



Quarterly Report:

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

April 1 to June 30, 2009



Submitted by:

Academy for Educational Development

*7th
Quarterly Report*

Submission: July 2009

Table of Contents

List of Acronyms	iv
Overview	1
BEST Mission and Objectives	2
Charting the Way Forward	3
1. Administration and Operations	3
Project Advisory Board Meeting in June	3
USAID/Y Mission Director Visit to the BEST-Yemen Office	3
BEST Staff Professional Development Retreat	4
AED Financial Training in Cairo	4
2. Technical Approach: Themes, Activities, Challenges, Accomplishments and Lessons Learned	5
Closing Sustainability Workshops and Gender Consultancy	
Closing Workshops in the Governorates of Amran, Mareb and Shabwah	5
Gender Equity Consultancy and Orientation Presentation	5
Training Activities	
School Headmasters Training in Mareb Governorate	6
Professional Development Workshops in Amran, Mareb and Shabwah Governorates	7
Number of Participants Attending the Professional Development Workshops	8
Community Participation Activities	
Project Selected and Trained School Social Workers in Rayma, Amran and Hodaida	9
An Open Day to Promote Community Participation and Girls' Education in Amran	10
Adult Literacy Activities	
Field Visit to Document Adult Literacy Activities in Mareb and Shabwah	11
Refresher Training for Adult Literacy Facilitators in Amran Governorate	12
Selection of Adult Literacy Facilitator Inspectors in the Governorates of Amran, Rayma and Hodeida	12
BEST-Yemen Builds the Capacity of Community Based Female Adult Literacy Facilitators and Inspectors and Representatives from LAEO in Hodeida and Rayma	13
<i>BEST Yemen Project Seventh Quarterly Report, April to June 2009</i>	ii

School Renovation Activities

Pre-bid Session for Structural Assessment Design of MPC and Schools to be Renovated	14
Project Receives Favorable Response to RFPs on School Renovation Activities for 2009	14
Project Conducts School Building Repair and Maintenance Concepts Workshop for Schools in Amran Governorate	15
Project Completes Major Renovation of “30 November School” and Construction of Multi-purpose Center in Bayhan District	15

Education Management Information Systems Activities

BEST-Yemen Project Employs Education Management Information Systems Coordinator	16
BEST-Yemen Project M&E International Consultancy	17
EMIS International Consultancy and Orientation Workshop Completed	17
Project Conducted EMIS Needs Assessment Visits to Hodaida and Rayma	18
BEST-Yemen Facilitates a Five-Day Training Course in Maintenance of Computer Networks for ICT Directorate Staff from Amran, Mareb and Shabwah Governorates	19
Baseline Data Collection Finalized for 58 Schools in Amran, Rayma and Hodeida Governorates	19
BEST-Yemen Conducts Students Achievement Assessment in Math and Arabic Subjects for Grades 1-3 Students from Amran, Mareb and Shabwah Governorates	19
Statement of Work for the Next Quarter	21

Appendix

Annual 2009 Work Plan: Accomplishments to Dates

List of Acronyms

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

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

Overview

This Seventh Quarterly Report for the Basic Education Support and Training (BEST) Yemen Project covers the period of April 1 to June 30, 2009. It was a quarter of intensification of activities in all thematic areas, perhaps highlighted by the significant advances in the improved planning and implementation of activities associated with the Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) Component due in great measure to the employment of a highly capable Component Coordinator and assistance from the EMIS international consultant within one month after filing the EMIS Coordinator vacancy. Timely international consultancies in the areas of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Gender Equity also strengthened the foundation for a successful quarter and for related planning and project implementation to follow for the remainder of the life of the project. The M&E consultancy contributed to the completion of all essential baseline data gathering for quality management and monitoring of the project through the PMP (Performance Management Plan) and PAMP (Project Advancement Monitoring Plan) completed and approved in earlier quarters. The Gender Equity Consultancy focused on strengthening an integrated approach to gender within the project, and resulted in gender activity and planning guidelines, gender assessment planning, gender-sensitive indicators for monitoring and evaluation, and the terms of reference for a proposed project "Gender Equity Committee." During the quarter, the project provided another boost to the professional development of individual team members and the project team as a whole, by conducting its second "Professional Development Retreat." The technical team members conducted a series of eight closing workshops focused on sustainability for the districts targeted under the Basic Education (EQUIP1) Project in the governorates of Amran, Mareb and Shabwah. Substantial numbers of headmasters and teachers were also trained as part of the closing down activities in these governorates. The stage was set for adult literacy activities in the eight new districts in Amran, Hodaida and Rayma as well with the finalized selection and training of sixty-eight social workers and fifty adult literacy facilitators. The activities for the School Renovation Component were accelerated and, among other accomplishments, the major renovation for the "30 November School" in Bayhan, Shabwah was finalized and the school was turned over to authorities. The EMIS needs assessment in six districts in Rayma and Hodeida added to the foundation formed to contribute to success in that and other areas in the new districts and school communities, while the component contributed to sustainability of EMIS activities in the districts under the BE Project by conducting a five-day training for six ICT Directorate staff from Amran, Mareb and Shabwah. All in all, the seventh quarter proved to be an active one that resulted in accomplishments that are certain to ensure improved sustainability of past interventions while enhancing the foundation for genuine success with the investments to be made in basic education under BEST-Yemen through December 2012.

