



**Quarterly Report:**

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

**October 1 to December 31, 2009**



Submitted by:

**Academy for Educational Development**

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

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## **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>DG</b>	Director General
<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>FDG</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>GOV</b>	Governorate
<b>GOY</b>	Government of Yemen
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communications Technology
<b>LAEO</b>	Literacy and 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>MRT</b>	Mobil Repair Team
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>PC</b>	Parent Council
<b>PAMP</b>	Project Advancement Monitoring Plan
<b>PMP</b>	Performance Management 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

## I. Overview

This Ninth Quarterly Report for the Basic Education Support and Training (BEST) Yemen Project covers the period of October 1 to December 31, 2009. This was an extraordinary challenging quarter especially due to the delay of many of its activities in the previous quarter because of the late initiation of the start of 2008-2009 school year. The year began in October due to the Ramadan vacation and the response to the threat of the spread of the N1H1 epidemic which resulted in postponing core training activities as well as others, including time-sensitive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities. Another unanticipated setback was the need to stop the planning and writing processes initiated at the beginning of the quarter of the 2010 Annual Workplan (AWP) due to the notice of USAID/Yemen's new "stabilization-focused strategy" (SFS) in mid-December, approximately two weeks before the original deadline for submitting the plan. This decision (and, at the time of writing this report, subsequent directives from the Agency) and other factors account for the need to truncate several of the activities acquired as "non-contractual deliverables" from the period of the forerunning (2004-2008) USAID-funded Basic Education (EQUIP1) Project. The particulars regarding this matter are detailed in Section V of this quarterly report; that is, *Annual 2009 Work Plan: Accomplishments to Dates*.

Despite these and other challenges, the project, as detailed in this report, accomplished an array of noteworthy objectives by completing activities that contributed to the establishment of a solid foundation for the work to follow for the remainder of the school year and life of project (LOP). The summary statements below highlight some of the accomplishments across the technical components of the BEST-Yemen Project. These include the following:

1. Conducted a series of CP trainings for heads of sectors, School Social Workers and Social Worker Trainers from the Governorates of Hodeida and Rayma;
2. Facilitated the formation of fathers' and mothers' councils in fifty-eight targeted communities in the governorates of Amran, Rayma and Hodeida;
3. Conducted "Back to School" and gender sensitization training workshop for seventy-three school headmasters in preparation for the new academic year 2009-2010;
4. Helped build the capacity of community-based female Adult Literacy Facilitators and Inspectors in Amran as foundation for cascading the process to participants in newly targeted school communities under the project;
5. Started Phase I of major renovations to twenty-three schools and the building of six new multipurpose community centers (MPCs) in new districts;
6. Completed the final delivery of "30 November School" in Bayhan District in Shabwah Governorate which is one of the high-cost, high-profile carryover activities absorbed by BEST-Yemen from the previous Basic Education Project; and
7. Conducted a series of Educational Management Information Systems (EMIS) training workshops for senior officers in Rayma and Hodeida, contributing to the creation of a solid base for informed decision making.

At the time of writing this report, it is clear that the journey ahead for the project will be even more challenging than the one traveled to date. This is addressed in the *Statement of Work for the Next Quarter* found in Section IV.

## **II. BEST-Yemen Project Mission and Objectives**

The BEST-Yemen Project 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 was aligned with that of the MOE for 2009 and will be for successive years through the LOP. The rationale for doing this is to effectively "mainstream" project workplans with GOY's own educational development plans and implementation strategies so as to ensure complementarity. BEST-Yemen continues to make 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. The need to partner and fulfill other guiding principles and practices, upon which the BEST-Yemen Project has been operating, were further intensified. This came as a result of the challenges of the 9<sup>th</sup> quarter and those anticipated for the remaining time period for this well-founded investment in basic education development and more stable communities across underserved and remote regions of Yemen.

Against the background described above, the central goal and key objectives of BEST are herein reaffirmed.

**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.*

### **III. Reports for the Quarter, October to December 2009**

This section describes the administrative, operational and technical accomplishments over the ninth quarter of the project. Main or core activities are highlighted below by units and components with all planned and accomplished activities incorporated in the “accomplishment charts” presented in Section V.

