Joint Lessons Learned Assessment

of

the Basic Education Support and Training (BEST) Project

Assessment Team

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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AED</td>
<td>Academy for Educational Development</td>
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<td>AL</td>
<td>Adult Literacy</td>
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<td>AWP</td>
<td>Annual Work Plan</td>
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<td>BE</td>
<td>Basics Education Project</td>
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<td>BEST</td>
<td>Basic Education Support and Training Project</td>
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<td>BEDS</td>
<td>Basic Education Development Strategy</td>
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<td>CLP</td>
<td>Community Livelihoods Program</td>
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<td>COP</td>
<td>Chief of Party</td>
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<td>CP</td>
<td>Community Participation</td>
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<td>DCOP</td>
<td>Deputy Chief of Party</td>
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<td>DG</td>
<td>Director General</td>
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<td>DOE</td>
<td>District Office of Education</td>
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<td>EMIS</td>
<td>Education Management Information Systems</td>
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<td>FC</td>
<td>Father Council</td>
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<td>GOE</td>
<td>Governorate Office of Education</td>
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<td>GOY</td>
<td>Government of Yemen</td>
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<td>GTZ</td>
<td>German Technical Cooperation</td>
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<td>ITC</td>
<td>Information Technology and Communication</td>
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<td>JICA</td>
<td>Japan International Cooperation Agency</td>
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<td>LAEO</td>
<td>Literacy and Adult Education Organization</td>
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<td>MASS</td>
<td>Multi-Faceted Approach to Safe Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
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<td>MC</td>
<td>Mothers Council</td>
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<td>MFC</td>
<td>Mother-Father Councils</td>
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<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>MPC</td>
<td>Multi-Purpose Center</td>
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<td>PC</td>
<td>Parent Council</td>
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<td>PAMP</td>
<td>Project Advancement Monitoring Plan</td>
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<td>PMP</td>
<td>Performance Management Plan</td>
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<td>RGP</td>
<td>Responsive Governance Program</td>
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<td>TOT</td>
<td>Training of Trainers</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>YR</td>
<td>Yemeni Riyals</td>
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I. Executive Summary

The purpose of this joint lessons learned assessment is to identify the best practices, lessons learned and challenges faced by the BEST project, and provide recommendations that can inform USAID/Yemen programming in light of the USAID/Yemen’s 2010-2012 Strategy. This assessment specifically focuses on providing useful relevant information for the two new USAID Yemen multi-sectoral projects: the Community Livelihood Project (CLP) and the Responsive Governance Program (RGP).

The four-year BEST project proved a sound model of good practice. At the school level, the project created an integrated, holistic package of educational services that succeeded in effectively supporting communities in the renovation of their schools, training school administrators and social workers to work together to mobilize their communities, encouraging parent council formation to support school improvement, establishing classes to support female literacy development (both to promote female involvement in their children’s education as well as support the return of some learners to the formal school system), and providing training to school educators to enhance their administration and teaching skills. BEST activities are bound together with a conscious effort to address gender disparity issues throughout. In addition, at central, governorate and district levels, BEST supported increased capacity of EMIS staff, encouraging more focused consideration of educational indicators to analyze data, enabling more effective local planning, and providing a model for decentralized EMIS practice. The BEST effort has been enhanced by a team-based project management style that encourages staff planning and implementation across project components.

Particularly notable features in BEST are its (1) engaged Ministry Advisory Board, (2) successful practices in engaging the community through use of a “Menu of Interventions,” (3) thoughtful collection of capacity and awareness building efforts with school administrators, social workers, father and mother councils, and teachers to promote community involvement, (4) creative mechanisms and diligent cross-project efforts to address gender issues, (5) successful REFLECT methodologies to address adult literacy, (6) capacity development that has activated EMIS at local levels, and (7) conscious efforts to build the pool of educational resources through the enhancement and revision of previously developed MOE materials, the Yemenization of effective externally-produced materials, the improvement in training delivery modes and effectiveness, the creation of necessary new Ministry training resources, and the expansion of Ministry tools to properly assess student and teacher performance. (An illustrative list of products and materials generated by the BEST project can be found in Appendix F.)

USAID’s new 2010-2012 Yemen Country Strategy represents a shift from sector-based development interventions like BEST to a more integrated multi-sectoral approach addressing the key grievances and drivers of instability in targeted, disadvantaged communities. Yet despite the new objectives and more unstable contexts for operation, BEST offers valuable lessons for the new Responsive Governance and Community Livelihoods Programs. First, the BEST approach provides a best practice model for effective engagement with the community, and demonstrates the value of more comprehensive, mutually-reinforcing interventions for maximum impact. Second, while the operational context of the new projects is different, the core elements of BEST program can be translated into these new contexts and provide a nexus for a broader range of multi-sectoral interventions.

BEST-type interventions will need to be divided between central level (RGP) and community-oriented (CLP) programming. At the local level, there will need to be more emphasis on short-term, high impact responses, justified in light of their contribution to stability. Yet the shorter term, contract-based approach of CLP does not pre-empt program planning that envisions longer-term community engagements to effect change that impacts stability as well as touches upon developmental goals. Interventions in a community can be consider thoughtfully in light of their needs in multiple sectors, and provided in an integrated fashion in staged interventions. RGP/CLP recommendations in light of the BEST assessment suggest the following:
**Program Coordination.** Develop a healthy coordination mechanism between the existing single-sector and new RGP/CLP programs, identifying potential interventions that BEST (and others) might support/supply during the period of overlap and utilizing proven single sector best practice in formulating new project interventions. Establish regular, concrete mechanisms to bridge the RGP/CLP divide. This might include joint annual work planning and/or careful, timely reviews to develop specific points of overlap, both in terms of activities and stakeholder engagements.

**Advisory Board.** With the broader multi-sectoral approach of RGP/CLP and the inherent divide in the nature of their programs, consider a joint Advisory to help bridge this gap to ensure effective communication among all involved sectors at all levels of government. Whether within the Advisory Board context or not, identify common stakeholders and Local Authority staff to be involved in both the RGP Public Dialogue Forums and in CLP capacity building interventions at the Governorate and District levels to bridge the communication gap existing between the more centrally-oriented and more community-oriented foci of the two programs, and enable players at these mid- and lower levels to view the overall USAID intervention more holistically.

**Central EMIS Institution Building.** Through RGP, (1) actively support the needed MOE restructuring as a critical step in improving government services in education, (2) work to improve the transparency of the budgeting process, encouraging both timely funding and implementation of the national annual school survey, as well as allocation of resources based on local plans informed by EMIS data collected and analyzed from schools, and (3) support the finalization of school registry tools and their introduction at schools where donor projects -- CLP included -- can reinforce their appropriate use through headmaster training.

**Local Government Capacity Development and Engagement.** Support Local Council/Local Authority capacity development, building their skills and understanding of their roles, working through them to enhance the relationship between the council members and the line ministry staff of the Local Authorities, engaging them actively in program-sponsored activities to build buy-in to the efforts and increase their overall commitment. This increased local capacity contributes directly to strategic objectives for improved governance and transparency. Draw upon training material arising out of the Decentralization and Local Development Support Program. Continue EMIS capacity development, particularly at the Governorate levels, and support stakeholder workshops to promote transparency and rationalization of decisions based on locally-collected data.

**Menu of Interventions.** Adapt the BEST “Menu of Interventions” approach to serve the CLP multi-sectoral model. While the menu would need to be dynamic and evolving, the basic framework would encourage a greater understanding by the community of potential program interventions, help promote honest, informed community dialogue about their needs and the options to address their local challenges, encourage real partnership, and assist in identifying synergies between different sectoral efforts. It has the potential to ultimately lead to the development of a more holistic multi-sectoral model of community support in the stabilization context.

**Gender.** Conduct an in-depth gender mainstreaming assessment drawing on the experience and best practices of the BEST project, and very consciously integrate gender strategies and awareness in all interventions. Utilize BEST developed resources – both material resources and locally available human capacity – to support the MOE in becoming capable of carrying out gender audits, trainings and follow-up activities. Establish a Gender Coordinator position to ensure that gender equity is addressed in every programmatic activity.

**School Renovation.** Recognize the value of visible interventions of this nature to mobilize community interest and energize involvement, and, given the more limited infrastructure budget of CLP, maximize in-
kind cost sharing without sacrificing critical school additions like walls and latrines that might significantly enhance female participation. Use school facilities grants to complement project efforts. For security, community/tribal representatives should join all equipment/materials transport vehicles serving schools undergoing renovation. Draw upon available Conflict Mitigation Program produced materials as a basis for staff discussion of work in unstable areas and to develop appropriate security strategies.

**Holistic Community Interventions to Address Educational Barriers at the Community Level.**

Replicate the BEST community-focused education model with an aim to integrate the core elements with other non-education sector interventions that are mutually supportive. This approach would have more sustainable impact than if school-related services were more selectively implemented in any one community. Include in the educational core of the model the critical BEST components of Community Participation, Adult Literacy, School Administrator and Teacher Capacity Development, and Gender Training and Awareness Raising, taking into account the detailed recommendations for enhancement made in the body of the report.

CLP community profiling would support the identification of critical first stage community interventions that are highly visible and help establish a base for additional community interventions. Visible improvements at schools have shown their potential to activate the community, and serve as a starting point for BEST-type community participation activities that could further engage school staff and parents, and lead to planning processes for school improvement and the implementation of trainings for both school administrators and teachers.

Depending on local priorities, local literacy classes for women might be initiated, encouraging more active involvement of women in community and school affairs or building the skills necessary for older girls and women to return to school. The nature of the REFLECT methodology means comparable programs for boys and young men could be developed to direct youth into productive training and work. The very successful BEST Summer Program model could be utilized (not just programs for girls/women, but also for boys/young men) to serve as a focal point for academic skills building, improved community awareness and youth/women’s leadership training, and needs identification for youth in areas such as literacy, life skills and vocational and agricultural training. The summer program might serve as a venue for discussing community needs, raising awareness of health and girls’ education issues, and promoting joint action for the community’s resolution, which could then be supported with proposals and community grants from CLP. These training programs could feed back into ongoing community projects and infrastructural improvement efforts, or the projects themselves could be the venue for these training programs. Potential activities for addressing the drivers of instability and educational challenges within the new stabilization framework are outlined in Appendix G.
II. Introduction

A. Background: Country-Wide Challenges

According to the UNDP Human Development Index 2007, Yemen is ranked 150 out of 177 countries. It is one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world with about 45 percent of the population living on less than US$2 per day\(^1\). Social development indicators, such as child malnutrition, maternal mortality, and education attainment remain poor. More than two-thirds of the population is under the age of 24 and illiteracy stands at over 50 percent. Its female illiteracy rate of 60 percent is the highest in the MENA region. There are large gender disparities, with significant gaps in women’s access to economic, social and political opportunities. According to the 2010 Global Gender Gap report of the World Economic Forum, Yemen continues to have the highest gender gap in the world and in the region occupying the last place of 134 countries included in the ranking. It remains the only country in the world to have closed less than 50 percent of its gender gap, and it deteriorated further this year relative to its own performance in 2008.

In the area of education, access is still a hurdle for many citizens and women and girls, in particular. Only 53 percent of females are enrolled in basic education as opposed to 74 percent of males. Of the total number of girls out of school, nearly 80 percent are unlikely to ever enroll, compared with 36 percent of boys\(^2\). Recent studies clearly show that the main causes for low enrolment and high drop-out rates for girls in Yemen are\(^3\): 1) lack of accessibility 2) socio-cultural factors and 3) institutional factors. A large part of Yemen’s population, approximately 72 percent, live in rural areas and since Yemen is a large country with millions of people scattered widely over often difficult terrain, the accessibility of schools is a major challenge in rural areas. At the same time, cultural and social norms, such as early marriage, have a more defining influence in the rural areas. Cultural and traditional perceptions of women and girls have led to a tradition of segregation between the sexes. This poses specific demands on the educational system. Schools are suitable only if within culturally acceptable distances, equipped with adequate facilities, and have female teachers for girls from the fourth grade onward. Many schools in Yemen cannot meet these criteria. Poor physical infrastructure, broken furniture, insufficient classrooms and a severe shortage of female teachers (only 5% in BEST target governorate of Rayma) are widespread throughout Yemen, especially in the rural areas.

The Yemeni Ministry of Education (MOE) has not been able to respond sufficiently to these challenges due to the rapidly growing population and weaknesses in institutional capacity. About 80 percent of teachers in Hodeidah and Rayma, for example, are unable to meet minimum MOE teacher qualification standards given their lack of educational degrees and pre-service training. The MOE suffers from limited human resource capacity at all levels of government as civil servants are typically political appointees not well qualified for their jobs. Lack of job descriptions and professional development training materials and insufficient capacity of trainers permeate throughout all divisions of the MOE (LAEO, Technical Office, Girls’ Education which includes Community Participation, Training and Teacher Qualifications, Guidance, etc). Additionally, either non-existent, unfunded or unenforced policies at the central level, unreliable data and structures at the local level, non-transparent budgets, and weak community participation disrupts the chain of command and its effectiveness to work uniformly to overcome these significant challenges. Hence, the Yemeni government heavily relies on donor support to develop models

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\(^1\) UNICEF, ACCELERATING GIRL’S EDUCATION IN YEMEN: Rethinking Policies in Teachers’ Recruitment and School Distribution, 2007  
\(^2\) UNESCO, EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2010  
\(^3\) UNICEF, ACCELERATING GIRL’S EDUCATION IN YEMEN: Rethinking Policies in Teachers’ Recruitment and School Distribution, 2007
of best practice, to build its capacity at all levels of government and to advance its educational sector agenda. The MOE integrates donor projects into its work plan and carries forward the best practices and lessons learned into future projects.

B. Project Description

The Basic Education Support and Training Program (BEST) is a $17,392,557.35 cooperative agreement implemented by the Academy for Educational Development (AED) under the EQUIP 2 mechanism. The project began on September 30, 2007 and ends December 31, 2011. The project operates within the broader framework of the Government of Yemen’s Basic Education and Development Strategy (BEDS) and its overall mission is to bridge “the gap between development activities and systems-building by increasing the relevance of policies, especially as it relates to achievement of gender objectives.”

In practice, its programming is grounded in five key theme areas:

- Improving access to basic education, especially for girls, through significant physical investments in renovation at schools.
- Addressing gender equity, through the integration of gender awareness objectives in all its activities.
- Improving school administrator and teacher quality and enhancing the quality of students’ education, through training to improve educator performance and increase mastery of both pedagogy and subject content.
- Enhancing both institutional and organization development at all levels within the ministry, through improvements to information systems, monitoring and evaluation, data collection and analysis, and policy formulation and planning.
- Supporting decentralization and ensuring greater community participation, through efforts to engage fathers, mothers, and communities as a whole in school affairs, build local literacy skills to increase awareness and involvement, and develop district-level EMIS and M&E systems capabilities to contribute to informed decision-making tied more closely to the school level.

While the EMIS supports are focused at all levels, at the school level the project has created an integrated package of services that supports communities in the renovation of their schools, trains school administrators and social workers to work together to mobilize their communities, encourages parent council formation to support school improvement, establishes classes to support female literacy development (both to promote female involvement in their children’s education as well as support the return of some learners to the formal school system), and provides training to school educators to enhance their administration and teaching skills. The activities are bound together with a conscious effort to address gender disparity issues throughout.

C. Purpose of the Assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to identify the best practices, lessons learned and challenges faced by the BEST project, and provide recommendations that inform USAID/Yemen programming in light of the USAID/Yemen’s 2010-2012 Strategy. The assessment has focused on providing useful relevant information for the two new USAID Yemen multi-sectoral projects: the Community Livelihood Project (CLP) and the Responsive Governance Program (RGP). The intent is to provide answers to the following questions:
- **Challenges**

What were the challenges faced by the BEST project, during the design and implementation phases, at both the central and community levels? How were these challenges addressed? Were these challenges addressed in an effective way? What were the alternative methods to address such challenges? What kinds of insights do these challenges provide for further work in Education in Yemen? Which of these challenges are relevant to stabilization programming in Yemen like the new CLP and RGP projects?

- **Best Practices**

What were the best practices of the project, at both the central and community levels, which had proven to reliably lead to achieving desired results? Should these successful practices be continued by the CLP, RGP projects and/or other USAID stabilization program mechanisms like the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) and/or Conflict Mitigation Programs or they need to be modified? What are the modifications needed, if any, for these best practices to fit with the CLP, RGP projects or other stabilization program mechanisms? What of the best practices identified are most applicable to community stabilization and conflict-sensitive interventions? Were there any approaches identified by the BEST project to deal with community stabilization and conflict sensitive interventions, but were not implemented by the project? What were the reasons for not implementing them?

- **Sector-Specific vs. Multi-Sectoral**

What of the sector-specific programming that BEST had been contributing to, would fit with the multi-sectoral integrated stabilization programming, as in the case of CLP, RGP projects? What of these sector-specific programs should be dropped or modified as USAID goes forward to multi-sectoral stabilization programming? What modifications are needed to these sector-specific programs to fit with the new multi-sectoral stabilization programs? What of the sector-specific assistance, in general, is unlikely to be continued with stabilization programming and what consequences should USAID learn about?

- **Lessons Learned:**

What are the key lessons learned from the BEST project that could inform the design and implementation of future USAID stabilization programming in Yemen?

For greater clarity and logic to the response, the report regroups these questions into three major categories:

i. **Findings:** Challenges and Best Practices from the BEST-Yemen Project

ii. **Conclusions:** Insights from the BEST Project that Inform the New USAID Stabilization Projects

iii. **Recommendations:** Application of Best Practices of BEST to Address the Key Challenges in the Education Sector under the New Stabilization Framework

**D. Methodology**

Given the nature of the assessment, much of exercise utilized qualitative approaches. The study benefited from a healthy in-depth investigation of first-hand knowledge, perceptions, and experience of informants at all levels, from learners to senior ministry officials. To support these investigations, the assessment also drew on review of pre-existing project and MOE data, studies, and PMP results. The assessment included a variety of data collection methods:
**Desktop review** of relevant USAID-Yemen and BEST documents including the Yemen Country Strategy, the BEST Application for Assistance, the RFAs for both the CLP and RGP projects, recent quarterly reports, annual work plans, performance management plan, project advancement monitoring plan, and other project-developed documents and products arising specifically from program activities capturing best practices and lessons learned.

**Literature review** of relevant research and programming related to Yemen as well as other relevant contexts in which stabilization approaches, disaffected youth/Al Qaeda, and war-affected educational programming might apply. See Appendix A, List of Key References.