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-Yemen has expanded 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 2009 and will be 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 so as to ensure complementation. BEST-Yemen 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-Yemen Project 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-Yemen Project 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.*

Charting the Way Forward

The quarterly performance report period from April through June 2009 can be summarized as one of closing down activities in Shabwah and Mareb and those parts of Amran that were originally under the Basic Education (EQUIP1) Project, while accelerating the approved activities in the eight new districts and 58 schools under the BEST (EQUIP2) Project. The emphasis was on sustainability in the closing down of activities in the mentioned governorates and school community sites. Only the activities related to the special school renovations and constructions in Shabwah and support activities in Mareb with the Al Thawrah Boys' School were extended by design. The activities related to My Arabic Library were delayed until the time that the review of the books is completed by a MOE-designated MAL Review Committee. With the completion last quarter of the selection of the schools and communities in the new governorates, the field work there was implemented as per the work plan with minor delays in some instances. Two international consultancies resulted in the improvements expected in EMIS with special emphasis on the role of the BEST-Yemen Project in this area as well as follow-up technical assistance in the final phase of planning and implementing the baseline collection process. A third international consultancy in the area of gender equity was also completed with results that are having immediate impact on the integration of gender across all project components. The activities, accomplishments, challenges and lessons learned during the seventh quarter of the project are covered in the remainder of this document in the categories of Administration and Operations followed by Technical. Accomplishments in the Closing Work Plan and those under BEST in the new districts and governorates are summarized in the two charts that constitute the Appendix. In the next and subsequent quarters, 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.

1. Administration and Operations

1.1 BEST-Yemen Project Advisory Board Meeting in June

A Project Advisory Board meeting was conducted on June 22nd. The Deputy Minister for Projects and Equipments Sector chaired the meeting attended by representatives from the following MOE sectors: Girls' Education, LEAO, Teacher Training and Certification, EMIS/Technical Office, USAID and the BEST COP and DCOP. Topics covered included presentations and discussions on the 6th Quarterly Report and the three international consultancies recently completed in the areas of M&E, EMIS and Gender Equity.

1.2 Mission Director Visit to the BEST-Yemen Office

The USAID/Yemen Mission Director visited the BEST-Yemen office on the 27th of June. A presentation was made by the COP on the project. This was followed by discussion and, upon arrival of other implementers, brainstorming about the areas for synchronization among the projects working in sectors such as health, which are receiving US Government funding in Yemen. This was followed by a tour of the BEST Project offices.

1.3 BEST Staff Professional Development Retreat

From May 7 through 9, the BEST-Yemen Project conducted a “Professional Development Retreat” in Hodeida. The objectives of this second total-staff “retreat” reflected the theme of professional development. The outcomes ranged from increased individual skills development in IT, time management and planning to report writing. The overall purpose was enhanced team performance. This professional development activity contributed to extending team members’ knowledge of one another and the diverse roles and responsibilities of the entire staff. In-depth understandings of the main tasks of each of the project units were also gained through sessions, such as the one on conducting needs analysis through the REFLECT Methodology presented by the Adult Literacy Component Coordinator. In addition, as a result of the retreat, component coordinators are using a new monthly reporting and planning form. This form will serve as a key document in preparing for project deliverables such as quarterly reports, the USAID/Y Weekly and project Calendar for Key Activities. The retreat was mandatory for all project staff members and included group and individual sessions.



1.4 AED Financial Training in Cairo

Two members of the BEST-Yemen Project Management Team, the COP and Basic Education Support Advisor, participated in three days of Financial Training from June 16 – 18 in Cairo, Egypt. The training, which was supported by the AED Home Office in Washington, covered an array of topics, such as orientation to the firm’s organizational structure, ethics and compliance, roles and responsibilities of field and home office representatives, financial reporting, procurements, various policies and procedures, project deliverables and office inventory, audits, and field office close-down processes. In addition to Yemen, participants included representatives from Jordan, Sudan, West Bank, Palestine, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Senegal, and the training staff, all of whom were from the USA, including senior vice presidents in the areas of finance, management, contracts and technology.

