart of Yemen's Basic Education Development Strategy (BEDS). BEDS was developed prior to the re-opening of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission in Yemen, but all education activities correlate with BEDS and therefore the FTI. FTI is supported by all donors who work in concert with the Yemen Ministry of Education to implement its annual work plan aimed at achieving the BEDS goals. Currently the education donor group's rotating chairperson is from the Netherlands Embassy, and the deputy chair is from USAID. The Fast Track Initiative was created in 2002 as a partnership between developing countries and donors to accelerate the delivery of universal primary education in the world's poorest countries.

Current Program

The USAID education program is focused on improving basic education, especially for women and girls in five remote and underserved governorates. The EQUIP1 program was launched in 2004 to support community-based primary school activities, in addition to literacy, numeracy, and life-skills education through classes and mobile outreach. Results to date include the development of a catalog of Ministry of Education-approved teaching aids to assist headmasters and teachers in acquiring educational aids through ministry channels, as well as to help other donors intending to support schools in Yemen. In addition, a Renovation Risk Management System was developed and used to assess the repair needs of 77 schools; a mobile repair team to support self-help efforts to maintain facilities, furniture, and equipment is now functional; 100 community-based organizations (parent councils) were formed and strengthened; and to date, more than 1700 teachers and school administrators have been trained in student-centered and active learning techniques.

Illustrative Next Steps of the New Initiative

In order to assist the government in reforming its education system in FY 2008, USAID has developed new programs to improve the teaching of reading, writing, and mathematics. USAID will continue to conduct in-service training for teachers, renovate and expand schools in needy communities, and support the development of Parent Councils. In addition, USAID will support the government's decentralization goals in the education sector by providing officials at the governorate and district levels training in data collection, data management and using data for informed decision-making. Additional funds in FY 2009 would allow USAID to assist the government in expanding these new approaches, such as in-service training and decentralized planning and reporting, throughout the country's education system.