**Interviews/focus groups** with key informants such as USAID staff, Project Advisory Board members, BEST senior program staff and core component staff, and key stakeholders at all levels within each of the major component areas of the project (School Renovation, Gender Equity, Training and Quality Education Improvement, Adult Literary, Community Participation, and Institutional Organizational Development). The aim was to triangulate responses from central to school-level stakeholders including senior government policy makers, directors, technical specialists, international donors and BEST senior management staff at the central level; heads, supervisors and trainers within offices of education at the governorate and district levels; and direct beneficiaries at the school level. See Appendix B, List of Key Informants.

**Workshops** with BEST senior staff members to educate staff on the new USAID strategies as well as afford the opportunity for group discussion on identifying linkages within the BEST project and developing a model for basic education that captures the core elements of BEST good practices that fits within the context of the new USAID Stabilization Strategies guiding CLP and RGP activities. See Appendix C, Staff Workshop Agendas.

**Field visits to schools** to gain a fuller understanding of the program through direct observation of schools and classrooms, and first-hand meetings with local beneficiary groups. The team was able to visit the BEST field office in Hodeidah Governorate to meet and extremely diverse mix of Governorate and District level ministry representatives from both Hodeidah and Rayma Governorates, as well as visit two schools in Zabeed District, where the team viewed school facilities and student classrooms, and interviewed school and community representatives served by the various components of the BEST program.

### E. Team Members

The team was composed of three members: team leader Mark Sweikhart, an International Education Specialist; Brenda Sinclair, an Evaluation Consultant and Education Advisor; and Refaat Shafeek, USAID Regional M&E Specialist at the Office of Middle East Programs in Cairo. Both Mr. Sweikhart and Ms. Sinclair arrived in country on October 22, and departed Yemen on November 12, 2010. Mr. Assessment Team visiting a sharing session between Father Council representatives from a number of schools in Zabeed District, Hodeidah Governorate
Shafeek arrived in country on October 23 and joined the team for the first week of the assessment, departing October 30, 2010. See Appendix D. Biographies of AED Team Members.

F. General Schedule of Activities

Week One schedule in-country focused on activities that would allow the team to better understand the program and the nature of the assessment exercise. This included (1) meetings with USAID to review assessment goals and finalize the assessment strategy and plan, (2) meetings with CLP, RGP and M&E senior project staff to understand their programs within the context of the new USAID stabilization strategy in Yemen, (3) two workshops conducted with the BEST team to orient them to the aims of the assessment, clarify the new USAID strategic goals, and allow BEST staff to share their insights as a group, (4) in-depth interviews with BEST technical team component staff, and (5) finalization of lists and schedules for meeting non-project staff during the remainder of the stay. Week Two focused on meetings with ministry and donor program staff, as well as a primary focus on field informants to be interviewed during a three-day visit to the city of Hodeidah and its surrounding districts. On November 6 of the Week Three, the team met for a two-hour discussion with the BEST Advisory Board. A final debriefing was prepared and presented on November 9 to USAID Sean Jones, Director of Technical Programs, and Abdulhamid N. Alajami, Education Team Leader and BEST Project AOTR. The remaining days in country consisted of final data collection and preparations for the final report submission.

III. Part I: Findings: Challenges and Best Practices from the BEST-Yemen Project

A. Challenges

1. What were the challenges faced by the BEST project, during the design and implementation phases, at both the central and community levels?
2. How were these challenges addressed? Were these challenges addressed in an effective way? What were the alternative methods to address such challenges?
3. Were there any activities planned, but were not implemented by the project? What were the reasons for not implementing them?

The Challenges of BEST Start Up

At the time of the BEST’s project start up, the Basic Education (BE) Project – Yemen was still on the ground. It meant that BE programming in 77 existing school communities continued, while the BEST program was in the process of starting up and actively developing new goals, approaches and programming. In the process, BEST budget was allocated in part to support the winding down of activities in BE, so this cut into the planned BEST implementation budget, and resulted in BEST juggling inherited BE activities of $2.28 million. Additionally, new BEST staff needed to be hired though many strong candidates were still employed with BE. While many key staff ultimately came from the BE program, they needed reorientation to new ways and processes.

Dealing with this challenge was in part assisted by the fact that the BE implementer, AED was the new BEST contractor. A transition plan was established in the BEST Application for Assistance and ongoing communication between the two programs regarding the transition assisted in the process. In part, the organizational link between programs assisted in a quick start early on by AED. As regards establishing a coherent new project team, the COP worked to craft a new management framework. He included a senior technical director under him to deal with the component heads and focused on establishing clear new project systems of operation and instituted a re-evaluation of staff skills and structures to meet the new project needs. He quickly established basic work regiments, financial and operational protocols, work and
leave calendars, reporting processes, and developed a full job description to employee evaluation processes. He engaged an international consultant to provide external perspectives on the work, and identified a capable local consultant pool to support the project’s efforts. Importantly he worked to actively reorient staff and change their mindset to the new project goals. He promoted a TEAM approach that integrated efforts across components and identified a gender leader to incorporate this key issue across all components. He instituted yearly 3-day staff retreats to clarify project focus, build team spirit, assess both project and individual weaknesses, and build a solid understanding of sustainability issues as good practice.

To connect effectively with the Ministry, the COP established the BEST Project Advisory Board including deputies of the relevant sectors, or their heads of departments, that would meet quarterly. This Advisory had not existed previously with BE. It served to establish a clear linkage between BEST and the ministry, opened a clear channel of communication, encouraged serious review of reports and discussion of project accomplishments, and reinforced areas that required further focus and served to identify the nature of help that might be necessary. The Board Chair very positively describes the board’s importance as an insurance that the project is operating within the ministries goals and is coordinated with other MOE sectors and avoids overlap in donor efforts supporting the Yemeni Government.

The Challenges of an Early BEST Close Out

In January of 2010, the BEST project learned that the original five-year project would be closed down on December 31, 2011 rather than the end of 2012, with a resulting budget cut of approximately $3M. As a consequence, the project had to re-examine its 2010 AWP activities, considering a revised implementation program that would hopefully result in the least negative impact on the community perceptions of the Government of Yemen, USAID and BEST; as well upon the overall aims of the program and its intent to ensure the greatest sustainability of the BEST effort.

As a result, the project will be working diligently to complete key program activities and to fully document and refine key local products that will be useful for the reinforcement and replication of these activities. This includes training materials in all the key component areas, and full documentation of essential processes. BEST will work to establish a critical mass of training cadres that could be formalized within the MOE, explore grants options to support sustainability of AL classes, and insure planned teacher and School Maintenance Committee trainings are completed for all BEST schools prior to the project’s close. Additionally, with the new CLP and RGP projects underway, the project will seek to maintain key high profile staff on board to support closing activities, as well as promote BEST/new project collaborations utilizing existing staff to support endeavors addressing the new USAID stabilization goals.

School Renovation Component Description

This component aims to improve access to basic education, especially for girls, through significant physical investments in renovation at schools. This includes improvements in the physical learning environment, providing security and privacy for female students, and building the capacity of the School Maintenance Committee to ensure that renovated facilities are well cared for and maintained. Through more active engagement of the community in school facilities support, this effort also assists the Ministry in its goal of more decentralized educational management. Component activities include both major and minor renovations to schools and classrooms with particular consideration for latrines and privacy walls to encourage girls’ participation. In some cases new buildings are built. Importantly, local community is actively engaged in the initial needs assessment and design phase of the school renovation, and Parent Councils are consulted in looking at separation issues for boys and girls, discussing school wall boundaries and assessing classroom effects on the surrounding community, as well as latrine placement.
BEST building efforts begin at the lead cluster school and then move to its satellite schools. At the central cluster school, a Multipurpose Center with a 100-person capacity hall is built to accommodate training as well as support local community activities and events. At renovated schools, new desks are provided and technical support and training is given by a Mobile Repair team to school volunteers to assemble and repair student furniture. The Mobile Repair team consists of a community coordinator, technical coordinator and at least one other member with expertise in carpentry. Prior to the close of the BEST program, the team is also to organize and fund trainings provided by the MOE Department of Maintenance in all-around general school maintenance issues for all School Maintenance Committee members to assist in sustaining the investment.

School Renovation Challenges and Means of Addressing

Perhaps the most significant challenge to the component is the lack of BEST funds to cover the overwhelming and pressing local school needs. During our visits with Rayma officials, the Director of the GOE stated that only 40% of the approximately 500 schools in the governorate were adequate. As such there are often unrealistic community expectations of what the project can do, particularly when new construction is generally preferred by the community, and realistically, project capacity can address mostly renovation. Many schools lack furniture and children sit in dusty, unhealthy environments. School administrative spaces also lack furniture and the existing school furniture available is often broken and unused. In Hodeidah governorate alone, the Director of Education says over 20,000 chairs currently require repair. In rural communities, water generally is not easily accessible and school water supplies are even more scarce. In some communities, when school mapping input and local criteria of the Local Council are not used to locate schools, tribal conflicts may arise and complicate the issue of school relocation or renovation of an existing site. In more remote and/or mountainous areas, it may be very difficult for contractors to access schools and it may require multiple trips to transport supplies. Often skilled labor is not available locally and thus these workers need to come from outside, creating higher labor costs. There is the problem of inconsistent quality of construction work. In more insecure areas where the project previously worked, there exists the potential for hijacking of team vehicles as well as the transported equipment and supplies.

BEST has attempted to address these issues in a number of ways:

BEST utilizes a transparent selection process and encourages active engagement of the community from the start. Abdul Rahman Al-Samawi, Director General of School Mapping praised BEST for its initial upfront work with the Ministry to develop a national level process for school interventions. The collaboration resulted in the crafting of criteria for governorate, district and ultimately school selection, approved at all Ministry levels. When initial meetings with schools are held, a community workshop is conducted to explain with great transparency the school selection process, the types of interventions available, and the scope of BEST services. BEST’s “Menu of Interventions” evolving over time through engagements with school communities, outlines potential challenges communities might face, the nature of the interventions required and the roles and responsibilities of the different partners to address the issue. Thus the team is able to temper expectations to a greater degree and work closely with the community to define joint roles and plan accordingly. This approach succeeded in making the nature of interventions more realistic, helping to encourage a clear community role, promoting partnership,
volunteerism, and sustainability. By engaging the community in the planning and implementation, the community members take greater ownership over the process and become not only a host of the construction activity. The project’s Mobile Repair Team also supports the School Maintenance Committee (formed as a sub-committee of the Father’s Council) to assemble and repair the furniture already on the site at little or no cost. Many schools are described as having “piles” of broken, unused furniture.

It appears the visibility of major school renovation work actually increased community involvement in many ways. School members noted that once many in the community see the level of intervention, overall school improvement efforts gained credibility. In one school we visited in Zabeed, the formation of the Mother Council was delayed as compared to the Father Council. Women were described as reluctant initially to be involved, but once they saw the scope of the BEST intervention, their interest grew and the entire school improvement endeavor gained credibility. It should be noted this women’s mobilization success was also attributed to the Adult Literacy program and its use of effective gender-sensitive materials with women in the community.

Renovation team members suggest as improvements to the current strategy, even more time should be devoted during the start up phase to engage the community and get an understanding of the school needs. Others suggest that even greater in-kind community contribution to the school effort is possible, particularly in rural areas where this is practice is reasonable and accepted by the community. One informant notes that SFD-supported construction has conditions that to build a school, the community must be involved in providing at least 5% of the total cost – directly or in-kind through labor, equipment, supplies, and/or transport of materials. Other models of support to schools include the Child Friendly School of UNICEF, the Whole School Improvement Approach of the World Bank and the JICA Bridge model. With JICA for example, school communities are provided a $1500 school grant to respond to their identified needs, with school facilities improvements being among them. Obviously, in these cases, the scope and scale of school renovation is much more limited.

BEST also worked to address basic quality construction challenges. It has developed a “risk management strategy” to transfer school construction and monitoring responsibilities to three local firms: a Structural Assessment Firm, a Monitoring and Engineering Firm, and a Renovation Firm. These firms jointly have full responsibility for the successful completion of the project, yet BEST continues to closely monitor the function of the three-firm effort to ensure quality. At the beginning of the performance period, the site is formally handed over to the contractor, with the MOE engineer from the Governorate, the Director General of the Local Authority, a Local Council representative, the school headmaster, and representatives from the monitoring firm formally present. This arrangement has worked for the project. The project’s Chief Architect suggests that along with the existing transparent bidding process, an even more intensive orientation for local contractors, MOE, and M&E engineers on issues of quality would further enhance quality outcomes.

When schools were more remote and access to contractors very difficult, the project was occasionally able to coordinate with the ministry to allow contractor use district equipment with governorate approval. School water issues were sometimes addressed through community efforts to link school supply to the available town supply. Additionally the project is continuing to explore the use of water separation technologies and the use of ECOSAN dry latrines in areas where water is scarce. Security issues, though
no longer a problem in current areas of BEST service, were addressed through the development of solid relations with the local community and by carrying a person from the local tribe during construction trips.

**Gender Equity Component Description**

Gender equity is at the core of the BEST-Yemen whole school development model. Rather than treated as a separate component, gender equity is a primary focus throughout all of BEST-Yemen components. Key interventions aimed to achieve gender-equal opportunity to educational services include: improving equality of access and participation of boys and girls in schools; contributing to the creation of a gender aware school environment; improving school administration/management and teaching methods through use of a “gender lens” so as to promote gender equity; and supporting changes in conditions and facilities that improve the safety and address the concerns of female students and teachers. The BEST-Yemen project pays particular attention to issues that prevent girls from attending school, remaining and completing their education, and adopts measures that will help accelerate narrowing of the gender gap for girl students and women teachers. The overall aim of gender equity within the BEST project is to eliminate discrimination against women and girls at the school and community levels.

**Gender Challenges at the Central Level and Means of Addressing**

The 2004-2008 USAID-funded Basic Education (EQUIP1) Project offered a means of cascading successes in the promotion of girls’ education into the BEST project. However, the shift in geographical locations from the earlier project, which operated in less stable environments (Mareb, Shabwah, Amran), to considerably more stable governorates of Hodeidah, Rayma and different districts within Amran created a challenge in transferring experiences. This change in target areas required an assessment of gender disparities and identification of relevant gender mainstreaming approaches. Staff and government counterparts in the new governorates, however, lacked adequate capacity and technical expertise to assess and identify gender-appropriate interventions. As a result, women and girls were not always consulted about their specific needs and several schools were built without privacy walls or appropriately-located latrines, which are viewed as essential by the community for providing a safe environment for girls to attend school and served as barriers to girls’ education.

This lack of gender consideration not only existed at the local level, but also at the central level. This is largely due to the fact that gender is still considered a fairly new concept within Yemen. With the girls’ education unit having been established in 2005, there is not yet a clear vision, structure, or capacity at the central, governorate and local levels for the girls’ education unit to work with the other sectors. Gender mainstreaming is further hampered by the scarcity of gender sensitization materials within the country and the MOE as well as deficient policies at the central level to address key gender challenges, such as severe shortage of female teachers and forms of teacher harassment to male/female students.

In order to ensure a greater systematic and sustainable effort for integrating gender into the project components at the local level and within the Ministry of Education Girls’ Education unit, the BEST project recruited a Gender Component Coordinator who was responsible for overseeing the development of gender sensitization materials, working in collaboration with the MOE, and ensuring that gender equity is mainstreamed across all components of the BEST-Yemen project.

**Gender Challenges at the Local Level and Means of Addressing Gender Disparities**

Results from a gender equity assessment of 58 targeted schools in the three targeted governorates (Amran, Hodeidah and Rayma) conducted by the BEST Gender Coordinator reveal that girls face overwhelming barriers to access, persistence and completion of basic education. Over half of girls in BEST target areas have never enrolled in school or have dropped out at the age of puberty between grades 4-5 prior to
gaining basic reading, writing and numeracy skills. Conversely, boys have typically persisted to grades 6 through 9 attaining literacy skills prior to dropping out of school due to reasons of poverty and the need to find employment.

The key reason for girls’ dropout and unenrollment in all three governorates was found to be due to lack of schools, particularly unisex schools. In the Islamic culture, it is culturally unacceptable for girls to be educated by a male teacher and seated in classrooms mixed with boys, especially after reaching the age of puberty (Grades 4-5). This gender bias, particularly in rural areas, results in parents’ and teachers’ low educational aspirations of girls and expectations of dropout due to early marriage. During one school visit during the assessment, it was found that transfer of girls to girl-only schools after grade 6 has high success rates, even if a girl marries because there are no perceived threats from male teachers or students.

The second greatest challenge affecting girls’ enrollment and persistence in basic education was lack of facilities and furniture to provide a safe, healthy and secure environment for girls. Schools are overcrowded, have insufficient facilities (e.g. lacking water, classrooms, functioning latrines for girls), privacy walls, or desks to attend to the specific needs of girls. In many cases, functioning latrines are only used by male teachers and students. In overcrowded classrooms, where there is a shortage of desks and chairs often occupied by boys, girls must sit on the floor surrounded by dust, which affects their health and self-esteem. In schools with insufficient numbers of classrooms, girls learn with boys in tents, stairs or under trees, jeopardizing their safety and security. As a result of these challenges, girls often do not survive through the higher grades, and in severely under-resourced, overcrowded schools that do not have enough chairs, desks or classrooms, girls do not even reach grade 4.

The BEST project has addressed this issue through school construction, renovation and facility improvements creating a gender-friendly environment (Refer to the School Renovation Sections). For example, during the structural assessments in the design phase of school construction, the engineers consulted with mothers and girls to learn about their needs and responded through construction of privacy walls, functioning latrines within walking distance to the school, windows adequately positions to allow for privacy and safety, and additional classrooms and furniture to ensure each girl had a safe space among other considerations.

Another significant factor contributing to girls’ dropout is a critical shortage of female teachers in most primary schools. Only five percent of all teachers in Rayma, for example, are female. There are rare instances where a girl in grade 6 or 9 is permitted to be taught by a male teacher, but most families and communities abide by cultural norms and adhere to segregation of girls from boys and male teachers after fourth grade. One way schools have tried to address this issue is through recruitment of volunteer female teachers. There are about 25 volunteer female teachers in eight targeted schools in Bait Al-Faqih and Zaidia districts in Hodeidah governorate to help fill the shortage of female teachers. It is presumed that the situation is the same in many other districts since it is a national issue.

Low self-esteem caused by unjust treatment from teachers, both male and female, is another major factor behind girls drop out in many of the BEST target schools. During initial school visits and classroom observations, teaching practices were found to be male-biased with very clear examples of discrimination against female students. Girls often sat in the back of the classroom and were rarely called on, while boys sat in front receiving more attention, praise and interaction from both male and female teachers. As a result, gender inequalities begin to emerge in boys’ high levels of self-confidence and girls’ low self-esteem. Further compromising girls’ self-confidence and success in school is verbal harassment from teachers, both male and female, who verbally insult girls, calling them names in public and embarrassing them to the point where they are ashamed to return to school and inevitably drop out. Gender inequities are also reinforced through the roles boys and girls assume in the classroom. For instance, classroom monitors are often boys in almost all schools, while girls are expected to perform cleaning duties such as
sweeping. Sports activities are strictly defined by sex and do not target girls. Teachers’ favoring of boys in the classroom and discrimination against girls is mainly due to being lack of awareness and training in active learning and gender-sensitive instructional methodologies. These cultural norms and biases that cause girls’ low self esteem and lack of participation in school activities eventually lead to absenteeism, poor performance and withdrawal from school.