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

Closing Sustainability Workshops and Gender Consultancy

2.1 Closing Workshops in the Governorates of Amran, Mareb and Shabwah.

From June 2 through 6, the BEST-Yemen Project conducted a series of eight closing workshops in eight districts in the governorates of Amran, Mareb and Shabwa that were attended by 439 participants (76 females and 363 males)-- social workers, headmasters, fathers' and mothers' council's, teacher's inspectors, and representative of the local



governing councils. The main objectives of the workshops were to officially announce the closing of project activities in Shabwah and Mareb and select districts in Amran as well as to give the communities and the local educational stakeholders an opportunity to explain what the challenges and the problems they faced before the intervention of the project, and what had changed as a result of the project intervention. They also discussed the achievements of the project, the lessons learned along the way, and the roles and responsibilities of the local communities, schools and the Governorate Offices of Education in sustaining the successes.

2.2 Gender Equity Consultancy and Orientation Presentation

From May 13 through June 1, the BEST-Yemen Project hosted a Gender Equity consultancy by Dr. Kangbai Konate, a short-term international consultant who worked closely with the project Gender Equity Component Coordinator to address various aspects of gender, including the formulation of a strategy that ensures that gender is mainstreamed and implemented in all programmatic activities of the project. The consultant also addressed and produced deliverables on gender activity and planning guidelines, gender assessment planning, gender-sensitive indicators for monitoring and evaluation, and the terms of reference for a proposed project "Gender Equity Committee." Jointly with the Gender Equity Coordinator, they conducted a gender orientation presentation for the project staff which was also attended by USAID Senior Education Advisors. In this presentation, they addressed several approaches to improving project performance in this significant area. This orientation also enriched the knowledge of the project staff about the

concept of “Gender in Education” and the importance of gender mainstreaming within project activities. This cross-cutting principle involves integrating gender perspectives and gender analysis into all stages of designing, implementing and evaluating project activities, policies and programs. Gender mainstreaming also means paying attention to the points of view, experiences, and needs of both men and women in all relevant activities and in all areas of involvement with the targeted communities. The impact of the project’s enhanced attention to gender equity will contribute to increased enrollment of girls as well as improved performance of females in the education of the nation’s children.



Training Activities

2.3 School Headmasters Training in Mareb Governorate



From April 4-16, the project trained a total of 108 school headmasters (100 males and 8 females) in a twelve-day workshop for representatives from one hundred and forty-five schools in the Governorate of Mareb. This Part III training mainly focused on providing the headmasters with skills required for effective school management. The participants enhanced their abilities to function as positive team players and constructive colleagues in a school setting. They also were prepared to encourage a spirit of optimism, enthusiasm and self-motivation while

creating a positive attitude within the school environment. Among other areas, special consideration was given in the training to the handicapped, performance assessment, and the use of alternative ways for disciplining students so as to avoid corporal punishment. The skills required to formulate a school-based strategic management plan were also addressed in Part

III of the headmaster training program. The training of headmasters in Mareb and other governorates targeted under BEST-Yemen has contributed to a more dedicated and competent corps of Yemeni school headmasters. In Mareb alone, the headmasters of the 145 schools that participated in this training are impacting approximately 12,000 school children in grades 1 to 9.

2.4 Professional Development Workshops in Amran Mareb and Shabwah Governorates

From 31 May through 5 June, BEST-Yemen conducted a series of eight professional development (PD) workshops for three hundred and sixty-three (363) (53 females and 310 males) teachers, teacher inspectors, school headmasters and district officers of education, heads of training and inspection departments and representatives of the local governing councils in eight districts in Amran, Mareb and Shabwah governorates. This PD workshop came as a result of the teacher inspectors visits to seventy-seven targeted schools over a three-week period. The workshops provided additional training in response to the major weaknesses identified during the school visits in the performance of teachers, grades 1-3, and proposed solutions to the practical problems faced by the teachers that were difficult to solve during the short professional development visits to schools. This required the participation of the heads of the Training and Inspection Departments. This PD workshop also helped the participants to document the major successes and improvements noticed in teachers' performance during the inspectors' visits. It was observed that the teachers could plan well for their lessons and effectively prepare annual work plans. It was noted further that class seating arrangements were pedagogically sound and classrooms were clean and well ventilated. Teachers were also observed to be effectively producing and using educational aides from locally available materials. Teacher interacted with students and students were not just passive listeners.