#### **A. Administration and Operations Report**

##### *Finalized Purchase and Custom Clearance of Project Vehicles*

The project finalized the process of purchasing two vehicles that were ready for use in Hodeida and Rayma to support project activities. Custom clearance was completed and vehicles' customs were insured in November 2009.

#### **B. Technical Report**

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

##### *Training for Heads of Sectors in the Governorates of Amran, Hodeida and Rayma*

From October 25 through 27, the project conducted a three-day training workshop for one hundred and seventy-six participants (115 males and 61 Female), heads of sectors and divisions at the District and the Governorate Offices of Education in Amran, Hodeida and Rayma. The main objectives of this training were to activate the roles of the participants to enhance community participation in schools, increase awareness of the importance of forming fathers' and mothers' councils, and emphasize the role community participation plays in improving the quality of education, especially girls' education. The training also acquainted the participants about the importance of girls' education and the returns it brings to the entire community. Possible solutions to problems that hinder the promotion and progress of girls education within the targeted communities were addressed. This training also provided participants with the necessary skills to enable them to successfully monitor and evaluate community participation activities in their governorates. This and similar training facilitated by the project are intended to establish a solid base for community participation in the three governorates so the participants are able to initiate

and follow-up on community participation while initiating the process of forming fathers' and mothers' councils in the designated communities and schools.

### *Training School Social Workers and Social Worker Trainers*

From November 3 through 5, the project conducted a two-day community participation training for one hundred and eight (118) school social workers and social worker trainers (80 males and 38 females) from the governorates of Amran, Rayma and Hodeida. Among the participants were heads of girls' education and community participation departments, district officers of education and members from the local governing council at each of the participating district and the governorate levels. The main objective of this training was to acquaint the participants with the new Ministry of Education by-law related to the formation of fathers' and mothers' councils in the nation's schools. The training workshop aimed to raise the awareness of relevant stakeholders regarding their roles and responsibilities in the fathers' and mothers' council formation and training processes. This training of the social workers and social worker trainers provided them with skills and mechanisms intended to enable them to activate communities and schools in improving education. The training also addressed the effective use of community service registries in schools. Another result of the training is the preparation of the participants in the formulation of the 2009-2010 community participation action plan to be carried out in each school targeted under the USAID-funded BEST-Yemen Project. As with similar training, this workshop of the two social worker groups contributed substantially to establishing a solid base for community participation in the three governorates, enabling the relevant stakeholders to activate the role of the local community within the targeted schools while initiating the process of forming and training fathers' and mothers' councils in the designated school communities.

### *Formation of Fathers' and Mothers' Councils in Targeted Schools*

From November 6 through 14, the project facilitated the formation and training of seventy fathers' and mothers' councils in fifty-eight targeted communities in the governorates of Amran, Rayma and Hodeida. These councils included forty-four fathers' and twenty-five mothers' councils and one mixed council that included both fathers' and mothers' members. The formation of fifteen other councils was postponed to the month of December due to Eid Holidays. Ahead of the elections process, community mobilization took place. This included training school social workers, conducting consultative meetings with school headmasters and teachers, and sending invitation cards to parents through students to encourage them to attend the elections. Imams of mosques also participated by informing the community on the importance of participating in these elections. The election took place at each school and an estimated total of 6,000 parents (approximately 4,000 fathers and 2,000 mothers) participated. Parents elected their representatives in a democratic manner. The impact of the councils in the schools is helping to increase parental involvement in the educational process, resulting in stronger bonds between the community and school. This also contributes to the promotion of greater awareness among the community on the importance of education as a means of building the individual child and the nation. More immediately, this participation helps enable the school to achieve better with less cost and effort while furthering the enhancement of the teaching and learning environment.



*Workshop to review the MOE CP Monitoring and Evaluation Manual*



From December 15 through 16, the project facilitated a two-day training workshop to review and amend the CP Monitoring and Evaluation Manual of the Ministry of Education. This workshop took place in the governorate of Ibb and was attended by a team of four ToT Trainers (3 male and 1 female). In the workshop, the team revised and amended the sixty-two working papers and activities as per the new forms in the manual related to social workers performance indicators that contained planning, guidance for students, activating fathers' and mothers' role in school and improvement of communications with the local communities. This workshop constituted one of the significant contributions that the project has made in support the Ministry of Education in improving its manuals to better serve Yemeni schools and communities.