In order to increase girls’ self-esteem in targeted schools and create gender equitable opportunities for girls and boys in the school environment, the project introduced the idea of forming student empowerment groups in cluster schools on a pilot basis. Students would be assigned the task of ensuring a gender equitable school environment to promote gender equity in schools. Their participation in leadership roles would enable students, mostly girls, to gain valuable life skills such as higher self-esteem, improved and independent decision-making, self-confidence, communication and problem solving.

With regards to teacher verbal harassment of female students, the gender-sensitive material developed under BEST for teachers includes information about verbal abuse and harassment and describes codes of conduct. The BEST team recommended a policy that prohibits harassment and discrimination against girls be developed. However, given BEST does not work at the policy level, it was difficult to address this challenge.

To address the need for gender-sensitive training at the school and all levels within the Ministry of Education, the project developed two gender sensitization materials: one for teachers and headmasters and one for mother and father councils. The gender sensitive training materials aimed to make target groups more gender aware by introducing them to a range of gender-related topics such as the negative impact of prevailing gender roles, ways to build gender-friendly schools, and the importance of women’s (mothers) roles in the schools illustrating examples from real life experiences and successes generated from BE and BEST Yemen project success stories. Most importantly, materials targeting teachers and headmasters introduced gender-sensitive teaching methodologies.

BEST-Yemen works in collaboration with other projects to create a gender-friendly, safe school environment within Yemen basic education schools. Assisting with the translation and contextualization of the School-Related Gender Based Violence materials through the “Multi-faceted Approach to Safe Schools” (MASS) Program funded under Women in Development, BEST aims to reduce school-related gender-based violence in selected basic education schools in Yemen focusing on students in grades 6-9.

Absence of mothers’ representation on parent councils, very weak parental involvement in schools, and low priority for girls’ education adversely affect girls’ education. BEST-Yemen, through its community participation component, has conducted a range of community awareness raising activities to promote girls’ education, has established mother and father councils through transparent community elections, and has offered adult literacy courses to promote mothers’ involvement in educational activities. Through these efforts, BEST has dramatically improved women and girls’ participation in education, and has contributed significantly to increased girls’ enrollment and retention (see gender-related best practices).

Due to budget cuts and the reduced life of the project, the BEST project was unable to address all the gender challenges in the target areas such as: renovating all schools targeted under BEST with gender
considerations, addressing female teacher recruitment, or training female volunteer students awaiting recruitment into the formal education system. These activities are highly recommended for future educational development programs.

**School Administrator and Teacher Training Component Description**

This component’s aim is improve school administrator and teacher quality and enhance the quality of students’ education, through training to improve educator performance and increase teacher mastery of both pedagogy and subject content. The component aims to (1) improve inspectors’ skills in monitoring and inspection of administrator and teacher professional development, (2) improve the school administration in planning and evaluation, (3) develop curriculum and materials that will support interactive training, (4) train teachers in grades 1-3 in Math, Arabic and Science through active learning methodologies, and ultimately, (5) increase the level of academic achievement in grades 1-3 and 4-9 in Math, Arabic and Science. To date the first three tasks have been achieved, with the training of teachers to begin in November 2010 continuing through the first half of 2011. Obviously the reduction in the duration of the project by one year may impact the necessary follow up and assessment of these teacher trainings.

**School Administrator and Teacher Training Challenges and Means of Addressing**

The majority of Yemeni teachers lack the necessary training to effectively teach in the classroom. The Director of Education in Hodeidah reported that of the 22,000 teachers in his governorate, only 4,000 (18%) obtained the four-year Faculty of Education pre-service training. Nine percent (9%) hold a two year Faculty of Education Diploma. Sixty-three percent (63%) hold a teaching diploma under a previous older model of teacher training. Interviews with inspectors and training directors suggest teachers are weak in multiple areas. When asked to prioritize areas of greatest need, they suggest needed improvements for primary teachers in dealing with the young child, understanding their behaviors, psychology and development, and supporting the child’s talents and growth with suitable goals and appropriate learning methodologies. Many note the often abusive manner in which teachers interact with children regardless of the gender of the teacher. In addition, many note the deficiencies in student reading and writing in grades 1-3 and its role in eventual dropout, so they highlighted the need for improved teaching skills in these subject areas. Finally, informants reinforced the need for greater competence in the various subject areas and the pressing needs for appropriate guides and instructional materials in all subject areas. Available in-service training does not adequately address the overall needs, and implementing responsive teacher training is often a serious challenge due to the disparities in teacher levels and needs.

Similarly school headmasters also lack skills to run their schools effectively. Among areas highlighted by inspectors as areas for improved headmaster skills included creating a school plan, effectively managing a school, dealing with and evaluating teachers, improving the school environment, and completing school registries.

Inspectors at the district level most often perform observation of teachers and evaluations of their performance, followed by mentoring teachers to resolve challenges, or to follow up on the application and impact of training on teacher and student performance. Yet the Head of Inspection in Zabeed noted the unrealistic workload of inspectors and the limited budget per inspector to complete their task. He noted he had previously 80 inspectors to cover 50 schools in his district but now survives with only 14.

The limited presence of female teachers is also a challenge particularly when the disparity between girls and boys enrollment is so significant. Several informants highlighted the UNICEF model for funding the
qualification of female teachers to obtain a teaching diploma. UNICEF subsequently funds their employment for 3 years with the ministry committing to their employment after that time. But a number of officials note that district level corruption may pre-empt many of these subsidized teachers from eventually ending up on the payroll, frustrating such efforts.

To support improvements in school administrators’ capacity, BEST drew upon MOE materials developed earlier with the support of GTZ. Utilizing the third manual of a three-manual set, BEST supported the modification of this program from a 12-day training to a 21-day one, including an eight-day upfront and an eight-day ending training with an intervening five days in the field that allowed for follow up of BEST school administrators at their schools. The content of the training included topics such as Partnership in the School, Administering for Quality, M&E in the School, Planning Skills for the School, and Basic Registry Forms. Importantly, the Deputy Minister of Training both approved the training content and approach, visiting the program while in process, and found the delivery modifications extremely positive as an alternative mode for future MOE programs. The original local experts/developers of the GTZ materials were engaged in the effort and facilitated the initial 6-day TOT, targeting specific groups of school inspectors that had been previously certified as national trainers. All school administrators at all schools in the BEST districts were then trained and followed up by selected local inspectors. The activity was conducted in partnership General Director of Training and officials at both central and governorate levels.

The added intervening time for application between the two eight day trainings, afforded time to take a break in what was a long training (administrators noted they got bored with longer trainings), and the gap time enabled the further identification of what administrators needed and might be addressed in the second full week of training. Positive impacts that were highlighted by the component coordinator included:

- Headmasters were more likely to conduct meetings with teachers.
- Headmasters and teachers were more likely to discuss issues together for resolution.
- Some schools decided to conduct Girls Education Workshops on their own.
- Positive school environment changes were noted.
- School maintenance committees were established, and the school environments were cleaner.
- BEST schools now have all registry files and figures and one-year work plan on file (especially rare in schools)

As yet, teachers in BEST schools have not been trained. BEST did contract a committee of local Yemeni experts to develop the materials and these extensive and comprehensive teacher training packages are now complete and ready for implementation. Training will begin in November 2011.

Also, three training manuals related to countering violence against children have been Yemenized for three target groups: students, teachers, and social workers, and these materials will be incorporated in the teacher trainings. While the model has yet to be implemented, teachers will be expected to apply the new methodologies in their classrooms, and the designated inspectors will conduct school follow-up visits and individual mentoring with each teacher. The plan, building off the experiences and lessons learned from BE, will include follow up professional development meetings at the cluster school for teachers to share challenges and successes. It should be noted when similar types of teacher trainings were conducted in 2006 by the World Bank and Basic Education (BE) program using the same training materials, same trainers and the same assessors, significantly better teacher and student performance was achieved through the BE program and deemed attributable to the follow up assistance provided to teachers under that BE model. BEST will use a similar support model to maximize learning.
Finally, as noted earlier, teacher-student issues are a concern among supervisors and among parents. Teachers need to know how to better interact and teach young children, using age appropriate methods, proper supportive attitudes, building on students’ interests, and an understanding of child development and psychology, and avoiding physical or psychological abuse. Some of these issues are integrated in the currently developed BEST packages, but given the high priority ascribed to educators for trainings of this nature, it may be necessary to explore the development of a special module, arising out of a more in-depth field assessment of these issues, that is customized for shorter delivery and targeted impact.

**Community Participation Component Description**

The two main objectives of the BEST-Yemen community participation component are (1) to improve the level of participation of females in basic education; and (2) to enhance community participation in decentralized education management. In the words of the Director General of Girls’ Education in Hodeidah Governorate, the goal of the community participation component is to establish links with the community and the school so as to reduce dropout, increase girl’s enrollment and retention rates in school and to make the community aware of the importance of girls’ education.

Towards these aims, the BEST-Yemen project in collaboration with the MOE implements the following activities: formation of Mother-Father Councils (MFCs) through free and fair elections; provision of training to MFCs in roles and responsibilities of each member as well as in development of educational activity plans; capacity building of social workers’ trainers and heads of girls’ education and community participation departments; selection and training of social workers in their roles and responsibilities; supporting MFCs and school administration summer activities; gender-sensitive and promotion of equity of opportunity for female and males; development of guidelines for raising awareness of the religious, social, legal, health, economical importance of girls’ education; supporting open days to enhance efforts exerted for girls’ education; and supporting establishment of girls’ education supreme coordination committees.

**Community Participation Challenges**

According to the BEST Community Participation (CP) Component Coordinator and CP government officers interviewed, parent councils were not established in targeted schools before the BEST project, especially mother councils, for several reasons. Teachers, social workers and headmasters were not aware of the significant value the participation of father and mother councils can have on student and school performance. Mothers mainly did not attend council meetings because of the male-biased nature of the school (all male teachers/administrators) and religious customs that forbid women from interacting with men in public. Fathers did not attend council meetings regularly because of the belief that there was a financial commitment. The exception was in areas where there may have been a previous project. In schools where parent councils seemed to exist, members were not selected through a free and fair election process. The headmaster would select relatives or friends to comprise the council. Consequently, council members were under-qualified appointees, named on paper that may not have been actual parents of students within the school and did not actively participate in meetings or school events.

The lack of transparency in selecting community representatives also existed within government units responsible for enhancing community participation in support of girls’ education. According to governorate and district girls’ education and community participation directors interviewed from Hodeidah and Rayma, the central level government requires the district and governorate offices to select women to represent girls’ education at the district level, but the girls’ education/community participation sector does not have any criteria for assessing qualifications of advisors and technical specialists. Consequently, a sister or wife of a sheik who is influential, but is not necessarily an active proponent of girls’ education is often selected.
Informants stressed the need for transparent and specific selection criteria that prioritizes qualifications over biological sex of the candidate stating, “Why not put a man in charge (of the girls’ education/community participation unit) that’s qualified instead of a government officer’s female relative who doesn’t know anything about gender?”

At the school level, the biggest obstacle to active community participation was the absence of the social worker. Informants asserted that prior to BEST, there were not any social workers present within BEST target schools. Neither the headmaster, social worker, nor the community was aware of the important role of the social worker as a community mobilizer, problem-solver and student counselor. In the few cases in which there was a social worker present at a school, they were tasked with administrative duties and rarely interacted with students or the community. This was also due to lack of application of selection criteria during recruitment efforts or unavailability of qualified candidates.

Means of Addressing Community Participation Challenges

One of the greatest challenges abovementioned was the headmaster and social workers’ lack of understanding about their roles within the school and in relation to the community, as well as the lack of awareness about the role of the social worker among the community. The project addressed this through training headmasters and social workers in their job responsibilities. The training ensured social workers, headmasters and government trainers understood the vital role of the social worker and their respective supporting roles in mobilizing the community, activating parent councils and monitoring the performance and attendance of students with parental involvement. Likewise, BEST sensitized communities to the bylaws of the parent council, which explain the role of the community and social worker as an active member within that community responsible for tracking students’ and parents’ participation in school-related activities.

In order to address lack of functioning councils within target schools, the BEST Yemen project collaborated with school and community representatives to engage community members in the council election process. The headmaster sent a letter inviting parents to attend the election one week prior to the event, and announced the parent council meeting during school morning announcements as a reminder for students to inform their parents. As part of the communication campaign, BEST also asked mosque preachers to inform congregational members one day before the event. Including religious leaders in the community mobilization process proved extremely effective in gaining community participation.

The BEST-Yemen project successfully formed Mother-Father Councils at target schools through free and fair elections to represent parents of students enrolled in targeted basic education schools. Elections for mother and father councils were held separately and in a central location to accommodate all stakeholders, including women, local council representatives and government officials. Following the general public election, internal elections were held to elect individual positions within the council and on sub-committees. There are three subcommittees: (1) general relations, which deals with family affairs; (2) planning and finance, responsible for planning, funding and monitoring school activities; and (3) school maintenance, in charge of maintaining the school building and furnishings.

To facilitate active participation of all council members, BEST provided training to MFCs in roles and responsibilities of each member, and in the development of annual activity work plans. The annual activity work plans comprised all the activities the council would conduct throughout the school year (e.g., monitoring timely receipt of textbooks, ensuring availability of water for the school, observing teacher and student performance, minor school maintenance, furniture repair, and fundraising for school needs – refrigerator, electricity, wells, etc.). The ultimate goal of the training was to create self-sustaining community-based mechanisms to address challenges within the school, specifically low enrollment and
high dropout rates, especially for girls. With greater MFC member skills in educational management – including needs identification, activities planning, implementation and monitoring, the councils could relieve the school administration from some of the administrative burdens they endured and enable them to perform their roles more efficiently.

With aims to increase awareness within the broader community about the importance of promoting girls’ education, the project utilized a range of successful community awareness-raising strategies:

- Using the Imam to spread the word about the important role of mothers and fathers in supporting education, especially for girls;
- Development of guidelines, posters and other communication media for raising awareness of the religious, social, legal, health, and economical importance of girls’ education and implemented community-awareness campaigns targeting fathers, mothers, social dignitaries, and local government leadership about the importance of girls’ education;
- “Back to School” open enrollment day events to increase girls’ enrollments
- Summer school program to reinforce and strengthen knowledge and skills for students in basic education. The summer program also provided activities for improving knowledge and life skills of women and men in the community.

To address the capacity weaknesses within government girls’ education and community participation units, the project built the capacity of social workers’ trainers, inspectors and heads of girls’ education/community participation departments by providing them with training in skills pertaining to monitoring and evaluation and implementation of professional development programs. The training emphasized the importance of monitoring MFC activities through school visits. Inspectors were provided with transportation allowance to facilitate their role, which they deemed as critical to ensuring the sustainability of functioning councils.

Although the project could not effectively address the selection of district and governorate level staff since it is a policy issue outside the scope of the project, the project did include all technical specialists in the training in order to improve their skills and performance.

Despite these efforts, turnover of effectively trained staff challenged sustainability within the Community Participation component. A Director General of Community Participation in one of the governorates who was considered one of the best community mobilizers within the project resigned to work with a donor agency. The project has tried to overcome this issue by convincing the MOE to retain such exceptional counterparts, at least until the end of the project, until all staff within the unit are trained, or until they find qualified replacements.

Addressing the need for improved coordination among stakeholders at the governorate level, the project supported the establishment of girls’ education supreme coordination committees to be composed of all government and non-government entities (such as, Education, Health, Agriculture, Water Supply, International Organizations, National Associations, and others) directly or indirectly concerned about supporting educational efforts at the governorate level.

Adult Literacy Component Description

The ultimate goal of the adult literacy component is to reduce illiteracy rates in the targeted areas, particularly among members of mother and father councils for enhanced community participation in decentralized education management and improved girls’ enrollment, retention and transition in basic education schools. Working in collaboration with the MOE partner, Literacy and Adult Education Organization (LAEO), BEST implements simple and effective literacy and numeracy learning courses to
those who have never enrolled in formal education or who have dropped out of basic education before gaining basic reading and writing skills. In an effort to sustain the program and strengthen the capacity of MOE adult literacy programs, the BEST project trains Adult Literacy (AL) facilitators, inspectors and supervisors in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of its effective REFLECT methodology, and develops adult literacy instructional learning materials for application within government adult literacy programs.

**Adult Literacy Challenges and Means of Addressing**

The greatest challenge faced by the project and the MOE is the overwhelming demand for adult literacy programs given the alarming illiteracy rate, consisting of over half of the population in BEST target areas, especially for females comprising the majority. In Hodeidah, over half of the entire population is illiterate and of those 60 percent are female. In Rayma, 50 percent of the population is illiterate and the rate for women is the highest of three governorates at an astounding 75 percent of the total female population.

The main reason for high illiteracy, according to adult learners interviewed, is a shortage of schools within walking distance to rural villages. The BEST target schools did not exist at the time current adult learners, now between 19-45 years old, were of school age. Even if they had existed, learners admitted they would likely not have attended due to cultural norms prohibiting girls from attending co-ed schools beyond fourth grade.

Addressing the pressing need for literacy in target areas, the BEST project worked with the MOE to select target villages based on those that were most needy due to having the highest rates of illiteracy within the target districts, which were mainly located in mountainous, rural and remote areas that were inaccessible to LAEO, the MOE provider of adult literacy courses. Following district selection, the project developed simple, yet effective accelerated literacy learning programs targeting male and females, especially those who have never enrolled in school.

While the MOE was pleased that BEST was reaching the most hard-to-reach areas, the massive population size posed a challenge in achieving measurable impact. The total illiterate population in Rayma is 135,000; of which, BEST is only addressing 453 adults or 0.3 percent. In Rayma, the illiterate population, mainly females, reaches nearly a million. BEST is serving 1,653 adults, which is less than 0.2 percent (0.18%) of the total illiterate population. The BEST project attempted to address this issue by integrating its Adult Literacy program into the existing MOE LAEO program with aims to scale up efforts through training LAEO inspectors and staff and providing the MOE with learning materials that could be used by LAEO facilitators. With aims to develop a pool of qualified trainers at all levels of the MOE, the AL team conducted a series of trainings using a cascade approach to develop the capacity of national, governorate and district level trainers, consisting mainly of LAEO technical staff and supervisors.