Number of Participants Attending the Professional Development Workshops

Governorates	Cluster	Date	Participant in the Workshops												
			Teachers		Headmasters		Inspectors		DG' of Education		Local governing councils		Total		
			M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	T
Amran	Amran	5/31	13	3	6	1	6	2	6	0	1	0	32	6	38
	Thula	6/2	35	2	13	0	4	0	5	0	2	0	59	2	61
Mareb	Al-Wadi	5/31	20	7	8	1	3	0	7	0	2	0	40	8	48
	Al-Jobah	6/2	26	2	12	0	3	0	7	0	1	0	49	2	51
	Majzer	6/3	20	7	10	0	2	0	7	0	1	0	40	7	47
Shabwah	Attaq	5/31	14	5	5	1	4	0	4	0	0	0	27	6	33
	Bayhan	6/2	28	13	9	2	4	0	2	0	0	0	43	15	58
	Khora	6/6	13	6	4	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	20	7	27
Total			169	45	67	7	28	2	39	0	7	0	310	53	363

Lessons Learned

- For a training to be successful, it should be carried out based on a need. From the headmasters and teachers impressions, there was a pressing need for such training, as it included important topics essential to the professional development of the school headmasters as well as science subject teachers.
- Proper coordination with the Central Ministry of Education (Training Sector) 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. This further enhances sustainability.
- Direct supervision of the training events by the project field office team leaders ensures that the training activities will be implemented effectively. This helps prevent difficulties and to increase the timely resolution of others, contributing to the success of training events.

Community Participation Activities

2.5 Project Selected and Trained School Social Workers in Rayma, Amran and Hodeida

From April 17 to May 7, the project facilitated the selection of sixty-eight (50 males and 18 females) school Social Workers (SWs) in the fifty-eight targeted schools in the governorates of Amran, Rayma and Hodeida. The selection of these SWs was based on interviews and written assessments as per the criteria established by the Ministry of Education. The selection was immediately followed by a twelve-day training aimed at preparing the SWs to launch the process of activating community participation in the project sites. The participants were trained in the areas of skills required to satisfactorily activate sustained involvement of the community in the improvement of the quality of education through approaches that are intended to raise the awareness of relevant stakeholders of their roles. This encompasses planning and mobilizing field activities such as the formation and training of fathers' and mothers' council in the targeted schools.



2.6 An Open Day to Promote Community Participation and Girls' Education in Amran.

On 15 June, the BEST-Yemen Project, in collaboration with the Offices of Education at the governorate and the district levels, organized an open day to promote girls' education in the districts of Amran and Thula. This high profile event was attended by 130 participants (100 males and 30 females), including director generals (DGs) of education, representatives of the local governing council, sheikhs, school headmasters, social workers, and heads of fathers' and mothers' councils. Influential community leaders also participated. Fourteen schools volunteered to prepare an exhibition in which they displayed drawings and educational aides prepared by the teachers and students on topics such as science, physics, math, and geography. The exhibition also included poems and dramas that were meant to increase people's awareness of the importance of girls' education. The activity provided a forum to discuss ways to promote awareness of girls' education among the relevant stakeholders, identify problems that hinder girls' education within district communities, and propose practical solutions to decrease the dropout rate among girls. Distinguished social workers, fathers' and mothers' councils and headmasters were honored for their outstanding performance and the support they rendered to their schools and communities. The end result of this open day event was to highlight the contribution made to girls' education and promote community participation in the improvement of education in the two districts.

Challenges

- Apparent unwillingness of district officers to cooperate in nominating a person from each school.
- Selection of social workers was postponed for a week due to a request from DOE.
- Some nominees in the list provided by the District Officers of Education did not meet the set of MOE and the project criteria.
- Social workers still encounter some difficulties, such as the availability of adequate time to dedicate to their responsibilities, since most social workers have a hectic teaching schedule.
- Some DOE department officials' unwillingness to participate in the open day activities without getting paid.

Lessons Learned

- Selection of local trainees to train social workers had a great impact in improving the quality of training.
- Involving MOE community participation heads in social workers interview and training had a great impact in the success of the training and motivated the social workers to take the training seriously and participate effectively.
- Headmasters' interaction in honoring distinguished students, social workers, fathers and mothers councils played an important role in strengthening the relationship between the school and the community
- Local community was impressed with the BEST Yemen project for organizing the open day activity, and encouraging participation in all the activities has contributed to the success of the open activity

Adult Literacy Activities

2.7 Field Visit to Document Adult Literacy Activities in Mareb and Shabwah

From April 25 through May 1, the BEST-Yemen Project Communication Team Leader and Gender Equity Coordinator conducted a week-long set of field visits to six districts in the governorates of Mareb and Shabwah. The main objective of these field visits was to document the adult literacy (AL) activities in the field under the two USAID-funded basic education projects over the past two years. This was accomplished through interviews with the adult learners, facilitators and education inspectors so as to collect information for use in “success stories.” During the visits, the project distributed over 600 copies of the “Color and Learn” book that was created with the help of the female learners in 46 adult literacy classes. The adult learners chose the themes of the book and the intended learning outcomes of the publication. The book reinforces life skills and other messages chosen by the mothers such as general hygiene, proper manners at home and in school, along with gender equity conduct. As a result of these site visits, the project has drafted five exemplary success stories, listed key adult literacy accomplishments, and proposed a set of recommendations for sustainability. An observation was made that it was the first time that adult learners have ever been involved in creating educational materials for their children so as to create an opportunity for them to join their children in reading.