From December 19 through 28, the project facilitated a nine-day Monitoring and Evaluation Training Workshop in Rayma and Hodeida for a total of twenty-eight (15 females and 13 males) Social Worker Trainers, and heads of girls' education and community participation departments. In this workshop, the CP team discussed areas for improvement in the performance of the community participation activities, as well as ways of improving monitoring and evaluation of these activities. Strengths and weaknesses in the social worker trainers' performance and means for improvement were also addressed. Professional development meetings and visits to targeted schools were planned. The training workshop also helped strengthen their skills in planning and monitoring the activities of the social workers and fathers' and mothers' councils in targeted communities. It also further enhanced their skills in report writing and managing meetings. A similar nine-day training workshop was conducted in Amran from December 22 through 31, for a total of ten participants (6 males and 4 females).

#### *Formation of Additional Select Fathers and Mothers Councils in Targeted Schools*

From December 10 through 20, and immediately after Eid, the project facilitated the formation and training of another eleven fathers' and mothers' councils in the governorates of Amran, Rayma and Hodeida. These councils included five fathers' and six mothers' councils. The election took place in eight targeted schools and an estimated total of 919 parents (404 fathers and 515 mothers) participated. Parents elected a total of 173 members (80 fathers' and 93 mothers' council representatives) in a democratic manner. The results of this activity will help increase parental involvement in schools resulting in stronger bonds between the community and school.

#### *Increased Parental Involvement in Targeted School Communities*

Over the last two months of the report period, the project completed the facilitation of the formation and training of seventy fathers' and mothers' councils (44 fathers' and 25 mothers' and one mixed council) in 58 targeted communities in the governorates of Amran, Rayma and Hodeida. Elections took place in each of the targeted school communities and parents elected their representatives through a democratic process. As noted elsewhere in this report, the impact of active fathers' and mothers' councils contributes significantly to the increase in parental involvement in schools. It also enables schools to accomplish activities with less cost and effort while contributing to the improvement of the learning and teaching environment. For example, fathers' councils in Al-Farouq and Al-Eshraq schools in Amran have donated a total of fifty thousand Yemeni Rials along with construction materials to support school maintenance and repair activities. At another target community, the mothers' council in Al-Thawrah School in Amran

conducted awareness raising campaigns with the school administration, teachers and students to clean the school. Success in establishing active mothers' and fathers' councils in schools is an integral part of the process of ensuring sustainable development for the improvement of the Yemeni education system.

### ***Training Activities***

#### ***“Back to School” and Gender Sensitization Training***

In October the project conducted a four-day training workshop for seventy-three school headmasters (66 males and 7 females) in preparation for the new academic year 2009-2010. Among the participants were Governorate and District Officers of Education from Amran, Rayma and Hodeida. The main objective of this workshop was to promote gender equity in schools. The Focus Group Discussions (FGD's) results related to headmasters and teachers performance and gender disparities that prevail in these schools were also addressed. Effective solutions to obstacles in promoting the enrollment and retention of girls in school were discussed as well. The training assisted the headmasters to establish institutional regulations for enhanced enrollment and retention of girls before the start of the academic year. The school headmasters were encouraged to help make the school a better teaching and learning environment that would attract students (boys and girls alike) as well as enhance their academic performance. Successful experiences between school headmasters were exchanged. In addition, there was a field visits to model



schools (in Sana'a) to see what activities could be replicated by the participants in their schools. In this workshop, details about "H1N1" epidemic were discussed and ways of preventing it from spreading among students were identified.