Once trained by BEST, supervisors and trainers trained 121 facilitators (120 females and 1 male) in AL teaching methodologies and production of instructional learning aids from locally available resources. Facilitators were selected on the basis of having a secondary education degree and relevant personal skills. The interactive, personalized nature of the REFLECT methodology; however, conflicted with cultural norms that inhibit female expression. As a result, it was difficult for female facilitators at first to motivate participants. Rather than sharing their personal experiences to create a comfortable learning environment, the facilitators would strictly adhere to the questions in the facilitators guide. The AL component addressed this through organizing exchanges for facilitators’ to share successful experiences and discuss ways of overcoming shyness.
One of the major challenges encountered during the delivery of the AL programs was the fact that women and girls were occupied with fulfilling their agricultural tasks and fetching water from distant locations, which affected regular class attendance. According to the Component Coordinator, poverty is a key barrier in villages where families’ rely heavily on the girls’ labor to meet the family’s subsistence needs. To overcome this issue, Adult Literacy classes were held during convenient hours in the afternoon so they would not conflict with work women performed during the morning hours.

Other obstacles according to the Adult Literacy Coordinator included: unavailability of qualified female facilitators from the same targeted areas; difficulty with monitoring, inspecting and supervising AL classes due to the scattered and remote locations of targeted schools; lack of cooperation on the part of officials in LAEO and education offices in terms of ensuring schools are open and available to hold literacy classes for male and female AL learners; and lack of support from mother and father councils in promoting AL activities.

Sustainability also presents a significant challenge. Adult Literacy learners stated that they would like to continue learning through the next level of BEST, which is equivalent to grade 6, and most preferably beyond to grade 9. However, LAEO courses are not offered in their area and transferring to the formal education system is a challenge due to several factors: (1) it is not culturally appropriate for women or girls above the age of puberty to attend schools with boys; (2) curriculum is not age-appropriate or relevant to their lives; and (3) the methodology that BEST uses is more relevant to their needs and helps them to develop life skills.

With the intention of garnering sustainable support of AL activities after the conclusion of BEST, the project initially held three workshops with community members and government staff to introduce the project and set the stage for their participation in supporting AL classes in the targeted communities. Members of local councils, NGOs and local educational organizations were invited with the aim of developing partnerships and guaranteeing sustainability.

Unfortunately, the MOE does not have the budget or the capacity to sustain the BEST AL program. The Director General for Adult Literacy in Hodeidah Governorate Office of Education unfortunately stated that there is no doubt that AL classes will be discontinued after the BEST project ends. The reason is primarily due to lack of funds. The base salary for AL facilitators is 20,000 Riyals/month ($90/month). However, the government can only afford to pay LAEO facilitators an incentive fee of 8,000 riyals ($40) every six months. BEST facilitators receive the same incentive fee of 8,000 riyals ($40/month), but on a monthly basis, which is a strong incentive. As much as LAEO would like to retain the BEST facilitators, not all LAEO facilitators are on the government’s payroll, and thus would have first priority over BEST facilitators. This issue has yet to be addressed by BEST as it is a budgetary issue beyond the scope of the project. One new effort towards this aim is the training of parent volunteers in the REFLECT methodology so they may potentially continue courses in BEST target villages after the BEST project concludes.

Additionally, there is a small pool of staff within LAEO trained in the BEST AL REFLECT methodology. To enable inspectors and supervisors to provide follow up assistance to the facilitators, the BEST project trained 34 AL field inspectors and supervisors throughout the three governorates from the Literacy and Adult Education Organization (LAEO) in methodologies and approaches used in monitoring and evaluation, inspection, report writing and test preparation. Nevertheless, this is still a drop in the bucket. According to the Director General of AL office in Hodeidah, of over 200 LAEO staff within the governorate office, only 10 people (the Head of LAEO and 9 others) have been trained on REFLECT methodology. Since BEST facilitators were all recruited under the project, none of LAEO’s 1,000 facilitators have received training in the “successful REFLECT methodology,” according to the DG of AL in the Hodeidah governorate office of education. It is possible that inspectors and supervisors who
have been trained could train others within the governorate and district LAEO offices. However, budgetary resources would need to be allocated from the central government or a donor for this specific activity.

**EMIS Component Description**

This component aims to support the MOE’s establishment at the governorate, district and school levels a culture of information-based management performance, and it assists in both the development of the EMIS system and support to planning and policy development. Along with interactions and involvement of the central ministry, BEST works with eight districts overall in the three assigned governorates. BEST activities include (1) capacity development on computer skills, data entry, data processing, calculation and interpretation of educational indicators, data analysis, database management, and the projection of educational data; (2) development of the EMIS infrastructure in the targeted district and governorate educational offices, providing those offices with the necessary equipment and programs, and training the relevant staff in their use; (3) technical advice to the targeted governorates and districts regarding the identification of data needed by the consumers, the structure and the content of the statistical report, and the coordination among the unit related to EMIS to avoid duplication of effort; and (4) support to planning and policy development, and training for the directors and heads of divisions at the governorate and district levels on improved management skills, monitoring and evaluation, the utilization of EMIS results for planning, decision-making, and policy formulation and analysis.

**EMIS Challenges and Means of Addressing**

The EMIS system struggles with a host of institutional problems affecting the full range of EMIS activities from the school to central levels. While a plan for a restructuring of the Ministry has been proposed, it has not taken effect as yet. Presently the EMIS departments are not under one head, and current proposals to have Statistics and IT consolidated at the central level, and school mapping at the district level are still pending. This organizational uncertainty is also complicated by a general lack of institutional capacity, clear role definition and criteria for staff, and established systems of performance evaluation. Given the issues of staff skills and job security in a potential restructured Ministry there is, not surprisingly, resistance to change internally to decentralization reform, particularly with EMIS staff that feel they might have something to lose. Moreover, in the educational system generally, there is a lack of skills and awareness in the use of educational statistics in decision-making and planning. At the lower system levels in particular, there is a weak overall vision for what educational improvement would mean in Yemen.

At the governorate level, there is the lack of adequately budgeted operational costs for the collection of data from schools and thus it is often left to the creative devices and initiatives of staff. At the critical level of the school, there is poor and inaccurate information on student/teacher numbers and achievement at the school levels with virtually no information on previous years. EMIS staff at governorate and district levels note few school headmasters have the needed registries, diligently keep the necessary information, understand the value of the information or see incentives to provide correct information, and so timely, reliable school data is lacking. Additionally, the central ministry conducts its annual school survey late in the school year – in April, and with a five-month timeline for eventual final reporting, any data comes out after the new year has begun, too late to effectively use and plan for the impending new school year. For example, at the time of the assessment, data for 2009-2010 is not even fully collected, and only 2008-2009 data is available. While GTZ and the MOE have worked on formal national school registry forms to standardized data collection at the school level (30 registry types developed in fact, with only two piloted and distributed to involved schools), others question the number of forms required to most significantly impact the quality and dutiful collection of the most significant data needed. So
currently, most headmasters lack the necessary orientation and training in the vital core of registry forms to effect data quality most significantly. At governorate and district levels, computerization of records is hampered by lack of infrastructure, equipment, electricity and generators to operate, telephone lines, and the necessary qualified human resources to train.

To help address this multitude of EMIS issues, BEST capacity building interventions at the Governorate and select Districts as a whole have built on assessment of needs according to staff’s de facto tasks, with consideration given to the further formulation and refinement of staff roles as their skills grow. Trainings have improved their skills and understanding of the aims of data, its proper analysis, and proper use in planning, as well as served to inform them of national policies, strategies and targets. Trainings in management skills and in using EMIS in planning and decision-making have helped create greater demand for data, and BEST’s engagements with both central and Governorate staff have served to reinforce MOE decentralization goals through greater skills and empowerment of Governorate and District staff. Additionally directors of education offices have been trained on employee evaluation and in linking such evaluations to career promotion. Central staff and Local Authority Staff have been included in training activities, providing the awareness of the effort. BEST has worked to ensure greater commitment, understanding and support for the EMIS improvement effort as well as for the staff in these local offices. Interviews with Governorate and District level EMIS-related staff revealed that due to the training there is a clearer understanding of their roles and strong interest in applying their learning. The targeted education offices are using the learned knowledge and methodologies to elaborate on realistic plans for 2010. Interviewed representatives of two governorate offices elaborated fully on their plans to collect data in November of this year, months in advance of Annual School Survey, and one office presented a detailed educational statistic report at the interview, demonstrating their use of the trained skills and their interest in directly applying it in their work in the development of useful reports and planning tools. Another supervisee, representing his senior at the interview, demonstrated clear knowledge of issues related to educational indicators and the shift away from simply presenting data, despite the fact that he had not attended the trainings himself but had learned this knowledge via his supervisor. He clearly understood the value of the data, and presented student enrollment statistics boasting of the increases in BEST districts vs. non-BEST districts. In Zabeed District in Hodeidah, the Head of the Division of Statistics and Planning noted that now the Local Council see EMIS representatives as now having a clear understanding of educational indicators, and as credible providers of information with a good command of the tools and methods of planning. In Rayma, where bureaucratic delays have hampered the delivery of computer equipment, staff described how they travel to Hodeidah to use computers and take advantage of the more consistent electrical power. It is here they often are able to produce their reports. All of these stories demonstrate the clear interest, transference, and direct application of the EMIS learning to the actual demands of their jobs, and reflect the intervention’s potential to inform more effective decision-making at the local level.

With support of the M&E Component, interested in enhancing the qualitative and quantitative data needed by the project, school documentation systems for students (male and female) have also been activated at BEST targeted schools, with registration processes and accuracy improved. Realistically though, as noted before, a more nation-wide effort to standardize registries and train school administrators in their use is needed.

The BEST local EMIS pilots clearly demonstrate their value, but also reinforce the need to address the larger systemic EMIS issues. There are 333 districts country-wide, and BEST deals with eight. The World Bank intends to support piloting of new software and work in an additional five additional districts. Given the breadth of the problems, a more coordinated effort with other donors is necessary. In the existing three governorate offices served by BEST, Amran had equipment from the previous Equip 1 project, Hodeidah had from other sources, and Rayma is receiving additional through BEST. Thus where
equipment and training have been present, it appears improvements can be made. Additionally, if these local efforts can truly impact planning, national level budgeting processes will need to become clearer and more transparent, and clear MOE budget allocations made in line with the findings and the resulting local level plans. Additionally, further study is warranted to determination where smaller scale investments can have the most significant impacts on improving data collection, analysis and use in planning and budgeting.

Unimplemented BEST Activities.

Were there any activities planned, but were not implemented by the project? What were the reasons for not implementing them?

Generally BEST programming implemented programs in line with its plans, though modifying or eliminating select activities based on agreements between the project, USAID and MOE. With the curtailment in the length of the program by one year with its accompanying reductions in budget, many activities will necessarily be drawn to a close earlier than anticipated. Notable eliminations include:

- The school grants process which would have funded local school renovation projects and support sustainability of the Adult Literacy programming, eliminated due to funding and the reduction in life of the project
- Distribution of school registers to schools, not implementable due to the fact that the MOE committee established to review and develop standard school registers suspended its work in March 2009
- Training of grade 1-6 MOE teachers in My Arabic Library, materials published by Scholastic and purchased with non-BEST USAID funds, eliminated under AWP 2010 as per agreement between USAID and MOE

Special Insights.

What kinds of insights do these challenges provide for further work in Education in Yemen?

The challenges within Yemen are many, and while the MOE has managed to effectively utilize donor projects to advance their longer term strategic agenda – piloting new system innovations in training, adult literacy, EMIS, and the like, and documenting curricula and educational tools and materials, the MOE and GOY haven’t demonstrated significant capacity to sustain actual programming absent continued donor engagement. While this might be the hard reality of a country in Yemen’s financial plight, it is disconcerting to note that in an October 31, 2010 newspaper article in the English-language National Yemen entitled “Central Audit Warns Government from Overreaching State Budget Deficit,” it was reported that while the 2009 national budget was 509 billion YR in deficit, yet a 28 billion YR surplus existed in the education budget. There are obviously issues related the education sector’s abilities to make use of its allocated budget, despite the pressing needs that are so clearly evident. Donor programs need to press the government further and early on in the project funding process for commitments, within reason, for sustaining external investments, and for improvements in government planning, budgeting and transparency to better enable this to happen.

B. Best Practices

What were the best practices of the project, at both the central and community levels, which had proven to reliably lead to achieving desired results?
Holistic Processes to Address Barriers at the Community Level. BEST provides an integrated approach to addressing educational needs at the community level and the coordinated efforts appear to be mutual reinforcing. School renovation and construction provides an immediate, highly visible impact on community perceptions of project credibility. Community members become involved, and trainings for headmasters and social workers enable the more active, focused and informed engagement of parents. Parent Council establishment and training enables both fathers and mothers to participate effectively, and literacy training for young out-of-school girls and older women help build their skills and confidence to potentially return to school or become positive contributors to their children’s education. Training for teachers and headmasters supports improvement in both pedagogical and subject content skills. Additionally, it is suggested that the more mutually supportive and timely these interventions, the more likely they may have sustainable impact. It should be noted that the integrated team-based approach internal to the BEST project, also supported the more effective integration of this “full package” community approach.

An Active Project Advisory Board. BEST’s establishment of an active, engaged representative MOE board seems critical to effective operation of the program, full Ministry buy-in and credibility of the effort, and true integration of the project into the MOE strategic goals and in supporting greater cooperation and non-duplication of effort among donor programs. The Ministry fully appreciates this approach and if anything, desires even greater engagement on projects beyond simple “advisory” status.

Nationally-Established School Selection Process. Prior to initiating activities in the field, BEST actively engaged the ministry in the development of criteria for governorate, district and ultimately school selection, and the Ministry supported its introduction, review and approval at all Ministry levels. This process enabled the initial local level meetings between communities and schools to proceed with much greater clarity on the criteria for participation, and improved transparency as to the selection process.

Menu of Interventions. BEST’s use of “Menu of Interventions” proved a model for effectively engaging the community. From the very start it helped outline potential challenges communities might face, the nature of the interventions required, and the roles and responsibilities of the different partners to address each critical issue. The menu helped guide a process whereby the community could look at its own priorities and identify how community members could participate in its resolution. It helped to make the idea of interventions realistic, served to temper expectations of the project to a great degree, and supported more close community collaboration to define joint roles, promote partnership, and plan accordingly for greater sustainability. Additionally, it appeared the more immediate and visible the project interventions, the more trust and credibility were established in the community for those that followed.

School Renovation Risk Management Strategy. BEST has developed a “risk management strategy” to ensure the highest standards of renovation work. The strategy served to limit both legal risk and physical harm to beneficiaries due to improper construction. The project contracts and then transfers school construction and monitoring responsibilities to three local firms: a Structural Assessment Firm, a Monitoring and Engineering Firm, and a Renovation Firm. These firms have full responsibility for the successful quality completion of the project, yet BEST closely monitors the function of the three-firm effort to ensure these quality standards are in fact met. To reinforce this official transfer, the school renovation/construction site is formally handed over to the contractor at the start of the performance period, with the MOE engineer from the Governorate, the Director General of the Local Authority, a Local Council representative, the school headmaster, and representatives from the monitoring firm present.

Training and Materials. BEST works in close collaboration with the MOE to ensure the products directly support the MOE’s Basic Education Development Strategy (BEDS). Efforts have included
enhancement and revision of previously developed MOE materials, the Yemenization of effective externally-produced materials, the improvement in training delivery mode and effectiveness, the expansion of Ministry tools to properly assess teacher and student performance, and modification and development of critical gender-sensitive materials noted below. Through this approach, BEST ensure that solid MOE-approved products are available for use by the Yemeni system and by donor projects, and thus the project succeeds in supporting the MOE’s achievement of its longer-term strategic objectives. See Appendix F for BEST products.

Gender Component Related. Best practices derived from the gender component are listed below:

- **Gender-related issues were addressed in every programmatic activity** of the project as per the approved plans. This was accomplished through development and distribution of a menu of gender mainstreaming approaches entitled, “Promoting Gender within the BEST Yemen Activities” that was developed as a guide to support Component Coordinators with incorporating gender into each component. See Appendix F. The guide was produced based on lessons learned from the previous Basic Education project and then contextualized under the BEST project through a gender assessment of target schools.

- **The project conducted a one-day Gender Orientation Presentation for the project staff,** attended by USAID Senior Education Advisors, which also contributed significantly to the effective integration of gender across components. The orientation acquainted the project staff with the concept of Gender in Education and the importance of gender mainstreaming within the Project activities, a cross-cutting principle that involves integrating a gender perspective and gender analysis into all stages of designing, implementing and evaluating projects activities, policies and programs.

- **The BEST-Yemen project initiated the process of developing “Gender Sensitization Training materials” for the MOE and a life skills booklet oriented towards girls.**

  - The gender-sensitive material, developed by BEST with approval from the MOE, is the first national level gender-training material to be implemented by the Girls’ Education unit within the ministry. According to gender trainers and specialists interviewed in Hodeidah, it is also considered to be the first gender-sensitive training material within Yemen that addresses girls’ dropout and discusses how to overcome it. A gender trainer from Rayma governorate who attended the gender-sensitive training workshop noted that the material was very relevant to the situation in Yemen because it addressed all of the issues that are major barriers to girls’ education: dropout, early marriage, unavailability of facilities, shortage of female teachers, cultural perceptions of girls and women, and lack of unisex schools for girls. He added the fact that it had a religious approach in which participants learned about how women were treated in the past and how it has changed, which helped people to see how women should be treated according to Islam. The manual consists of 14 basic gender exercises which introduces trainees to the difference between gender and sex, the importance of gender equality and its relation to Islam, a checklist for assessing gender equality within their own context, and provides ideas for ways to resolve the prevailing gender disparities while also challenging the trainee to think critically about ways to create a gender-friendly environment. In close collaboration with the MOE, the project conducted gender sensitization training for headmasters in preparation for the new school year in 2009-2010, and will be training teachers in the coming year.

  “The gender-sensitive training was very good. It reflected the reality of the situation in Yemen and addressed all of the issues that are major barriers to basic education.”

  Gender Trainer and Inspector,
  Rayma Governorate office of education
The life skills booklet, developed under BEST, includes life skills exercises of specific interest for girls with the objective of increasing their self-confidence, leadership and teamwork skills. The booklet was developed according to the life skills considered most interesting for girl students to address the gap in extracurricular activities, which primarily target boys. BEST is currently pilot-testing the material and the MOE, which currently does not have any life skills study materials for students, has already approved the adoption of the material into the Girls’ Education unit. The MOE would like all of their employed teachers to be trained to use the student booklet starting with the teachers in BEST target schools. In the coming year, BEST plans to revise the booklet according to interests of both male and female students with the intention of creating a complete life skills curriculum for all students.

The project distributed seven gender-related awareness-raising posters to targeted schools during the fathers’ and mothers’ council elections. During the dissemination, the project gender coordinator also met with mother and father councils, principals and teachers and provided them with guidance on how they could mainstream gender into their school (i.e., encouraging mothers to be represented in school maintenance committees).