2.8 Refresher Training for Adult Literacy Facilitators in Amran Governorate

From April 11 through 16, the project facilitated an Adult Literacy Refresher Training Workshop for forty-six (all females) AL Facilitators from Amran and Thula Districts in Amran Governorate. This training was also attended by four AL Inspectors and two (2) Literacy and Adult Education Organization (LAEO) officials from both districts. The training focused on identifying strengths and weaknesses in Level II of the REFLECT Methodology used in AL classes. The training enabled participants to illustrate problems faced and identify measures to overcome challenges in the AL activities. In addition to the Level II training, Level I refresher training was conducted for twenty-four (all females) Adult Literacy Facilitators from Amran and Thula District. In attendance were two AL Inspectors and two LAEO representatives.

2.9 Selection of Adult Literacy Facilitator Inspectors in the Governorates of Rayma and Hodaida

From April 4 through 16, the BEST Project finalized selection of a total of thirty-one (31) new Adult Literacy (AL) facilitators and six (6) Inspectors who will facilitate thirty (30) new Adult Literacy classes in the six new districts in the governorates of Rayma and Hodaida. The

selection process was done in coordination with local communities, Governorate and District Offices of Education (GOE and DOE), the Literacy and Adult Education Organization (LAEO), as well as representatives from the local governing council. The selection of these facilitators was based on established criteria, including the results of written assessment, a minimum level of a secondary school graduates, and being a member of the same community where the AL classes are to be conducted.

2.10 BEST-Yemen Project Builds the Capacity of Community Based Female Adult Literacy Facilitators and Inspectors and Representatives from LAEO in Hodaida and Rayma

The project facilitated a twelve-day training from June 14 through 28 on the REFLECT Methodology being utilized by the Adult Literacy Component. A total of fifty (19 males and 31 females) were in the attendance. These included, among others, Adult Literacy Facilitators and Inspectors and thirteen (12 males 1 female) Adult Literacy Director General, and representatives from LAEO offices in Hodaida and Rayma Governorates. As an outcome of this training, all participants will, in turn, train and supervise thirty (30) new adult literacy classes in the two governorates. This training aims to orient facilitators and inspectors to the REFLECT Methodology. Skills were also developed on utilizing ways of managing dialogue, specifying tools that will help identify problems and challenges from the local environment, and identifying solutions. The REFLECT Methodology mainly depends on drawing local maps (such as the learners village), and identifying problems that participants might face in their communities. Facilitators learn about basic instructional methods to improve phonic abilities so as to help learners sound out words easily using certain symbols. This training will be followed by an additional two days of training for the thirteen representatives from the LAEO offices. This will basically focus on supervision, data collection and analysis, report writing and problem-solving related to difficulties in implementing the REFLECT Methodology. These two trainings are intended to establish a solid base for adult literacy in the two new governorates so as to be able to follow-up with the opening of a projected 30 classes for adult literacy in the designated communities under BEST-Yemen.

Challenges

- The project helped open AL classes in areas that are densely populated and where the illiteracy rates are high. In many of these places, there are no other donors who have supported literacy classes. This created an extra burden on the BEST-Yemen project to open more classes to accommodate the increasing number of learners.
- Provision of AL Facilitators to areas that lack secondary school graduates who can facilitate the AL classes.
- In most of the targeted communities/villages, very few girls have completed secondary school and those who have, often have weak educational levels. This was apparent from the interviews and the written assessment test results.

Lessons Learned

- The AL classes helped fill the gap by providing AL learning opportunities in places where LAEO was not able to open classes.

- Be in close contact with the local authorities and communities because they are key to encouraging women to continue with AL classes.
- From the BEST–Yemen Project experience, the AL classes helped empower participants, boost their self-esteem, and enabled them to express themselves with confidence. From the project’s previous experience, remarkable changes in attitude were noticed in inspectors, facilitators and the women participants. As a result of continuous training and follow-up, inspectors and facilitators now have the ability to teach and run literacy classes effectively, manage discussions smoothly, and to solve problems raised by the mothers. This successful experience will be replicated in the new targeted communities
- Good coordination with the field helps solve problems that might arise during the implementation of AL activities in a timely manner, thus minimizing the negative affects that might hinder the implementation process.