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

#### ***Capacity Building training of Community-Based Female Adult Literacy Facilitators and Inspectors and Representatives from LAEO in Amran***

From November 7 through 15, the project conducted a fourteen-day capacity building training for twenty-five (23 females and 2 males) Adult Literacy (AL) Facilitators, Inspectors and representatives from LAEO offices in Amran and Thula districts. As

outcome of this training, the participants were able to conduct training and provide supervisory support for twenty new adult literacy classes in the Amran and Thula districts of the Governorate of Amran. This training acquainted the participants with the effective teaching methods related to the REFLECT Methodology that is being utilized by the Adult Literacy Component. In this training, skills were developed on ways of managing dialogue, specifying tools that will help identify problems and challenges from the local environment, and identifying solutions. Facilitators also learned about basic instructional methods to improve phonic abilities so as to enable learners to more easily sound out words using certain symbols. This training is intended to establish a solid base for adult literacy in the governorate of Amran so as to be able to follow-up with the opening of a projected twenty AL classes in the designated communities under BEST-Yemen.

### ***School Renovation Activities***

#### ***Mobile Repair Team Furniture Repair in Amran and Thula Districts***

From 6 through 22 October, the project Mobile Repair Team (MRT), with the help of four community volunteers, repaired over three hundred and thirty-two student double desks, twelve single desks, and fifty one single chairs in four schools in Amran and Thula districts in the Governorate of Amran. The MRT moved on to repeat the collaborative repair process in other targeted schools in both districts. Coupled with other school renovation activities, the Mobil Repair Team approach is contributing directly to the enhancement of the learning environment and resources in project schools. The way this



activity is planned and implemented in fostering sustainable practices that promote community involvement in the improvement of basic education and sustainable means of prolonging the life of the school buildings and furnishings. The work of the MRTs is in keeping with USAID's approaches to investing in sustainable development in the education sector.

#### ***Phase I Major Renovation in Targeted Schools in BEST-Yemen Governorates***

From the 17 through the 22 October, the project Chief Architect conducted an official site handover of eleven schools in Amran, Rayma and Hodeida as part of the initiation of Phase I major renovation (which includes three schools in Amran, three schools in Rayma, and five schools in Hodeida). The site handovers were done in the presence of the Government Office of Education, representatives from the local governing councils, local communities, schools administration, structural and monitoring engineers, and the renovation subcontractors. The major renovation of these schools was based on the architectural needs assessments that was conducted in these targeted schools by the project staff architects, followed by structural needs assessments by independent Yemeni engineering firms. This includes renovating seventy (70) existing classrooms and eighteen (18) latrines, seven (7) teacher residences, eight (8) administrative offices, six (6) store rooms, and four (4) walls. In addition, there will be the building of nineteen (19) new classrooms, twenty four (24) latrines, and five (5) privacy walls as well as five (5) rainfall

water catchment tanks. This school renovation is intended to establish a solid base for improving the physical environment of select rural schools which will help to create a healthier, attractive, and a more stable teaching and learning environment. This will directly affect the quality of the performance of teachers and students while forging stronger links between schools and the communities they serve.

#### *“30 November School” and Multi-purpose Center in Bayhan*

On 18 November, the project finalized the extensive school renovation work and construction of a multi-purpose center (MPC) at “30th November School” in Bayhan District in the Governorate of Shabwah. Final delivery of this school was done by the committee consisting of an engineer from the Governorate Office of Education in Shabwah, monitoring engineering firm, renovation subcontractor, school headmaster, local community representatives and the structural assessment firm. All parties signed the final delivery report of the two buildings after satisfactorily completing the necessary structural inspections. School renovation included rehabilitating twenty-two existing classrooms, seven latrines and making the school accessible to the handicapped. Major Renovation at the school also included construction and furnishing of a community-school MPC that accommodates 100 people. This center is designed and designated for community meetings, training and other school community activities. The MPC has a store and separate latrines for females and males.

#### *Government and Technical Team Participate in Sustainable Development Training*

From December 13 through 24, The BEST-Yemen Project sponsored the participation of five (one female and 4 male) representatives from the central Ministry of Education and



the targeted governorates of Amran, Rayma and Hodeida along with three (one female and two male) key staff from the project in a 12-day training course in Cairo on “The Concept of Sustainable Development and its Relationship with Education.” The training aimed

to introduce, promote and reinforce the concept of sustainability in development, especially in education. It included various topics such as Education for

Sustainable Development, The Role of Information Systems in Ensuring Sustainable Development, and Human Development and Environment as Key Factors in Sustainable Development. The participants also addressed issues surrounding sustainability for school building as well as indicators that should be considered while planning, implementing and mentoring sustainable investment in basic education. Field trips to urban and rural schools where an integral part of the learning. This training enabled the participants to redirect their thinking and practices towards sustainability. The participants are now considered to be “living resources” for the Ministry of Education and governorates levels in facing the challenges while sharing their new knowledge and skills with colleagues throughout Yemen.