The BEST project has drafted terms of reference for Gender Equity Committees at the school level whose main goal will be to help better integrate the project gender equity strategy and activate the role of women and girls in targeted schools and communities.

The BEST summer program, which was an academic, personal and life skills enrichment program developed with and for all members of the community, is another example of best practice that has resulted in many achievements for advancing the status of women and girls. Women who have participated in the program are becoming leaders fully aware of their role in their communities. Past female participants have become poets, public speakers and influential community mobilizers. The BEST project has compiled a list of all past female participants who have become community mobilizers.

Community Participation Related. Communities in BEST target areas have played a vital role in effective decentralized education management, provision of quality basic education, and achievement of gender equity within education through promotion of girls’ education. Several examples of the successes achieved within the community participation component and of best practice strategies for engaging and mobilizing community participation within education are listed as follows:

Training the social worker in their roles and responsibilities: Training the social worker to understand his role and responsibility as a community mobilizer was considered the most successful intervention by all community participation and girls’ education technical officers interviewed from Hodeidah and Rayma governorates and district offices of education. The social worker engaged the community to form parent councils, to routinely monitor their children’s attendance and performance, and to create gender-friendly environments for girls especially. They were the drivers of change in the

BEST Success Story: Zero girl dropouts through grade 6
A basic education BEST-target school located in Zabeeb district, Hodeidah demonstrates the impact of unisex schools on girls’ education. In this district, the schools have an agreement with parents to enroll their girls in girl-only schools after grade 6. The headmaster personally meets with each parent to arrange the transfer, and being a female role model herself this helps to gain the trust of the community. As the agreement is made at the time the girls enroll in primary school, Al Tharwa school has a 0 percent dropout rate for females through grade 6 and beyond. The majority continue through grade 11 or 12.

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school and community. This success is credited to the excellent training program for Social Workers and headmasters carried out by BEST and the MOE, which also prioritized recruitment of female social workers, whenever there was a female teacher candidate who met the selection criteria.

- **School administration training for headmasters:** The second greatest best practice was the headmasters’ training. Now that headmasters understand their roles and responsibilities, they are self-disciplined, have the motivation for self-improvement, and look forward to trainings and acquiring new knowledge and skills. Inspectors and trainers state that headmasters are always prepared for a visit. Because they know inspectors will conduct follow-up visits, they try to keep the registers up to date and schools tidy.

- **Student Council:** The training for social workers and headmasters included information about the purpose of student councils and how to practice democracy through student parliament simulations. According to a headmaster interviewed who had participated in the training and subsequently formed student parliament councils at her school, the activity has been very successful in enhancing students’ self-confidence and leadership skills.

- **Clarifying job descriptions of Headmaster and Social Worker:** Having a job description for the headmaster and social worker is important for building their capacity to effectively exercise their roles. The tasks of the social worker and headmaster are inter-related, but they were not aware of which activities they should collaborate. Through training on roles and responsibilities for headmasters and social workers, areas of overlap and collaboration have been clarified.

- **Religious-based community awareness raising messages:** As Yeminis are motivated by religious values and fulfilling their obligations as Muslims, a religious-based approach to raising communities’ awareness about the importance of educating women and girls’ is a best practice strategy for mobilizing communities. Through involving influential and educated religious leaders (Imams and preachers) to spread awareness about the value of educating women and girls, the project was able to link education to the Islamic religion citing references from the Quran which state the importance of gender equality within education (see side quote) and of parents’ responsibility to support their children’s education: “When god gives you a gift – a child, your job – it is your responsibility to take good care of it. What have you done to support your kids’ education? Is it only the school’s responsibility?” Community Participation facilitators also linked education to parents’ roles in the home and in the community: “A father and a mother each have a role in the home and in the community. How can each exercise their role if they are not educated? as well as to the specific role of the women within the household: Who is the most influential person in the household? Who is responsible for teaching the children?” It is usually the mothers’ responsibility to teach the children.

- **Girls’ education campaigns:** Through girls’ education campaigns, the project increased the parents’ awareness of the social, religious, health, and economical benefits of education, especially for girls, in 58 communities. Increased awareness about the specific needs of girl students also contributed to improving school safety and girls’ attendance and retention. According to the Community Participation Coordinator, the girls’ dropout rate in BEST target schools was reduced by an average of 10 – 20 percent. Enrollment also increased. The headmaster of Abdo Mohammad Al-Miklafi...
School cited enrollment numbers have increased by 48 students, many of which are girls, mainly due to increased awareness within the community about the importance of girls’ education.

- **Community-orientation and regular meetings:** One of the best practices of the project was to involve the local community in every activity. When BEST initiated the project, staff gave an orientation to the community about the scope of the project and investment types. The community was invited to participate in the needs assessment, development of community profiles, and project activities. The menu of interventions aided partners to understand their roles and responsibilities and increased participation.

- **Transparent parent council elections with participation from district and governorate DGs:** Parents have been selected through a community election process with the presence of the Director General from the district and governorate Community Participation and Girls’ Education departments. The Director Generals have budgets to follow-up on activities planned and to monitor their participation. This has also helped immensely to elevate the status of the council and to motivate parents to continue participating after elections.

- **Training of father councils** helped to change their perceptions about their roles and responsibilities within the school. Before, fathers thought they only had a financial responsibility. Now, they understand that their role goes beyond that to monitoring their children’s academic performance and encouraging them to do well in school. They are clearer about their role in school management and maintenance as well as the role of the school and the district education office. Father councils understand procedures for building wells, school buildings, latrines, and have directly approached government offices and local government councils to obtain building permits and funds for school infrastructure improvement projects and resources for other school activities.

- **Emphasizing volunteer work as a means of supporting the school** has led father councils to become more involved in school events, which in doing so has also increased their financial contributions to the school. For example, they participated in teacher and student award ceremonies and supplied prizes to the most distinguished students. During the student council election, the father council purchased ballot boxes. The most committed father councils have donated funds for water projects and to repair broken furniture.

- **Formation and training of mother councils, especially in the rural areas:** Before BEST, only the head of the father council was trained. Now, women from newly established mother councils receive training. As a result and according to key informants interviewed, there is significant visible change in participation of mothers in education. Prior to training, women would seldom attend mother council meetings, if at all. Now, mother council meetings have an 80-90 percent attendance rate in BEST target schools. There have been countless success stories about women who never attended mother council meetings in the past who now attend and help solve problems. For example, the mothers’ council have helped bring six girls back to school that had dropped out at grade 11 due to early marriage. In other cases, mother councils have opened adult literacy classes and recruited secondary school teachers to work as volunteer facilitators. Similar to father councils, mother councils participate in fundraising, monitoring student performance, school maintenance committees, and in purchasing awards for honoring distinguished students with the highest academic achievement.
- **Capacity building of government staff:** Respondents stressed the importance of consistent follow up to monitor the activity of mother and father councils as a source of reinforcement and motivation. The BEST project has developed the skills of 56 government counterparts and local partners enabling them to form and activate 128 father and 82 mother councils. Local government and community partners have trained more than 3,000 members of father and mother councils on their tasks and responsibilities including planning, proposal writing, implementing and following up on planned activities. According to the Community Participation Coordinator, the community participation managers at the district and governorate levels, who are most appreciative of the training received by the project, will likely continue to follow up on community participation activities.

- **Supplying transportation allowance for inspectors and DGs to conduct field visits:** Provision of budgets for inspectors and DGs to conduct field visits is critical for the success of the project. Like a chain interlinked, all parts of the system from the central level to the school level must work together. The Director General of Community Participation of the Hodeidah Governorate Office of Education stated that to sustain the project activities, they will need a budget for transportation allowance, which apparently is not available within the MOE. The GOE can conduct the trainings and supply materials, but they stressed the need for sustaining the transportation allowance to continue carrying out community participation activities.

- **Training school administrators and parent councils in school planning, budgeting and administration:** Mother/father councils and school administrators in 26 target schools have been trained in school development planning, budgeting and administration. This has helped school councils and administrators to work collaboratively in identifying school needs, creating and implementing school action plans, and raising funds from local government and community members to address the issues within the school. A post-training evaluation of parent councils in 85 schools showed that the 85 parent councils were able to raise an accumulated 1 million riyals within three months. The funds have been deposited into school bank accounts managed by the councils that are used to cover the costs of basic services (e.g., water, electricity, classroom maintenance, etc.). Key informants noted that this type of participation is void in non-BEST target schools.

- **Establishing school bank accounts to deposit fundraising monies** received from parent council fundraising efforts is another best practice established under the BEST project and will continue to serve as a school fund for school renovation and quality improvements. This sustainable mechanism enables councils to contribute to the annual school budget planning cycle and could potentially be used to match, store and replenish donor funds.

- **The Summer Education Camp,** which provided academic enrichment courses and life skills for all members of the community, was considered the best activity the community had participated in within the last 20 years. According to BEST program staff, it was a truly effective example of partnership between the school and the community. The community-school joint activities included

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4 As the study was conducted in collaboration with the MOE, national evaluation forms developed by GTZ for evaluating the achievements of parent councils were used to evaluate parent council participation in BEST-target schools.
students, teachers, headmasters, governorate and local council leaders representing agriculture, water, facilities and other NGOs. The summer camp provided supplementary courses to address student weaknesses in core subject matter, which subsequently enhanced student performance; it conducted activities that raised awareness about the importance of girls’ education and life skills for women and girls, which greatly impacted fathers perceptions of girls’ education causing them to prioritize girls’ education over boys; and it offered life skills courses to women and men, significantly motivating women’s participation in adult literacy and life skills courses.

- **Involving the local council in parent council activities:** As a result of inviting the local council to participate in parent council elections and activities, there is greater communication and collaboration between local councils and schools. In some communities, the local council has offered to support school construction or to pay for teacher salaries to enable recruitment of female teachers in direct response to needs voiced by the parent councils and headmasters.

**Adult Literacy Related.** The Adult Literacy program is one of the key successes of the BEST project. The REFLECT methodology in particular which is the core of the program is a best practice in the field of adult literacy for having achieved dramatic impact on adult learners having no previous formal education. Participants who have never been schooled have become literate within as little as six months. Supporting evidence of this best practice follows:

- **Simple AL instructional and learning programs based on learning literacy through empowerment methodology (REFLECT methodology):** The interactive REFLECT methodology does not require use of any books. The content and topics for discussion is contextualized to the learner needs and are derived from learners’ reflection of their life experiences and problems they are facing, which are then used in discussion and problem-solving exercises. For example, if learners say water is scarce, they would learn how to pronounce the word “water” and then draw maps of the village to identify water sources and brainstorm places to build a well. The program combines literacy to support development of basic reading, writing and numeracy skills with life skills that empowers learners to improve the quality of their lives.

- **Accelerating learning program:** Under the BEST AL program, it takes a learner only six months to achieve basic literacy skills. The AL program is divided into two levels, each consisting of only six months. The first level of the AL program is equivalent to grade four of basic education. The second phase of the program is equivalent to grade six. This means it takes only six months to complete four years of basic education, and one year to achieve six.

- **Option for transfer to basic education:** After completing the first phase, learners if they wish may take the MOE re-entry exam and, if successful, transfer to a basic education school. Twenty-three learners have been re-integrated into basic education schools (in Thula district, Amran Governorate) since July 2009.

- **Life skills for health, social, and economical decision-making:** (as well as political awareness, leadership and community participation). *Life skills* constituted an important part of AL activities targeting both male and female learners. A total of 158 field facilitators and inspectors were trained in life skills implementation and various instructional methods for enhancing reading and

**BEST Success Story:**

After only six months in the AL program, Nadia has learned to read, write, and do basic math calculations. Her husband migrated to Saudi Arabia for work and their only form of communication is through text. Before enrolling in the literacy program, Nadia would ask people in the community to help translate the messages her husband sent because she could not read a single word. Today, due to the innovative REFLECT methodology, she is able to communicate with her husband directly and can read and respond to his texts.
writing skills. Utilizing **BEST-life skills booklets**, facilitators conducted various life skills-related activities (in relation to health, environment, agriculture, home economics, pre-natal and post-natal child care, and personal hygiene) in order to improve AL learners’ reading skills and promote positive behaviors in all aspects of their daily lives. For instance, AL learners have learned how to preserve food, maintain cleanliness and tend to their and their children’s personal hygiene.

- **Convenient scheduling which respects religious and domestic obligations:** The BEST project holds adult literacy classes in the afternoon so that it does not conflict with productive work. This is a widespread best practice for maximizing the participation of females since it does not interfere with their primary roles in the home and is accepted by husbands. During the call for prayer, the facilitator respectful of religious customs encourages the learners to pray. The facilitators also teach about proper hygiene and other topics related to Islam.

- **Increased awareness and participation of mothers in students’ education:** Mothers who have participated in AL courses have an enhanced level of awareness about the important role of the mother in education at home and at school. Women who have completed both levels are able to assist their children with their school work through grade 6. Learners who have been studying in the Adult Literacy classes for 6 months are able to teach their children in grades 1 and 2 the alphabet. Informants reported that since mothers have been attending adult literacy classes, children’s educational achievement has increased.

- **Teamwork and exchanges of experiences** among AL inspectors, facilitators and supervisors had a positive impact on the program. Sharing sessions among facilitators has helped to boost their self-confidence and facilitation skills.

- **Training parents to become literacy facilitators:** Most AL facilitators are teachers, but in order to promote sustainability, the BEST project is starting to train parents in the AL methodology and instructional guides.

- **Pilot-tested facilitator guides and materials in REFLECT methodology, reading and life skills for BEST and LAEO.** The AL Component has developed, pilot-tested and finished an array of learning materials that will be adopted for use within the MOE department. They include: REFLECT methodology, Reading through Empowerment and Life Skills Facilitator’s Guides, 12 Supplemental reading books for literacy and life skills development covering topics related to pre-natal/maternal/post-natal care, infant nutrition, child health and development, cleanliness, eye care, and women’s health. The project has also developed AL Training and Facilitation manuals for supporting facilitators with delivery of LAEO AL courses.

- **Building the capacity of AL inspectors and supervisors through quality training materials, training workshops, and provision of budget for follow-up activities.** BEST provided AL inspectors and supervisors with quality training courses and workshop in adopting relevant effective instructional methodologies and monitoring and evaluation approaches on an ongoing basis so as to ensure achievement of objectives. According to government representatives interviewed who participated in the training, “The training provided by Aziza Sharaf, the AL Component Coordinator, was excellent”. The DG and Inspector who attended the facilitator training and participated in selecting the AL facilitators stated that it was very effective because they now know the names of the

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**BEST Success Story:**

In Mareb, one of the toughest places BEST staff have worked under the previous Basic Education project, they had many success stories of women becoming literate leaders within the community and advocates of women and girls’ education. The secret to their success was first gaining the community’s trust, raising awareness about the importance of education and enhancing mothers’ and fathers’ participation in the parent councils through literacy courses.
facilitators better than those of LAEO. The main reason is because through BEST they have a budget for training, overseeing and supervising the AL facilitators. Such a budget does not exist under LAEO.

- **BEST project selected areas with the highest rates of adult illiteracy** because the GOE could not address these areas due to lack of funding.

- **BEST provided monthly salaries for AL facilitators.** This was a strong incentive for motivation especially when compared with LAEO facilitators who are paid every 6 months.

- **Collaboration with LAEO:** LAEO is pleased that they are working as one team with BEST to implement AL programs. They were trained to follow up and to conduct refresher trainings. The Ministry of Education will adopt the AL REFLECT methodology, but needs funds for training and facilitator fees.

IV. Part II: Conclusions: Insights from the BEST Project that Inform the New USAID Stabilization Projects: CLP and RGP

A. Description of Education Sector within the New Stabilization Strategy Context

USAID’s 2010-2012 Yemen Country Strategy represents a shift from customary, sector-based development interventions like BEST to a more integrated multi-sectoral approach addressing the key grievances and drivers of instability in targeted, disadvantaged communities. USAID’s stabilization goal is supported by two key Assistance Objectives, (1) improving the livelihoods in targeted communities and (2) improving the country’s governance capacities to mitigate drives of instability. This means that if single-sector BEST-type activities are to continue, they must be translated into a whole new context and ultimately respond to different priorities.

The new USAID programs established to address these two main objectives operate in multi-sectoral fashion, but in two different spheres of activity. The Responsive Governance Program works at the central level to strengthen policy formulation and implementation capacity, increase transparency of and participation in Yemen government processes and decisions, and promote civil society participation in policy development and implementation. The program will engage at the governorate level but only to support the implementation of Public Dialogue Forums intended primarily to inform policy level thinking. Community Livelihoods Program focuses more specifically on communities in eight governorates, mostly likely in 3 districts in each governorate, and aims to address these communities’ articulated frustrations and needs.
Thus when translating BEST-type programming into these new contexts:

- Basic education sector activities will need to be divided between central level (RGP) and community-oriented (CLP) programming
- Previous aims to support educational interventions in more stable accessible areas will be refocused on more unstable local environments
- More developmentally-focused educational programming will need to be reoriented to aims that will impact the reduction of instability and more directly respond to “drivers” of instability
- At the local level, there will be more emphasis on short-term, high impact responses, justified in light of their contribution to stability
- Local interventions will be implemented through a grant process with grant maximums generally of up to $100K, but possibly up to $250K.
- While there may be the possibility of envisioning longer-term community engagements to effect change, they may need to come in shorter-term staged interventions.

B. Conclusions Related to Challenges

Which of these (BEST) challenges are relevant to stabilization programming in Yemen like the new CLP and RGP projects? What are the anticipated future challenges to development in education in general, and to relevant components of the CLP and RGP projects in particular? What is needed to address these challenges? Were there any approaches identified by the BEST project to deal with community stabilization and conflict sensitive interventions?

Many of the BEST challenges and their modes of resolution will be relevant to the new programs, with some providing greater insights to education programs in general and others to the specific requirement of the new RGP/CLP programs. It should be noted that some of these transferrable approaches to addressing challenges are also included in the Best Practices section that follows this section:

Overlapping Programming at Start-Up. The BEST Project was challenged from the start with the existence of an ongoing USAID education program with a similar aim. Effecting planning and coordination helped BEST meet that challenge. With the new RGP/CLP programs now underway, with educational-sector elements integrated within each, it is particularly important that these three programs, as well as other existing USAID single-sector programs, develop a clear process of transition from single sector to multi-sector programming to effectively meet USAID’s new strategic goal. This includes (1) timely, ongoing coordination between old and new programs, (2) orientation of new programs to potential responses to education sector needs (and potentially other sector needs) within the new multi-sector context, building off established best practice, lessons and sustainable products (presumably this report will assist in this effort), (3) identification of potential interventions that BEST might support_supply during the period of overlap, as their experienced BEST staff could be well-placed to pilot modifications necessary in the new program contexts, and do so with full understanding and expertise in effective delivery models/mechanisms, (4) coordination on a mutually acceptable transfer/hire of qualified BEST staff to the new programs, (5) an in-depth in-house training for RGP/CLP staff to fully orient staff to “development” within the context of the stabilization aims, as well as to build an integrated team approach both within each separate program as well as across the RGP/CLP divide. This should include some mechanisms for joint annual work planning and/or plan review to develop specific points of activity cross-over.