School Renovation Activities

2.11 Pre-bid Session for Structural Assessment Design of MPC and Schools to be Renovated

On April 12, the project held a pre-bid session at the Sheraton hotel attended by 30 engineering firms who previously had received the terms of reference for the structural assessment design of 12 multipurpose centers and 26 schools to be renovated under BEST-Yemen as part of the phase one for major renovations. This meeting was attended by the USAID/Y Basic Education Advisor, BEST Project COP, the Chief Architect and the construction lawyer. In this meeting, the chief architect had the opportunity to answer all the inquiries raised by the engineering firms regarding the Request for Proposals of the structural assessment of 26 schools and the design of 12 multipurpose centers to be renovated.

2.12 Project Receives Favorable Response to RFPs on School Renovation Activities for 2009

On April 12, the project held two Pre-bid Sessions at the Sheraton Hotel as a follow-up to the RFPs for structural assessment services for twenty-six schools in the Governorates of Amran, Hodaida and Rayma and for the preparation of the structural design, bills of quantities and cost estimates for twelve multi-purpose centers in the same three governorates. This was the first major step in the direction of school renovations under the BEST-Yemen Project, which is working in a total of eight new districts in these governorates. The process will ensure that the targeted schools are structurally sound for renovations and that there is no risk that structural damage will occur during renovations for decades thereafter. A total of thirty engineering firms who previously received the TORs expressed interest and responded before the deadline of the 22nd of April. The two sessions provided the opportunity to present more detailed explanations and updates to all interest firms regarding the issues on payment, bank bonds, legal matters and other requirement for satisfactory response to the RFPs.

2.13 Project Conducts School Building Repair and Maintenance Concepts Workshop for Schools in Amran Governorate

From May 12-18, the Basic Education Support and Training (BEST) Project conducted School Building Repair and Maintenance Concepts Workshop for Eighty-Four (84) (82 males and 2 females) participants from twenty-four (24) schools in Amran and Thula Districts. Participants included school headmasters, teachers, and heads of fathers' and mothers' councils, social workers, and engineers, representatives from District Offices of Education, Governorate Office of Education, and Director Generals of Education. This six-day maintenance workshop helped orient the participants about the importance of continuous maintenance, increase each participant's knowledge of and skills in basic repair and maintenance tools and concepts, and train the participants on the use of the MOE repair and maintenance manuals in making early alerts and reporting about the physical conditions of school buildings. The results of this workshop will help contribute to extending the service life of buildings and indirectly reducing the cost of construction and renovation of the school buildings.

2.14 Project Completes Major Renovation of "30 November School" and Construction of Multi-purpose Center in Bayhan District

The Basic Education Support and Training Project completed the renovation work and construction of a multi-purpose center at "30th November School" in Bayhan District in the Governorate of Shabwah on June 7. School renovation included renovating and rehabilitating twenty-two existing classrooms, seven latrines and making the school accessible to the handicapped. Major Renovation at the school also included construction of a MPC that accommodates 100 people. The center is meant for community meetings, training and other school community activities. The MPC has a store and separate latrines for females and males. An official site handover was conducted by the project Chief Architect and Deputy Chief of Party who did the initial delivery of the buildings to the Governorate Office of Education and the communities in Bayhan District.



Challenges

- Unstable security conditions.
- School building's future sustainability in terms of lack of knowledge about school building maintenance tools and methods, lack of local skilled labors and local experts.
- Lack of awareness about the importance of maintenance
- Lack of good communication between the Central Ministry of Education and the local community.

Lessons Learned

- Strict monitoring of trainers and participants during the lectures and the field visits to the schools.
- The importance of having an agenda established well in advance of the workshop.
- The necessity of developing a national maintenance strategy including manuals and a training course in maintenance.

Successes

- Maintenance committee members are beginning to interact seriously regarding maintenance through dialogue with the engineers and trainers.
- Maintenance committees are now able to effectively use resources such as tools, methods and manuals.
- Follow-up and feedback through participants' questions about the next step are taking place, which include distributing the small repair and maintenance tools kits.

Suggestions for Improvement

- Revising the curriculum to avoid repeating and duplicating the content.
- Reducing the workload for the workshop coordinator and giving more advance time for better planning.
- MOE maintenance department engineers need capacity building support on issues related to their mission and scope of work.
- Using the multi-purpose rooms at the district level for future training workshops.