## ***Education Management Information Systems Activities***

### ***“Basic Computer Skills” Training in the Governorate Education Offices in Amran***

On the 12 of October, the project EMIS Coordinator along with a computer specialist from the general directorate of ICT in MOE, conducted a field visit to the Governorate Office of Education in Amran to assess the impact of the training course in “Basic Computer Skills” held for the data providers in the Governorate Education Office in Amran last year. The aim of the assessment was to learn the strengths and limitations of the course for planning similar courses in the governorates of Rayma and Hodeida. The findings also helped to determine the knowledge and skill levels for future capacity building in this field in the Governorate of Amran.

### ***“Basic Computer Skills” Training Course for Senior Officers in the Governorate Education Offices in Rayma and Hodeida***

From November 14 through 25, the project facilitated in Sana’a a twelve-day (12) training course in basic computer skills for twenty (20) senior officers (all males) from the governorate education offices in Rayma and Hodeida. This training aimed at providing the participants with the necessary technical skills to use the computer in their daily work. It included topics such as Windows XP, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, and Microsoft PowerPoint, Internet and E-mail. During the course, the participants practiced working with common computer applications such as word processing, spreadsheets, database programs, presentation software and, additionally, the use of email and internet. This course contributes to the improvement of the efficiency of the managerial work in both education offices so as to create a solid base for sustainable utilization of EMIS for decision making in the targeted governorates.

### ***Conducted “EMIS Training Workshops” for Senior Officers in Rayma and Hodeida***



From December 21 through 28, the project conducted two major Educational Management Information System training workshops on the topic of “Using EMIS for Planning and Decision Making.” The workshops were attended by a total of forty-two (4 female and 38 male) Director Generals from Governorate and District Offices of Education in Rayma and Hodeida. Each of these three-day training workshops emphasized the significance of EMIS data and how this system can be used in planning. The workshops also addressed current issues related to educational policy in Yemen and EMIS-related terminologies. Participants were provided with the opportunity to utilise EMIS for planning, calculating key education indicators, and analyzing district and governorate relevant statistical tables. As a result of this training, the participants are now able to analyze educational data, identify the gaps and the problems of the educational system in their respective governorates and districts, and formulate conclusions and

recommendations necessary for the planning and decision making. This training contributed to the improvement of the efficiency of the managerial performance of leaders and staff in the governorate and district education offices. As with the Amran training, the workshop in Rayma and Hodeida contributed to a more solid base for sustainable utilization of EMIS for decision making in these two governorates.

### ***Monitoring and Evaluation Activities***

While M&E is an integral part of the BEST-Yemen EMIS Component, it has activities that encompass the entire project, especially in regards to performance management evaluative activities and on-going monitoring. The M&E Advisor, over the time period of the 9<sup>th</sup> quarter, continued to contribute to these activities, specifically in providing inputs to the Senior Management Team on the accomplishments for the quarter (as reflected in Section V of this report) and those for the 2009 calendar year (as addressed in the 2010 AWP submitted to USAID/Y on the 18 of January 2010). In addition, during the final quarter of 2009, through the coordination of the M&E Advisor, the project responded to a request from the MOE for support in designing valid and reliable national test instruments and measurements for grades (4-8) of basic education. These instruments would help (1) to assess the current status of basic education in a scientifically organized manner and (2) to measure the impact of training and other interventions on (a) performance and practices improvement for the educational institutions, (b) access to and enrollment rates of basic education, (c) drop-out rates reduction, and (d) academic achievement improvement.