Addressing School Renovation Needs. CLP will encounter the same challenges of overwhelming community needs as relates to schools, and they will have less funding to tackle school renovations at the
same level of effort as BEST. While BEST school renovations included at times new classrooms with a
cost of $25,000 each, the CLP COP suggests the program’s initiatives might be limited to a total of
$30,000 per intervention. This means increased upfront orientation and engagement with community
members to establish realistic expectations and prioritize needs to best enhance the learning environment
and improve access with the limited available resources. This requires thoughtful strategizing to obtain
maximum community involvement and in-kind cost sharing without sacrificing critical school additions
like walls and latrines that might significantly enhance female participation. Since these visible physical
investments have demonstrated their potential to energize community involvement, such an effort should
be tied to a well-coordinated initiative to capitalize on the community’s interest and build the capacity of
school leaders, social workers and parents. Using Mobile Repair Teams to support volunteers in repair of
school furniture seems a wise, cost-effective investment as well. While CLP budgetary limitations may
impact levels of investment, Multipurpose Centers, now in the BEST model, should be considered, but re-
envisioned in full light of the many cross-sectoral uses that would serve the community and that would
provide a highly visible hub for community activities of all kinds (summer programs, youth leadership,
health and gender awareness campaigns, literacy/life/vocational skills training, local fundraising, etc).
The lessons from BEST also suggest that in more remote, less secure areas, there may be the need for
increased coordination with governorates and governors, particularly in drawing upon their approval to
allow contractors to use district construction equipment to accomplish the task when distance, access, and
terrain make other alternatives impossible. To ensure greater safety and security, community/tribal
representatives should join all equipment/materials transport vehicles serving schools undergoing
renovation. More generally it should be noted that The Conflict Mitigation Program produced materials
that summarizes tribal traditions and norms, and how to mitigate conflict using schools and proper
religious messages. These materials may more generally be used in work with communities targeted by
CLP.

Central EMIS Institution Building. BEST demonstrated its abilities to successfully effect change at
governorate and district levels despite the absence of necessary restructuring throughout the EMIS system
as a whole. But while governorate and districts office staff did utilize data more effectively to create local
plans, they ultimately were limited by the fact that the ministry processes of budgeting were not
transparent. Thus while plans are now better devised to respond to identified local need, there is no
certainty that funds would be available and could be prioritized to meet those needs. Given RGP’s
broader aims to strengthen central policies and structures, actively supporting the needed MOE
restructuring would be a critical step in improving government services in education. Acting to improve
the transparency of the budgeting process would also enable more timely funding and implementation of
the national annual school survey, as well as improve allocation of resources based on local plans
informed by EMIS data collected and analyzed from schools. EMIS staff at local levels almost
unanimously emphasized the importance of finalizing school registries template, printing them, and
providing school headmasters appropriate orientation in their use in planning and decision-making. As
such, one critical intervention to improve data and decision-making at all levels would be the finalization
of these tools and their introduction at schools where donor projects (CLP included) are active and could
reinforce their appropriate use through training.

Local Government Capacity Development and Engagement. EMIS successes at district and
governorate levels demonstrated the value of capacity building of these groups. In fact, other officials and
staff at these levels wished elements of BEST training had been extended to them. In a number of cases
cited by EMIS staff at governorate and district levels, their enhanced skills resulted in increased trust and
confidence between them and Local Council members. Since Local Councils are newly activated bodies
without a long history, building their skills and understanding of their role, and working through them to
enhance the relationship between the council members and the line ministry staff of the Local Authorities
makes sense. BEST practice of select officials at the Governorate and District level Local
Councils/Authorities in training events, proved effective both in building buy-in to local efforts and
increasing their overall commitment. CLP should look specifically at supporting Local Council/Local Authority capacity, particularly given their program’s multi-sector approach in the targeted governorates/districts. One informant noted an earlier multi-donor funded effort, the Decentralization and Local Development Support Program, focused on Local Council Systems. The program produced training manuals, translated in both English and Arabic, that might be a helpful resource as the materials addressed issues of management, information systems, contractor selection, performance monitoring, and budget management. The Local Authority Development Fund, he noted, also offers a model on how grants might be managed through the Local Council.

**School Administrator and Teacher Training.** Educator skills throughout the Yemen school system are lacking. In many of the rural areas that CLP will be working in, these deficiencies will be a barrier to successful student achievement, and lack of effective teaching skills will contribute to early dropout for both boys and girls. CLP should draw upon the BEST/MOE-developed materials and their piloted modes of successfully training delivery for both school administrators and teachers, working simultaneously to build the skills of local school inspectors and trainers to train and follow up on school educators’ skills acquisition. Note that best practice in the earlier Basic Education program, highlighted the importance of teacher follow up to effect visible enhancements in teaching skills. Like BEST, training of this nature should be addressed through mechanisms that enable more systemic development of local trainer/inspector cadres, with delivery at cluster/district levels, with active engagement of district and local education officials, and in concert with Ministry guidelines. Both administrators and teachers should be trained. This will need to be taken into consideration in CLP’s grant/proposal development process so such trainings benefit from efficiencies of scale and promote MOE system capacity building. Given the input provided many inspectors, trainers, and headmasters, teacher training emphasis might need to be prioritized, addressing teachers’ significant inabilities to deal with young children and use age-appropriate methods first (including gender sensitivity), and then building skills in teaching Grades 1-3 reading and writing before many of the other critical subject content areas.

**Gender:** Given nearly half of girls are not enrolled in basic education with the rate even higher in the rural and conflict areas, the new stabilization projects will undoubtedly face pressing gender-related challenges within education such as critical shortage of teachers, unavailability of girls’ only or safe schools, gender-biased teachers and schools, and lack of institutional and human capacity within the MOE girls’ education unit to adequately respond to these challenges. When BEST shifted from the Basic Education project governorates to the BEST target areas, the Gender Coordinator conducted a gender gap assessment within its 58 communities to apply appropriate gender mainstreaming tools and approaches. CLP should conduct a similar assessment drawing on the experience and best practices of the BEST project. The new project should also build the capacity of girls’ education and communication staff using best practice materials and qualified trainers within nearby governorates from BEST or its former Basic Education project so that the MOE staff may become capable of carrying out gender audits, trainings and follow-up activities.

**Community Participation:** According to key informants and donor representatives interviewed, community participation within Yemen schools is dormant in areas where there is not an active project. Therefore, all challenges faced by the Community Participation component during the initial stages of implementation, such as lack of social workers and mother councils, inactive father councils, and non-transparent council member selection, are relevant to the new stabilization program areas. CLP and RGP should conduct an assessment of the target communities working with MOE inspectors and apply relevant best practices from the BEST community participation component. Additionally, after training mother and father councils in school improvement plan development and proposal writing using the BEST model, CLP should provide grants to address school needs, establish school bank accounts, and request the government to incorporate the activity into their budget planning cycle for sustainability. The execution of the grants should be monitored closely to ensure they are being used for intended purposes.
In order to work successfully in unstable areas, transparency and trust must be built between the community and the government. The CP Component Coordinator who has experience working in conflict areas of Marib, Shabwah and Amran in previous projects suggested CLP initiate engagement with the community by inviting government and community representatives (from various tribes) at the governorate and district levels to develop a joint work plan based on the expressed needs of the community. In response, CLP may offer interventions to satisfy the immediate needs and desires of the community. An agreement should be signed between the project, the local council and sector heads from the health, education and agricultural divisions outlining roles, responsibilities and commitments to provide future funding for sustainability. Following the signing of the agreement, the project should ensure immediate follow-up on planned activities to ease tension between the government and community. Immediate implementation helps to build the community’s trust in the government’s commitment to respond to their needs.

In areas where there is strong opposition to the government due to widespread corruption, the community has been more accepting of a foreign entity entering the community as opposed to the government. To not be subject to fatal attacks, it is recommended that project staff not mention that they are funded by the U.S. or employed by the Yemeni government. Instead, it is recommended that the project identify itself as an international project with aims to support the community. The project may work through NGOs or CSOs.

If the project is working directly through the local government, it is best for the project to work in collaboration with the local council and to inform the community that the funds are being received from an outside donor so that when the project ends, it does not cause more instability if some of the activities cannot be continued.

**Adult Literacy:** As 60 to 75 percent of the female population within the BEST project is illiterate, the same percentage, if not more, should be expected within the target conflict areas. Depending on population size, the numbers of illiterates could reach the hundreds of thousands or as in the case of Hodeidah nearly a million. This presents a grave challenge and opportunity to address one of the key drivers of instability. Sustainability of facilitators and AL courses could very well be another challenge if local councils and government divisions do not commit sufficient budgetary resources. A signed agreement should be developed with all partners at the inception of the program to ensure committed resources for sustainability. Additionally, involving teachers and parents in facilitator roles may help to alleviate some of the financial burden.

C. **Best Practices Transferable to RGP/CLP** (Including Recommendations for Modifications/ Additional Interventions)

*Should these successful practices be continued by the CLP, RGP projects and/or other USAID stabilization program mechanisms like the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) and/or Conflict Mitigation Programs or they need to be modified? What are the modifications needed, if any, for these best practices to fit with the CLP, RGP projects or other stabilization program mechanisms? What of the best practices identified are most applicable to community stabilization and conflict-sensitive interventions?*

**An Active Project Advisory Board.** BEST’s establishment of an active, engaged representative MOE board proved critical to the effective operation of the program. With the broader multi-sectoral approach of RGP/CLP and the inherent divide in the nature of their programs, it makes sense to consider a joint Advisory to help bridge this gap, and ensure effective communication among all involved sectors at all levels of government. Given the breadth of the two programs and the fact that other donors will still be
working in the single-sector mode, this is also critical to avoid unnecessary overlap. Ministry figures on
the board will have a significant role in minimizing duplication of effort and ensuring that community
level interventions support broader governmental development plans and build off of existing systems,
processes and tools/resources. Additionally, whether within the Advisory Board context or not, it makes
sense to identify common stakeholders and Local Authority staff to be involved in both the RGP Public
Dialogue Forums and in CLP capacity building interventions at the Governorate and District levels. This
will help bridge the communication gap existing between the more centrally-oriented and more
community-oriented foci of the two programs, and enable players at these mid- and lower levels to view
the overall USAID intervention more holistically.

Holistic Processes to Address Barriers at the Community Level. Since BEST’s integrated approach to
education at the community level appear to be mutual reinforcing (and its team-based program
management style further enhances this approach), CLP should work to replicate this general community-
focused education model, with perhaps consideration to integrate the model with even other non-
education sector interventions that are mutually supportive. This approach would appear to have a more
sustainable impact than if school-related services were more selectively implemented in any one
community.

Established Criteria and Systems of School Selection. Prior to implementation, BEST actively engaged
the ministry in the development of criteria for governorate, district and ultimately school selection, and
the Ministry supported the criteria’s introduction, review and approval at all Ministry levels. This process
ensured greater transparency on school selection and enabled open, forthright dealings with communities
on the process. Within more unstable, unsecure tribal areas, perceptions of unfairness may trigger
increased volatility. Clearly given the new USAID objectives, and targeted areas for intervention, a
comprehensive new set of criteria need to be established, within the framework of the identified
governorates and chosen districts. Considering student population, school mapping and local contexts are
critical starting points and will help minimize potential disputes, or at least offer a clearer framework for
addressing problems when they do arise.

Menu of Interventions. BEST’s use of “Menu of Interventions” proved an effective approach for
engaging the community in discussions about their education needs. The menu highlighted the potential
challenges communities might face, the nature of the interventions required and the roles and
responsibilities of the different partners to address the issue. While this approach was used within the
single sector of education and evolved over time, the same concept could be used in a multi-sector
approach, helping to raise awareness of the full menu of issues with community members, particularly
important in cases where some needs might be ones people are less inclined to talk about (adult literacy,
or even their children’s education when water and infrastructure might seem more pressing). While
clearly community contexts might differ dramatically from one location to the next, a dynamic,
changing/evolving document of this nature would help promote honest community dialogue about needs
and options to address their local challenges, encourage real partnership, and potentially assist in
identifying synergies between different sectoral efforts. It might serve as a promising CLP starting point
that could lead to the ultimate development of a more holistic multi-sectoral model of community support.

Risk Management Strategy. BEST “risk management strategy” that engages three local firms -- a
Structural Assessment Firm, a Monitoring and Engineering Firm, and a Renovation Firm – in local school
construction is a viable model to consider in the more unstable contexts of CLP, particularly where
regular where CLP-grantee oversight might be more limited. The formal hand over to the contractor at
the start of the performance period – attended by the MOE engineer from the Governorate, the Director
General of the Local Authority, a Local Council representative, the school headmaster, and
representatives from the monitoring firm – could be used to further reinforce local responsibility and

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oversight of the effort and promote community ownership and roles in supporting the resolution of issues during the period of school renovation.

Menu of Gender Mainstreaming Approaches. Given Yemen has the highest gender gap in the world with gender disparities cutting across all sectors, all best practices from the BEST-gender component are applicable to stabilization programs. Initially, a gender mainstreaming assessment should be conducted in the targeted areas to identify gender disparities and appropriate gender mainstreaming approaches. The Gender Coordinator should ensure that gender equity is addressed in every programmatic activity of the project through orientation, gender-sensitive training, and distribution of a menu of gender mainstreaming approaches such as, “Promoting Gender within the BEST Yemen Activities” (see Annex F).

Gender-Sensitive Training and Life Skills for Girls. The CLP project should provide “Gender Sensitization Training” and Training in “Life Skills” for the MOE girls’ education and community participation inspectors and heads of departments, who can then be responsible for training headmasters and teachers in the gender-sensitive teaching methodologies and life skills activities. There is a strong need to develop life skills programs for students, especially for teenage girls.

Gender Awareness-Raising Activities/Girls’ Education Campaigns: Following the best practice examples of the BEST project for increasing girls’ enrolment and retention, CLP should distribute gender related awareness-raising posters to community mobilizers to raise parents’ awareness of the social, religious, health, and economical benefits of girls’ education. Using religious-based messages was extremely effective in increasing girls’ enrollment and reducing dropout. CLP should continue to replicate this best practice along with other activities that promote girls’ education such as “back to school” open enrolment day, summer camps, and mother council activities.

Food Rations: As an immediate intervention for increasing girls’ enrollment and retention rates in unstable, conflict-stricken environments informants recommended provisions of food rations to support girls’ education (flour, rice, water, gas, etc.) based on the success of UNICEF programs in similar contexts.

Unisex Schools: As most drop out occurs in co-ed schools, the most effective strategy for recruiting and retaining girls, especially in the conflict-sensitive areas where it may be dangerous for girls to attend school is to create unisex schools for girls in grades 1-12 and offer girl-friendly extracurricular activities targeting girl interests and needs, such as life skills.

Girl-friendly Schools: Within the limits of the budget, CLP should consciously look to build and/or renovate existing schools and classrooms, functioning latrines and privacy walls in consultation with mothers, female teachers and girls and ensure proper placement of latrines, windows and other facilities for adequate privacy and protection of girls. This was considered one of the major contributions of the BEST project and resulted in increased girls’ educational attendance and retention rates. Involving MFCs in school construction (e.g., supplying water for latrines) and carrying out school renovation and maintenance is also critical for sustainability. Gender Equity committees at the district and school level should conduct periodic visits to ensure that school facilities (e.g., latrines) are functioning and equally address the needs and interests of both girls and boys.

Gender Equity Committees: Given the gender difference in most of schools, there is a need to create gender equity committees at the school level (in mixed schools). CLP and RGP can build on BEST-developed drafted terms of reference for establishing Gender Equity Committees at the school level and may even expand on this to include Gender Equity Committees within the DOE and GOE.
At the central level, the following recommendations were provided by the Gender Coordinator and government representatives from the girls’ education and community participation divisions of education as applicable interventions for new stabilization programs:

- **Sexual Harassment Policies:** Support the MOE to develop policy that prohibits all forms of harassment towards male/female students and teachers in school and provides corresponding codes of conduct for school teachers, headmaster and students.

- **Female Teacher Recruitment:** The presence of female teachers is viewed as most critical for attracting and retaining female students as well as involving mothers in the parent council and school-based educational activities. Create a program for recruiting (starting with schools where there is a pool of female volunteer teachers), training and certifying female teachers giving priority to areas with high girl dropout rates and where communities do not allow a man to teach their daughters (acceptance of male teacher varies across communities). Formalize processes whereby MOE employs them after the project ends.

- **Sex-Disaggregated data:** Ensure that the education data and education indicators are disaggregated by sex. Provide gender-sensitization training for the department of planning and statistics in collecting, processing, analyzing and disseminating data.

- **Gender-Sensitive Planning and Decision-making:** Assist the MOE planners at the different levels in the elaboration of a gender-sensitive educational plan. Train the decision-makers to utilize the EMIS reports and to make gender-sensitive educational decisions.

- **School Selection Criteria:** To achieve maximum impact in closing the gender equity gap within education, priority for school selection in the new target areas should be given to schools that meet the following criteria: high female dropout rates, absent mother councils and existing female volunteer teachers. Priority should be given to training female volunteer and paid teachers at these schools. Increasing the qualifications of volunteer female teachers can help to retain students, increase literacy rates, and convince parents to allow girls to stay in school past grade 4.

**Community Participation Related.** All best practices of the Community Participation component, such as the highlights listed below, are applicable to the new USAID programs, particularly the Community Livelihoods Program, and should be duplicated to the maximum extent possible so as to address the needs of all districts and communities served.

- **The BEST Summer Program** should be continued to enrich academic achievement of boys and girls, and improve life skills within the community while also advancing the status of women and girls. Life skills courses should be offered to motivate women to participation in summer camp activities.

- **Establishment and Training of Mother/Father Councils.** Considering the significant impact parent councils have had on student and school performance within BEST target communities as well as the contributions women have made to community development, CLP should establish and work directly with parent councils to address needs within the community as a sustainable mechanism. Applying the best practices of the BEST-CP component, community orientation meetings to explain the purpose of the council, transparent council elections with participation from district and governorate DGs, and training mother and father councils on roles and responsibilities while also reinforcing volunteerism are necessary to ensure active councils. For increasing participation in decentralized education management, training immediately following parent council formation should take place targeting school planning, budgeting, administration...
and partnerships with local council and government members included in the training so that parents and headmasters will know for what purposes to include government partners. For example, in one target school visited during the assessment, council members approached the DOE to acquire necessary permits for school construction, and met with the local council to request an additional 60 desks for new students. School administration should encourage council members to collaborate with local government officials and, at year end, distinguished members of the father and mother councils could be honored during award ceremonies to motivate and sustain their active engagement.