Education Management Information Systems Activities

2.15 BEST-Yemen Project Employs Education Management Information Systems Coordinator

As of 11 April, the project has an experienced Education Management Information Systems professional on its staff who has taken on the responsibility of leading this component of the project in coordination with the Ministry of Education, so as to establish a foundation for substantive reform that will support relevant and sustainable educational development in Yemen. Mr. Mustafa Mustafa Refat holds a Masters Degree in Information Technology from the Technical High Institute in Ilmenau, Germany and has extensive experience in both EMIS and Monitoring and Evaluation in the education sector, having spent 13 years with the German

Technical Cooperation (GTZ). Mr. Mustafa has been working closely with the BEST-Yemen Chief of Party and the EMIS counterparts in the Information Communications Technology Unit within the Technical Office of the MOE. Working with the COP, Mustafa provided valuable inputs for the scope of work for Dr. Thomas J. Welsh, International EMIS Consultant, who advised the project and MOE in this significant area during the month of May.

2.16 BEST-Yemen Project M&E International Consultancy



From April 27-May 6, BEST-Yemen completed a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) consultancy conducted by Dr. Teshome Nekatibeb, who assisted the project technically in the development of a complete battery of instruments for carrying out the baseline studies to be administered in the new districts and school communities in the governorates of Amran, Hodaida and Rayma. The instruments address all of the indicators of the project Performance Management Plan (PMP) and Project Advancement Monitoring Plan (PAMP) approved in January 2009 by

USAID/Yemen. The consultant also developed a training manual on “Field Research and Data Collection Methods in Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation” for data collectors for PMP/PAMP Indicators. The consultant provided training for key project staff and data collectors in the areas of instrumentation, data gathering techniques, data analysis and reports required in the effective implementation of the PMP and PAMP. Dr. Nekatibeb oversaw the design and completion of the remaining baseline studies for indicators lacking in the 58 school communities in the eight new districts. The results of this consultancy serve the dual purpose of essential in-house capacity for immediate and future data collection needs and access to a complete set of tools for implementing on-going and impact evaluations under BEST-Yemen through December 2012.

2.17 EMIS International Consultancy and Orientation Workshop Completed

From May 13 through 26, the BEST-Yemen Project also hosted an Education Management Information Systems consultant, Dr. Tom Welsh. He worked closely with the project EMIS Component Coordinator to address an array of issues and plans for the project resulting in the analysis of the existing status of the implementation of EMIS within the MOE and options that the BEST-Yemen Project might take in responding effectively to identified needs at the diverse levels within the Ministry. Dr. Welsh, together with the Project EMIS Coordinator, also conducted an EMIS orientation workshop for twelve (7 males and 5 females) participants including the USAID/Y Senior Education Advisors, DG for Information and Communication System at the Central Ministry, a representative from the general directorate for statistic and planning, and BEST Project technical team members. This orientation workshop helped enhance the participants’ knowledge of the importance of the Educational Management Information System in the education sector and its role in decision making. The workshop

helped anchor the concept of a dynamic decentralized EMIS that promotes information-based decision making while providing the participants with a basis to enable them to advocate this concept. Discussion followed related to the role of BEST-Yemen in the promotion of EMIS in the Ministry of Education.



2.18 Project Conducted EMIS Needs Assessment Visits to Hodaida and Rayma



From June 13 through 17, the BEST-Yemen Project, represented by its Education Management Information Systems Coordinator and the National EMIS Coordinator, who serves as the Director General for ICT in the Ministry of Education, visited the six targeted districts in Hodaida and Rayma. The objective of the visit was to do an assessment of the status of the EMIS situation in the new governorates in order to identify the assistance that the project will provide. Fruitful discussions were conducted with

the leadership of the visited offices and the EMIS and management staff in each of the governorates. Essential information was collected about the EMIS situation in each office, focusing on the produced data, the utilization of data by the management staff, and the status of EMIS infrastructure. The following are among the key findings and conclusions resulting from the assessment visits: the gap between the data production and the data utilization in all offices should be bridged; the annual school survey should be accessible by all managers and properly utilized as the corner stone of EMIS system; the concept of an "information based education management" should be anchored among the managers in the education offices; and a comprehensive training program for both the data producers and the data users is crucial to professionalize the data production and the management in the education offices.

2.19 BEST-Yemen Project Facilitates a Five-Day Training Course in Maintenance of Computer Networks for ICT Directorate Staff from Amran, Mareb and Shawbah Governorates

From 27 June through 1 July, the project facilitated a five-day training course in maintenance of computer networks for six Information and Communications Technology (ICT) directorates' staff from Amran, Mareb and Shabwah Governorates. This training course was implemented under the framework of the BEST-Yemen Project closing activities for sustainability in the three governorates, and aimed at providing the relevant ICT staff with the necessary theoretical and practical skills that enable them to independently maintain the computer networks established with the BEST-Yemen Project technical assistance. The first four days of the training took place in the training hall at the Ministry of Education, where the trainees learned the theoretical part and exercised practical work on the Ministry's network. On the last day, the training took place in the Governorate Office of Education (GOE) of Amran, where the trainees worked the entire day on the network of the GOE. The course was planned, prepared, and implemented in full cooperation with the Technical Office and the General Directorate for ICT in the Ministry of Education.