### **IV. Statement of Work for the Next Quarter**

The next quarter, January to March 2010 of the BEST-Yemen Project will, indeed, be very challenging due to being the first quarter under a revised, refocused project—let alone a reformulated plan vis-à-vis the plan that was being written from the first week in October to the middle of December 2009 for the then anticipated 2010 work year ahead. With the new Mission SFS or stabilization-focused strategy and the feedback received from the Agency about one week before the deadline for this quarterly report, it is clear that one main element of the SOW for the next quarter or first one of the year (in fact, the second-to-last year) of the project, is to again go back to the drawing boards so as to omit an entire year of the project and cut back once again on funds that were to have been at a 20-million-dollar level for BEST alone when the project was designed now slightly over two years ago.

The above being a reality that the project planners and implementers must face, a new plan is to be formulated based on the original intent of the BEST Project yet with the limitations noted. It will mean that not only another plan or a sharply modified version of the workplan submitted on January 18, 2010 will have to be wisely formulated with a balance of lesser resources with the commitments and reasonable expectations of the beneficiaries. Importantly, the Performance Management Plan and the Project Advancement Monitoring Plan will have to be revisited as well following agreement with the Agency on the finalized version of the plans for 2010 and 2011 as per instructions from USAID/Yemen.

Having recently completed the January 18<sup>th</sup> version of the AWP 2010, it necessitates the reiteration herein of the now even more critical challenges facing the project in its quest to

accomplish all that it might under the new and changing circumstances. Hence, the following statements from that plan are herein reiterated:

### ***In-country security issues and impact on progress***

Although the travel restrictions for entry of consultants to Yemen are not in effect at the time of writing this work plan, security and resultant difficulties and concerns remain a major challenge to the successful implementation of the project. The project staff works within an elevated sense of uncertainty and travel by the Chief of Party is restricted for monitoring and other purposes. Work in Shabwah and Mareb for conducting sustainability follow-up activities requires innovative approaches which are not as effective in most cases as direct contact with targeted individuals and institutions. To date the new districts in the governorates of Rayma, Hodeida and Amran have not presented any difficulties for movement back and forth and within the districts other than the type of conditions encountered due to the topography such as the heat of the desert and the steep mountainous terrain. Given the intensification of anti-terrorist activities by the GOY, it appears that security conditions will remain uncertain and might hamper progress in conducting some of the core activities identified in the workplans for 2010 and beyond.

### ***Investment capacity of recipient communities***

As specified in the “*Guide to Needs Analysis and Investment Opportunities in Yemen*,” the effectiveness and efficiency of any investment program will depend on the absorptive, adaptive and innovative capacity of the recipient community, school or institution such as the Ministry itself. There is a need to continue to be clear at the initiation of an investment about what type is being made (remedial, maintenance or innovative) and the capacity of the recipient. Surely this will also vary across a governorate or even a district from one level of the system to another. This is to say that the project team in collaboration with the host governorates and districts as well as at the central MOE will need to continue to have and utilize well-founded sets of baseline information including profiles of the communities, schools and institutions in which it is to invest its resources. This is a challenge that the project leadership must face almost daily, certainly at the time of determining the focus and extent of the investments to be undertaken. The “Menu of Interventions” should also help ensure wise investing of resources at the targeted sites throughout the LOP.

### ***Meeting demands of the funding agency while addressing beneficiaries’ expectations***

The AWP 2010 is ambitious because of the need to ensure that the investments are well founded and, as appropriate, accelerated so as to satisfy the demands necessitated by the new stabilization-focused strategy of USAID/Yemen. This concern has been addressed throughout this (*the January 18<sup>th</sup> AWP*) plan and it has been done so with the beneficiaries’ reasonable expectations and perceived commitments in mind. The reduction of funds is trying in and of itself when an agreed-upon 20 million dollar project is designed with that budget figure used to formulate the scope of the activities over a reasonable period of five years. To have the duration of the project also shortened, indeed, takes both the substance and spirit out of the project. This being said, the BEST-Yemen Project T.E.A.M., as is evident in this (*that AWP*) plan, has attempted to meet this and the many other challenges being confronted in contributing significantly to the improvement of

Yemeni basic education while making its mark in addressing the factors that impede the development of a more stable nation.