- **Establishing School Bank Accounts to Deposit Parent Council Fundraising Monies.** This best practice should be continued under CLP especially given the grant-making scheme. The bank account can be used to store, replenish or match donor funds.

- **Recruitment of Influential, Educated Women on Mother Councils.** To facilitate recruitment of women on mother councils and their active involvement, CLP should involve influential, educated mothers in the mother’s council such as wives or daughters of sheiks or local governing council members because they are respected and have the power to influence other women in the community. The project should ensure they are trained in gender sensitization and aware of their role as promoters of girls’ and women’s education.

- **Sensitization of Father Councils** about the important role women play in the household, in decision-making and in educating their children through gender-sensitization training. Sample awareness messages related to religion and expected roles within the home, school and community utilized by the BEST project should be replicated such as, “Who teaches the children at home? Who is the decision-maker in the house about the children’s education and health? Who manages the budget? Who has an obligation as a Muslim to contribute to their community? (both men and women)” Such messages help men realize how education can help women to perform their roles more effectively and are well-received.

- **Capacity Building of Community Participation/Girls’ Education GOE/DOE staff** to conduct trainings and follow-up activities should be continued to enable the parent councils to be actively engaged in school-related activities. As learned under BEST, supplying transportation allowance for inspectors and DGs to conduct field visits is critical to the success of the project, and thus should be continued.

- **Training of Social Workers and Headmasters in Gender-Sensitive Outreach and Communication Strategies.** Social workers, especially female social workers, play a vital role in community mobilization and encouraging girls’ enrollment and mothers’ participation in parent councils. Thus, they should continue to receive training on roles, responsibilities, community mobilization using religious-based awareness messages, parent council formation, and gender-sensitization. Headmasters should be included in the training to ensure that social workers and headmasters collaborate in planning school activities.

- **Training and Formation of Student Councils.** Student councils were a best practice of the BEST project for having succeeded in building students’ leadership and democratic skills as well as self-esteem. It should be duplicated in new target areas giving special attention to gender balance in council roles and responsibilities.

Suggested modifications and recommendations for interventions most applicable to community stabilization programs were provided by the Community Participation Component Coordinator and
government representatives from the girls’ education and community participation divisions of education as follows:

- **Train the social worker on moral guidance counseling** to build their capacity in problem-solving student issues and providing proper guidance. (It is part of the MOE curriculum, but the MOE needs technical assistance to support the training).

- **Entry into new districts.** In new districts, work directly with the teacher, community and mother/father councils. Begin sensitizing them in gender issues. Go door to door to recruit them.

- **Assist the district education office with developing selection criteria for recruitment of girls’ education staff at the district and governorate levels.** The staff should be trained or required to meet a certain level of qualifications. Select a person who believes in girls’ education and is influential to work in the district education offices and support them with training.

- **Provide capacity-building in computer literacy and database maintenance.** Computers and maintaining a database can be used to track who has been trained at the district and governorate level and to know which schools have held elections. It’s very important to have a database to track and analyze the number of councils formed, and to generate reports to do field visits and to keep track of actual data.

- **Inspector training** is needed as inspectors are responsible for overseeing school management and administration, teacher professional development, school maintenance, morning assembly at each school, but they have resource constraints

**Adult Literacy Related.** Presuming the illiteracy rates will be as high, if not higher in the governorates of the CLP project, youth and adult literacy is critical to the achievement of stability as noted by the Director General of a district in Hodeidah (see side quote). The innovative methodology developed under the former Basic Education project and implemented under BEST was very effective in conflict-sensitive environments of Amran, Shabwah and Mareb. Literate women became leaders in their community and advocates for girls’ education and were able to contribute significantly to health, education, and economic circumstances of the household. Based on these impressive results the REFLECT methodology and life skills program can achieve within as little as six months to one-year, all of the best practices of the AL component are recommended for continuation under new stabilization programs as follows:

- Selection of districts with the highest illiteracy rates and no LAEO courses
- Replication of the innovative BEST REFLECT methodology
- Accelerating learning program with option for transfer to basic education
- Life skills for increased awareness of health, social, and economical issues
- Convenient scheduling which respect religious and domestic obligations
- Teamwork and exchanges of experiences
- Training parents to become literacy facilitators
- Building the capacity of AL inspectors and supervisors through quality training materials, training workshops, and provision of budget for follow-up activities
- Incentives such as monthly salaries for AL facilitators

**BEST Success Story:**
According to the Director General of Hodeidah district, “One of the evils in Yemen is ignorance and illiteracy. If we have illiterate, out-of-school youth, they will get involved in terrorist activities. We can talk about long-term goals for achieving sustainability and stability, but we have to focus on literacy first to address the immediate problems.”
Collaboration with LAEO for developing sustainable mechanisms

Slight modifications and recommendations provided by key informants are:

- **Expand the literacy program.** Add another level equivalent to grade 9 so women may develop a productive skill and complete basic education. This would also motivate their children to stay in school.
- **Include vocational training** that could lead to income-generating activities. Encourage women to become involved in something tangible in their community, school or in a project.
- **Revise the learning guide:** The learning guide needs to be revised to include more precise instructions, broken down into simple steps, so that facilitators can be more self-sufficient and less reliant on trainers for interpreting the material.

V. Part III: Recommendations: Application of Best Practices of BEST to Address Key Challenges within the Education Sector under the New Stabilization Framework

A. Drivers of Instability Related to Education and Governance

The USAID’s Stabilization Strategy will target the restoration of confidence between the Yemeni people and their government by addressing nine drivers of instability and conflict in Yemen. They include a large youth bulge and rapidly growing population, unequal development, political marginalization and repression of the disaffected, widespread corruption, weak state institutions, declining government revenues, growing natural resource scarcity, and violent Islamist extremism.

Drivers of primary importance to improved governance and education are as follows:

**Driver Category 1. Unequal Access to Political Power:** This driver of instability relates to the certain communities, groups or individuals that are disaffected and prone to destabilizing behaviors because of real or perceived exclusion from *equitable social participation and decision making*:

A large part of Yemen’s population constitutes illiterates comprising nearly half of the total population excluding them from the sphere of political decision-making. Women are especially marginalized given 60, and in some governorates as much as 75, percent of the total female population is illiterate. This causes significant gaps in women’s access to and participation in economical, social and political opportunities and places them at risk of becoming victims of violence and abuse in conflict-prone areas. Cultural barriers preventing women’s equal participation alongside men in public arenas call for female-targeted interventions to increase their access to political power. Particularly in education for example mother councils are non-existent in most communities excluding women from decentralized education management. As evidenced by BEST, when mothers are engaged in literacy/life skills courses and join mother councils, they become exceedingly active members of the community, advocates for girls’ education, effective problem-solvers, and more capable of improving their children’s health and educational status.

Addressing literacy gaps may also have an effect on reducing violence in conflict-prone areas. High illiteracy rates are perceived to play a role in destabilizing behaviors within conflict environments. For example, in three governorates (Marib, Al Jawf, Shabwah) in which tribal revenge killings have claimed the lives of 4,698 people between 1998 and 2008, 56 percent of the male population and 70 percent of the...
female population are illiterate. According to 2009 statistics from the government’s Central Statistical Organization, 1.3 million people live in these three governorates where the illiteracy rate is 63 percent, compared to the national average of 41 percent. Reducing illiteracy of both men and women in these governorates may increase access to political power and, in turn, reduce conflict.

**Driver Category 2. Unequal Access to Physical/Service, Opportunities and Resources:** This driver of instability relates to the certain communities, groups or individuals that are disaffected and prone to destabilizing behaviors because of real or perceived inequalities in development, distribution of services, resources and/or opportunities for wealth generation.

The majority of out-of-school girls, and boys, are in the rural, poverty-stricken areas, in which 74 percent of the population lives. The accessibility of schools is a major challenge in rural areas. Nearly half of girls are not enrolled in basic education, and of those roughly 80 percent are unlikely to ever enroll. Boys’ education is higher with enrolment rates at 74 percent and the likelihood of boys not ever enrolling is a low 36 percent. Child domestic labor is a challenge for both boys and girls, but more so for girls. Besides distant locations, poverty and child labor, unequal access to educational services for girls also stems from a horde of institutional factors within the educational system including insufficient facilities, teacher discrimination and harassment against girls, a shortage of female teachers, lack of funds for constructing gender-friendly schools closer to rural girls’ homes, and neglect for overall gender sensitivity within the institution for addressing the specific needs of girls. Insufficient access to literacy courses for women and girls out of school further marginalizes them from accessing physical services, resources and opportunities for wealth generation, such as life skills, vocational training and income-generating opportunities.

**Driver Category: Crosscutting. Youth Issues:** This driver relates to the high numbers of youth that are disaffected and prone to destabilizing behaviors because they are unemployed and/or have poor engagement in other legitimate activities.

More than half of Yemen’s population estimated at 20 million is under the age of 18 years and more than half of the children in the country live below the poverty line. And if they do go to school, adolescents in Yemen face enormous challenges in finding a job when they graduate and in finding productive ways to fill their spare time. According to the United Nations Development Programme, more than 40 per cent of young people in Yemen will face unemployment in the next ten years. The prospects for youth employment in Yemen are especially dire because the country suffers from a “youth bulge,” a demographic phenomenon found in many developing countries as they move from high to low rates of fertility and childhood mortality (Mortality rates usually decrease first, and the temporary combination of low mortality and high fertility leads to a population bulge). While many nations have benefited from this bulge, where educated youth have contributed positively to economic growth, in Yemen investment in human capital has been very low. A relatively small percentage of the population is educated (nearly 50 percent of Yemenis are illiterate) and even those with university degrees rarely have the skills needed to succeed in the modern workplace. Students with IT degrees, for example, are not competent in Microsoft Office. English graduates often cannot hold basic conversations with English speakers. To deal with these deficiencies, and thereby turn the “youth bulge” into an advantage for the economy, investment in basic and technical education is needed.

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B. Model for Addressing Drivers of Instability Related to Improved Governance and Educational Outcomes

The BEST model affords an integrated approach to responding to education sector needs. It has a community-based component that combines a set of mutually-reinforcing interventions that address both formal and informal educational needs within a community and that contribute to stability outcomes desired by USAID’s Stabilization Strategy in CLP programming. Importantly, the BEST model utilizes an inclusive community-led approach that meshes effectively with the community approaches to be used by CLP in assessing and responding to the larger multi-sector needs of a community. For example, BEST interventions can be linked effectively with other high priority needs within the community: infrastructural improvement efforts; life skills, leadership, and vocational and agricultural training programs for youth; and potentially community health and sanitation initiatives relevant to both children and adults. As noted before, the “Menu of Interventions,” which is the starting point for BEST educational interventions in a community, provides a concrete example of a tool that – with expansion and modification to include the full range of viable multi-sector interventions of CLP – could guide initial community multi-sector discussions, and subsequently inform local proposal development efforts.

Though CLP programming will generally target rapid response, high impact, and cost effective interventions, the BEST model can also be implemented in staged interventions that over time both contribute to local stabilization goals and government development goals in the education sector. Thus as CLP programmers identify community needs, they can (and should) develop a longer plan to achieve stability goals through an “anticipated plan of future staged interventions.” The additional benefit of such a longer-term approach is that multi-sector responses can be integrated in each “chunk” of the staged process.

By necessity, to implement the BEST model effectively, CLP will need to engage with local authorities at both district and governorate levels, building local capacities and contributing to improved access and delivery of basic services and strengthened governance capacity – all aims of the Stabilization Strategy. As such virtually all aspects of the BEST program can find a place in the new programs, albeit with modifications possibly required due to the CLP grant-based processes, the allowable scale of education interventions, and the number of communities that can be served. Given these restrictions, it does make sense to determine the reasonable geographic scope of CLP interventions in the chosen districts in their eight assigned governorates, and attempt, like BEST, to deliver a comprehensive, integrated, multi-sector package of services in a community to have the greatest impact and to benefit from the mutually-reinforcing nature of these diverse multi-sector interventions. Additionally with a more comprehensive plan in mind, there can be interventions developed which benefit from efficiencies of scale, activities that reasonably and practically can be developed and implemented more consistently across districts or governorates. This includes such BEST interventions as school administrator and teacher training, local council/local authority capacity building, and EMIS trainings for district and governorate level officials and ministry line staff.

BEST EMIS component is one program element that clearly extends beyond the community-district-governorate scope of CLP. The nature of EMIS within BEST is that is should serve both local and national needs. Given RGP goals to strengthen government infrastructure, improve transparency of decision-making, and promote informed policy making, RGP might incorporate elements of the EMIS strategy at the central levels and, quite possibly move beyond it with support for the implementation of MOE restructuring plans (including needed reforms in EMIS departments) and ensuring more generally transparent budgeting processes that actually build upon the valuable educational data collected via EMIS. At a simpler level, facilitating the finalization of school registry system, perhaps in coordination with other donor projects, would dramatically enhance the chances that available data is reliable.
BEST governorate, district and school level interventions might be taken up through CLP local governance improvement efforts, with priorities being the establishment of effective EMIS offices and necessary infrastructure at the governorate level, and school registries in the hands of appropriately trained headmasters capable of completing them correctly.

Potential Interventions by RGP and CLP in Relation to EMIS and improved Governance

**RGP Central Level**
- Support for policy formulation in the education sector
- Provide advanced training options in data analysis, planning and computer maintenance
- Support the restructuring effort of the ministry particularly the EMIS department
- Encourage more transparent budgeting processes
- Standardize school registry system

**Governorate Level**
- Train governorate Local Councils (Technical Committee for Education)
- Continue capacity development of Governorate EMIS
- Encourage workshops with stakeholders to promote transparency and rationalize decisions based on data

**Community Level**
- CLP
- Train district Local Councils (Technical Committee for Education)
- Continue capacity development of District EMIS
- Distribute school registries and provide Headmasters an orientation on use and the importance of data in planning

In regards to the integration of the BEST model into the larger framework of CLP engagements/interventions in local communities, the diagram on the following page provides an outline of potential links. The blue components represent current BEST interventions and how they could connect with other interventions in the community. Refer to diagram along with the following narrative.

As a starting point:

CLP community profiling would support the identification of critical first stage community interventions that are highly visible and help establish a base for additional community interventions. Potential high impact projects might include pressing community infrastructural needs, water projects, and community facilities improvements such as schools or health facilities.

Support for renovation at local schools could include provision of water supply to schools, latrines for both boys and girls, privacy walls, and general improvements to the school environment including classroom renovations and additions. Since such visible improvements at schools have shown their potential to activate the community, BEST-type community participation activities could be initiated. This might include headmaster/social worker trainings to mobilize community support and involvement, establish Mother/Father Councils, and form a School Maintenance Committee. These trainings would build community awareness and promote parent understanding of roles in these bodies. They would
enable their involvement in the development school improvement plans with community and local council contributions, and could encourage Mobile Repair Unit initiatives with local volunteers to repair and assemble existing school furniture. In larger communities and at school cluster center sites, multipurpose centers could be considered to host diverse community training needs.

The BEST Model Integrating into a Larger CLP Implementation Framework

Depending on local priorities, local literacy classes for women might be initiated, encouraging more active involvement of women in community and school affairs or building the skills necessary for older girls and women to return to school. The nature of the REFLECT methodology means comparable programs for boys and young men could be developed to direct youth into productive training and work. The very successful BEST Summer Program model could be utilized (not just programs for girls/women, but also for boys/young men) to serve as a focal point for academic skills building, improved community awareness and youth/women’s leadership training, and needs identification for youth in areas such as literacy, life skills and vocational and agricultural training. The summer program might serve as a venue for discussing community needs, raising awareness of health and girls’ education issues, and promoting joint action for the community’s resolution, which could then be supported with proposals and community grants from CLP.

Such local literacy and skill training programs could feed back into ongoing community projects and infrastructural improvement efforts, or the projects themselves could be the venue for these training programs.

At schools, critical quality improvements would be needed still to enhance student achievement and discourage student drop out. School administrator and teacher trainings utilizing BEST models and delivery modes, could be planned on the larger scale (including the necessary TOT delivery and follow up planning) but implemented for school administrators and teachers at cluster and/or district venues. School Administrator trainings would include training to improve school data collection (given its
importance in district/governorate planning) and teacher trainings could be phased in to meet needs in order of priority.