2.20 Baseline Data Collection Finalized for 58 Schools in Amran, Rayma and Hodaida Governorates



From May 20-29, BEST-Yemen Project finalized the process of baseline data collection for fifty-eight schools, (eleven clusters schools and forty-seven satellite schools) in eight targeted districts in the governorates of (Southern) Amran, Rayma and Hodaida. This nine-day baseline data collection fieldwork activity was carried out by fourteen data collection consultants (eleven males and three females) and five architects who, with the help of the community, identified the number of classrooms

required in each school, and documented the physical conditions of the school before intervention (i.e., checked the structural integrity of schools before renovation). This data will be used to complete the indicators for the Performance Management Plan and Project Advancement Monitoring Plan to be utilized throughout the life of the project.

2.21 BEST-Yemen Conducts Students Achievement Assessment in Math and Arabic Subjects for Grades 1-3 Students from Amran, Mareb and Shawbah Governorates

From June 23 through 25, the project facilitated the administration of three days of student achievement assessment for 579 students (225 females and 354 males) in grades 1-3 in Arabic and mathematics subjects in school that were targeted under the BE Project. The representative sample of students was selected from 21 targeted schools in Amran, Mareb and Shabwah governorates. This assessment was conducted by thirteen (3 females and 10 males)

well- trained consultants from the Ministry of Education Training Sector, who are specialized and well experienced in this field and have supported the Ministry with similar assessments. The success of this activity was due to the close collaboration of the BEST-Yemen Project with the Director Generals of Education, training and inspection departments at the district and governorate level, as well as school headmasters. The students' test scores in math and Arabic are currently being checked and analyzed, a process that will be finalized early in the next quarter and a detailed report with the students achievement results will be submitted by the M&E Advisor to the COP for review and sharing with USAID/Y.

Challenges

- Maintaining and supporting the experienced and qualified EMIS coordinator now in place with the necessary resources to get the job done:
 - Appointing one more EMIS technically qualified staff member in the ICT area.
 - Integrating the EMIS Component across the other BEST components to provide an integrated approach to the dissemination of the EMIS. This should 'mimic' the information cluster being advocated to the MOE.
 - Using the BEST training team to formulate and implement the EMIS training program under guidance of the EMIS officer.
- Dealing with three different departments of the MOE each claiming some measure of jurisdiction over the National Annual School Survey (NASC) and the EMIS. The Vice Minister has been advised to decide upon a single director charged with the authority and responsibility for the NASC.
- The World Bank providing the operational EMIS and all related and relevant documentation and training materials as soon as possible. Delivering such is informed by the assumption that the EMIS will be a 'national system' that is standardized.

It is further noted that this is a discontinuity with EQUIP1 because, at that time, there was no team developing a National EMIS. The World Bank Project started in November 2007 and to date has been working on MOE payroll and examination systems rather than the EMIS.

Lessons Learned

- An EMIS could be efficient only if it is utilized by the decision makers and the managers for the decision making, planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, and so on. Hence, the EMIS development and the capacity building in this regard should not focus only on the improvement of the data production but should focus at the same time on the improvement of the data interpretation and data utilization by the education managers.

- For an EMIS to be effective and efficient it must be developed, available, understood and applied, not only at one level, but at every level from the Supreme Policy Council to the classroom.

Statement of Work for the Next Quarter

The next quarter of the BEST-Yemen Project, July to September 2009, will need to be one of “closing the chapter” on those activities that, by request and follow-up design, intended to further enhance the good work of USAID/Y in the 77 school communities under the Basic Education/EQUIP1 Project, which officially closed on the 23rd of July 2008. Those remaining activities in the area of School Renovations should be the only ones still underway throughout the quarter along with the plans for the training related to the projected approved books under “My Arabic Library,” which are to be accelerated so as to have them completed in a timely manner. The training for MAL will have to be conducted when teachers are back to school at the start of the new school year, 2009-2010. The early start of Ramadan and the announcement that the academic year will begin after Ramada and Eid may pose an obstacle to these two activities; however, the project technical team is preparing to address this. This underlines the need for an accelerated pace in the first two months of the quarter. As noted in the “Overview” and statement on “Charting the Way Forward” sections earlier in the report, all other activities were to have been formally completed by the end of June 2009 with the emphasis on sustainability. Those few that couldn’t will need to be given special attention and completed satisfactorily. The swing of momentum to the 58 school communities in the eight new districts in Amran, Hodaida and Rayma is critical to ensuring that all the detailed plans and preparations are in place to launch the first full school year of an integrated set of interventions in school community improvements for the newly targeted populations under the BEST-Yemen Project.