Potential activities for addressing the drivers of instability and educational challenges within the new stabilization framework are outlined in Appendix G. Linkages and implementation schedules of these activities could and should be made with other sector interventions in health and agriculture.
Appendices
Appendix A

List of Key Reference Documents

- Application for Assistance, BEST Project, December 17, 2010
- Annual Work Plan, BEST Project, February 2, 2010
- Performance Management Plan, BEST Project, August 2010
- Project Advancement Monitoring Plan, BEST Project, July 2010
- Quarterly Reports, BEST project
  - 11th Quarterly Report (April 1-June 30, 2010), July 2010
  - 12th Quarterly Report (July1-September 30, 2010), October 2010
- Menu of Interventions, BEST Project, Updated June 14, 2010
- 2010-2012 Yemen Country Strategy, USAID/Yemen
- Performance Management Plan, USAID Assistance to Yemen FY 2011 - FY 2013, Draft #3, October 24, 2010
- Final Report of Measurement of Academic Achievement of Students, Grades 1 and 3, BEST Project
- Responsive Governance Project, Request for Applications, January 28, 2010
- Multi-faceted Approach to Safe Schools (MASS) Proposal, USAID/Yemen’s Plan and Budget
- Socio-Economic Development Plan for Poverty Reduction, 2006-2010, October 2006
- Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework, July 2008
- Reform Priorities for Yemen and the 10 Point Agenda, MENAP Roundtable Summary, Chatham House, 2010
- Literacy in Conflict Situations, Dr. Ulrike Hanemann, UNESCO Institute of Education, March 2005
- Schools as Zones of Peace, Education for Stabilization and Peace Building in Post-Conflict Nepal, World Congress of Comparative Education Societies, Istanbul, June 14-18, 2010
- Why Youth Join al-Qaeda, Colonel John M. Verhous, Special Report, United States Institute of Peace
Appendix B

List of Informants

USAID

1. Sean Jones, Director of Technical Programs
2. Abdulhamid N. Alajami, Education Team Leader. BEST Project AOTR

BEST

3. Ernest D. O’Neil, Chief of Party
4. Ali Mohammed Al-Agri, Deputy Chief of Party
5. Salwa Ali Sheikh Azzani, Communications Team Leader and Gender Coordinator
6. Aziza Sharaf Hameed Abdullah, Adult Literacy Coordinator
7. Ali Abdo Al Emad, Community Participation Coordinator
8. Mustafa Mustafa Refat, EMIS Coordinator
9. Ali Farea Al-Omairi, M&E Advisor
10. Ahmad Abdulwali Al-Tashi, Chief Architect and Director of School Renovation
11. Sabora Mohammed Al-Ammari, Executive Architect
12. Mohammed Mohammed Al-Watari Mobile Repart Team Facilitator
13. Rasheed Abudullah Al-Oqab, Training Coordinator

BEST Advisor Board

14. Abdul Kareem Al-Jendary, Advisory Chair and Deputy Minister of Projects Sector
15. Hammoud Naji, General Director of Planning and Statistics
16. Mohammad AbudRahman Al-Samawi, General Director of School Mapping
17. Mohammed Abdul Wasea Shuja’a, General Director of Training
18. Ibrahim Al-Mesbahi, Department Representative, Girls Education

USAID Projects

19. Craig Davis, COP CLP (Community Livelihoods Program)
20. Vassil Yanco, DCOP and Action COP, CLP (Community Livelihoods Program)
21. Stephanie Baric, Senior Program Manager, CLP (Community Livelihoods Program)
22. Abdul Salam Al-Kohlani, Director of Operations, CLP (Community Livelihoods Program) and previous BEST DCOP, Operations and Finance
23. Nejla Kalaz, Grants Manager, CLP (Community Livelihoods Program) and previous BEST Operations Manager
24. Abdul Kareem, DCOP and current Acting COP, RGP (Responsive Governance Program)
25. Harvey Herr, COP, Monitoring and Evaluation Project

Donor Organization Programs

26. Orie Sasaki, Field Training Planning and Coordinator, BRIDGE II, JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency)
27. Shiro Nakata, Training Planning and Donor Coordination, BRIDGE II, JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency)
28. Gudrun Orth, Senior Education Advisor, GTZ (German Technical Cooperation)
29. Abdul Moula A. Mohey Al-Dein, Manage, Community Participation and Girls Education, GTZ (German Technical Cooperation)

Project Stakeholders and Beneficiaries

30. Dr. Ali Bahlool, Director General, Office of Education, Hodeidah Governorate
31. Khalid Al-Hakimi, Head of Division of Statistics, Hodeidah Governorate
32. Abdulrahman Al-Shamiri, Deputy Director of Projects, Hodeidah Governorate
33. Ali Sallam Al-Ariqi, General Director for Governorate Education Office, Hodeidah Governorate
34. Mr. Fadhel Al-Hedadi, Girls’ Education/Community Participation Trainer of Trainers, Office of Education, Hodeidah Governorate
36. Muhammad Abdul Bari Al-Ahdal, Manager of Community Participation, Office of Education, Hodeidah Governorate
37. Ali A., Director General of Girls’ Education, Gender Trainer and Head of Inspection unit, Office of Education, Hodeidah Governorate
38. Muhammad Adi Muhammad Wahan, Director General, Literacy and Adult Education Office, Hodeidah Governorate
39. Abdul Salam Muhammad Ali, Inspector, Literacy and Adult Education Office, Hodeidah Governorate
40. Abdul Rahmam Rassam, Head of Division of Statistics and Planning, Zabeed District, Hodeidah Governorate
41. Abdul Bari Hiba, Director, District Education Office, El Zaidia District, Hodeidah Governorate
42. Menzabib, Social Worker Trainer, District Office of Education, Zabeed District
43. Husain Mohammad Khalil, Director, District Education Office, Head of Inspection, Zabeed District, Hodeidah Governorate
44. Abdulla Barbash, Headmaster, Abdo Mohammad Al-Miklafi School, Zabeed District, Hodeidah Governorate
45. Ali Mohammed Salem, Arabic Teacher, G 5-7, Abdo Mohammad Al-Miklafi School, Zabeed District, Hodeidah Governorate
46. El Mahi Haidar Mohammed, Math Teacher G 4-7 and School Maintenance Committee, Teacher Representative, Abdo Mohammad Al-Miklafi School, Zabeed District, Hodeidah Governorate
47. Samar Mohammad Al-Mahnabi, Al-Tharwa School, Zabeed District, Hodeidah Governorate
48. Ghalib Al-Battah Head of School Fathers Council, Al-Tharwa School, Zabeed District, Hodeidah Governorate

49. Samar Mohammad Al-Mahrabi, Headmaster, Al-Tharwa School, Zabeed District, Hodeidah Governorate

50. Dr Abdulla Al-Qolaisi, Director of Governorate Education Office, Rayma Governorate

51. Majed Al-Kashai, Director for Statistic and Planning, Rayma Governorate

52. Mohammad Ali-Mohsen, Employee in the ITC Directorate, Rayma Governorate

53. Sagir Ali Qasem, Director for Training, Governorate Education Office, Rayma Governorate

54. Amad Ali Al-Tarifa, ITC Specialist, Blad Al-Taam District, Rayma Governorate

55. Abdul Majid Khiri Hasan, Statistic Specialist, Al-Gabin District, Rayma Governorate

56. Ms. Samia Sa’ad Al-dhobaibi, Manager of Girls’ Education, Office of Education, Rayma Governorate

57. Mohammed al Burbui, Director General, Literacy and Adult Education Office, Rayma Governorate

58. Nejla Al-Arossi, Inspector, Literacy and Adult Education Office, Rayma Governorate

59. Mahmoud Al-Nehary, Social Worker/Head Master Trainer, El-Jabeeri District, Rayma Governorate

60. Mansoor Uqbil, Deputy Director, Bilad Al-Taam District, Rayma Governorate

61. Nasir Hassan Ahmad, Headmaster/Gender Trainer, Vice Director General, Bilad Al-Taam District, Rayma Governorate

62. Ali Ghalib, Social Worker Trainer, Al Jafaria District, Rayma Governorate
Appendix C

Staff Workshop Agendas #1 and #2

BEST Senior Staff Workshop #1
Joint Lesson Learned Assessment
BEST-Yemen
October/November 2010

Today’s Meeting: A Mutual Orientation
- Assessment Team’s orientation to the 3 week assessment exercise
- BEST Team’s orientation and overview to the project’s components

Assessment Purpose
- Identify the challenges, best practices, and lessons learned by the BEST project
- Provide recommendations to inform USAID/Yemen Programming in light of USAID’s stabilization strategy
- Focus on providing useful information and insights for the Community Livelihood Program (CLP) and the Responsive Governance Program (RGP), specifically determining how BEST’s sector-specific approach would fit into in USAID’s multi-sector programming approach with the stabilization strategy

Data Collection Methods
- Review of critical program documents
- Examine pre-existing program studies, consultative sessions, collected data
- Interview key informants and conduct focus groups
- Visit the field, and when appropriate conduct surveys

Three-Week Timeline
- This week – Focus on BEST project staff and on CLP/RGP senior staff
- Early next week – Focus on central ministry, advisory board members, and other education donor groups/projects
- Later next week – Focus on community, local and district level informants
- Final week – Close the information gaps, write report, brief USAID

Today’s Agenda (Morning)
- BEST staff overview of program components review aims, audiences, activities and achievements
- Task setting for the coming week
  o TASK ONE – Component preparations of all day Wednesday Assessment Session
  o TASK TWO – Individual review of the Project Comparison’s Summary Materials (BEST/RGP/CLP)

Today’s Post-Meeting Agenda (Afternoon)
- Prioritize key informants working with Assessment Team
- Identify key documents and data that highlight BEST Challenges, Best Practices and Lessons Learned
- Review with Assessment Team potential field visit scenarios for next week
This Week

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<th>Tuesday</th>
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<td><strong>Assessment Team</strong> becomes fully proficient in issues related to the new CLP and RGP, through interviews COPs and previous-BEST staff now work with the two new projects</td>
<td><strong>Morning Session</strong> Component presentations on challenges, best practices and lessons learned with facilitated full group discussions</td>
<td>In-depth individual interviews with program component managers, scheduled throughout the day with the Assessment Team</td>
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<td><strong>BEST Component Teams</strong> prepare mini-presentations for Wednesday Assessment Session</td>
<td><strong>Afternoon Session</strong> Facilitated discussions on the insight this provides to the new CLP and RPG projects, and how BEST strategies and education-specific programs would need to be rethought in the multi-sector approach utilized in USAID’s new stabilization approach</td>
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BEST Senior Staff Workshop #2
With Assessment Team
9am-4pm, Wednesday, October 27, 2010

Morning Session (9:00am – 12:00 noon)

Objective: Develop a “best BEST” program model that captures core elements and good practice

1. Introduction
   • Rules of Engagement
   • Unfinished matters (uncollected documents, Thursday schedule of interviews, coping of presentations)

2. Presentations and Discussion of BEST Program Components
   • Challenges (and how these challenges were addressed)
   • Best Practices
   • Lessons Learned

   TASK 1: During each presentation, listeners should consider:
   • Are there additions or refinements that should be made to improve the response?
   • What ways do other components support the addressing of challenges faced?

   Following each presentation, a brief discussion of the above issues will occur.

3. Facilitated Summative Discussion

   What are the major critical points related to the entire program?
   • Challenges
   • Best Practices
   • Lessons Learned

   What does the “best BEST” education model look like?

   What products exist (or need to be developed in the final year) to support sustainability of future educational programs of this nature?

LUNCH

Afternoon Session (1:00pm – 4pm)

Objective: Develop a model for basic education program implementation in light of USAID’s new stabilization strategies and program framework

1. Introduction to the New Realities of USAID Programs in CLP and RGP

   • Basic education sector responses divided between central and community oriented programs
   • Unstable environments as the new target for USAID-funded programs
   • Ultimate goal is now reduction of instability and responding to the “drivers” of instability
• Emphasis on short-term, high impact responses that need to be justified in light of their contribution to stability
• Possibility of envisioning longer-term visions for local change, but within very short term staged interventions

2. Crafting Potential New Model of Educational Programming Given the New Realities

TASK 2: Two groups each address the following questions and record their responses:

• What might be the nature of interventions given the new strategies and program realities?
• How might program elements be sequenced as a community moved from initial engagement in an unstable environment to a progressively more stable environment?
• How would each intervention contribute to increasing community stabilization?

Each group presents their recommendations with a full group discussion of each.

Final discussions and conclusions of two proposed models.
Appendix D

Biographies of the AED Team Members

Mark Sweikhart, International Education Specialist, has over three decades of work with the public sector, community-based organizations, indigenous non-governmental organizations, and international private voluntary organizations both in the US and abroad. For over 12 years, he has worked specifically with USAID/State Department-funded programs as education program designer, strategic planner, manager and evaluator. He has 6 years living experience in the Middle East. As such, he is familiar with the region and has a deep understanding of international educational programs addressing issues of educational reform, ministry capacity development, teacher professional development, school improvement, and community engagement. He led the team that conducted a USAID-funded education sector assessment in Liberia in 2006 and was key member of the post-war assessment of Kosovo’s education sector by AED and Save the Children in 1999. He also was a lead member of the assessment of the $37 million USAID-funded Integrated English Language Program (IELP II) in Egypt in 2001. Mr. Sweikhart has a Master of Public Administration from Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, with a focus on management of change and education system reform.

Brenda Sinclair, an Evaluation Consultant and Education Advisor, has performed needs assessment, midterm evaluations and final project evaluations in Guatemala, seven provinces throughout Indonesia (including Aceh and Papua), Ghana and Zambia. Highlights of previous field-based senior-level technical positions held that involved working with schools, government, non-government and international partners include: Education Advisor on a USAID-funded basic education project in Indonesia, Senior Education Advisor responsible for designing and evaluating basic and higher education projects, Gender Technical Specialist responsible for integrating gender into UNICEF programs in the LAC region, and Monitoring and Evaluation Consultant responsible for leading a baseline survey for a World Vision basic education project in Zambia, Africa. Ms. Sinclair currently works as a Consultant of Global Education Advisors, her independent consulting business, providing education technical assistance, evaluation consulting, and gender mainstreaming advisory services to Washington, DC-based clients on projects funded by USAID, the World Bank, the UN and private sponsors committed to achieving universal quality education for all.
## Appendix E

### Menu of Gender Mainstreaming Approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Component</th>
<th>Gender-Oriented Interventions$^8$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Renovation</strong></td>
<td>&lt;ul&gt; &lt;li&gt;<strong>Building Classrooms:</strong>&lt;/li&gt; &lt;li&gt;Make sure that classrooms constructed are spacious and well-located to let in light and have proper ventilation.&lt;/li&gt; &lt;li&gt;Classrooms that are constructed/added will be done in consultation with mothers, female teachers and girls (where feasible).&lt;/li&gt; &lt;li&gt;Proper placement of windows so as to ensure privacy for girls&lt;/li&gt; &lt;/ul&gt; &lt;ul&gt; &lt;li&gt;<strong>Building Latrines:</strong>&lt;/li&gt; &lt;li&gt;“Girl friendly” schools should have separate latrines for girls that are “FUNCTIONING”&lt;/li&gt; &lt;li&gt;The community and female teachers/students will be consulted before latrines are built to help identify the location of the latrines.&lt;/li&gt; &lt;li&gt;Participation of FC’s &amp; MC’s will be elicited to avail water and to maintain these latrines&lt;/li&gt; &lt;li&gt;Regular visits will be conducted by the GEC to ensure these latrines are functioning, and girls are actually using them&lt;/li&gt; &lt;/ul&gt; &lt;ul&gt; &lt;li&gt;<strong>Building Privacy Walls:</strong>&lt;/li&gt; &lt;li&gt;All girls’ schools will have privacy walls, making them a safer place for girls, esp. in the rural areas&lt;/li&gt; &lt;li&gt;Build privacy walls without compromising on space for girls’ activities/sports.&lt;/li&gt; &lt;li&gt;Special consideration will be given to schools located in the middle of the desert and remote areas which are subject to theft&lt;/li&gt; &lt;/ul&gt; &lt;ul&gt; &lt;li&gt;<strong>Distribution of Three students desk</strong>&lt;/li&gt; &lt;li&gt;Use of 3-Student desks will be limited to single sex schools. In mixed schools, girls will be provided single desks as they won’t share the desks with the boys, especially in the higher grades as it is culturally not acceptable.&lt;/li&gt; &lt;li&gt;MRT will be designing / buying single desks especially for schools that have fewer female students.&lt;/li&gt; &lt;/ul&gt; &lt;ul&gt; &lt;li&gt;<strong>Renovation of Female Teachers Residence</strong>&lt;/li&gt; &lt;li&gt;This may be used as an incentive to recruit more female teachers in rural areas, where there is an acute shortage.&lt;/li&gt; &lt;li&gt;In communities where female teachers exist and lack residence will support them by building an extra room, kitchen and a toilet, provided that there is a pressing need for that.&lt;/li&gt; &lt;/ul&gt;</td>
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</table>

$^8$ Promoting Gender in Education Within BEST-Yemen Project Activities, Draft document
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Component</th>
<th>Gender-Oriented Interventions</th>
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</table>
| Multipurpose Community Center (MPC) | ▪ MPCs can be made available for adult literacy classes for women and for Mothers’ Council activities, in addition to community activities.  
▪ Mothers and female teachers will have equal access to these MPC to conduct activities |
| School Maintenance Committees (SMC’s) | ▪ Will negotiate with the MOE to ensure that SMCs have equal male and female representation. |
| Community Participation | Review the CP materials used by the girls education sector especially in the girls education campaigns  
▪ Review materials for any gender stereotypes and revise them for use in our targeted governorates  
▪ The project will develop additional awareness packages on the importance of girls’ education and the role of the community in promoting girls’ education with the Teacher-Training and CP team  
▪ When appropriate, the project will team-up with other donors, for instance UNICEF, to organize and conduct awareness campaigns. |
| Training activities: | ▪ Offer regular gender sensitization training to the MFCs. |
| Forming and Training Mothers/ fathers councils | Having mothers’ and fathers’ councils in schools helps forge bonds between the school and the community. Through them it becomes easier to approach girls and women in the community.  
▪ All targeted schools, including boys’ schools will have mother’s councils  
▪ Provide regular training either by “skills improvement” meetings / workshops or refresher trainings or exchange of successful experiences with other active councils.  
▪ Continuous awareness campaigns will be organized to make them aware of their role in schools.  
▪ Encourage influential women such as wives or daughters of sheikhs or local governing councils etc. to join the mothers’ councils because they are respected and have the power to influence other women in the community  
▪ Mothers / fathers councils, teachers and headmasters should be able to help avail WATER to the schools, where needed, for drinking purposes and to help keep latrines clean and functioning.  
▪ There will be means of continuous follow-up visits by our CP facilitators, GOE, DOE and CP workers to help build the capacity of these councils to enable them to be actively engaged in school related issues.  
▪ Headmasters will be gender sensitized, and should be aware of the role of the mothers’ councils. Headmasters will be encouraged to give mothers the opportunity to take active part in school activities. |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Project Component</th>
<th>Gender-Oriented Interventions *</th>
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</table>
| School Social Workers | - Social workers, especially female social workers, play a vital role in community mobilization and encouraging girls’ enrollment. The project will provide gender sensitization training to these social workers.  
- Should be able to identify female social workers in our targeted schools and propose to the MOE to be flexible with the criteria in selecting female social workers especially in the rural areas.  
- Need to focus on their “Professional Development Training”. This training should also focus on how to deal with students “behavioral aspects” because they mainly deal with students social problems (especially females students).  
- Since most social workers in the entire Yemen are basically teachers, (some of who are overloaded with work as teacher teaching some of which have more than 25 sessions per week and are not free to devote themselves to their role as social workers, BEST project needs discuss this with the DOE and GOE offices through schools CP team. |
| Supreme Council for Girls Education | - Gender sensitization will be conducted for these councils to strengthen their role in promoting girls education  
- Refresher trainings will be conducted regularly for these councils in order to activate their role in the governorate  
- Conduct regular follow-up visits to assess their performance and achievement contributed to their communities  
- Arrange for exchanging successful experience with effective councils in other governorates. (something that they could learn from and imitate in their own governorates) |
| Local Governing Councils | - The project will consider raising their awareness about girls’ education and include them in all our CP training activities so that they can help find solutions for girls’ problem in their respective districts. |

Participatory approach:  
Mothers’ Councils receive strong support from the BEST project component coordinators and the GEC in the form of empowering activities such as: to support their active participation in awareness campaigns; their opinion will be taken into consideration regarding all decisions related to their schooled children (renovation, construction, etc.).

<p>| Adult Literacy | REFLECT Methodology enables Adult female learners to learn functional literacy and numeracy! |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Component</th>
<th>Gender-Oriented Interventions[^8]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Literacy classes for Mothers’ Councils, drop-out girls and young girls</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Priority will be given to mothers’ council formed by the BEST –Yemen project in schools to participate in these adult literacy classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Project will encourage as many young girls and drop-outs as possible to join these classes (through the CP Team)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Provide learning materials such as textbooks and schoolbags, to motivate the learners to participate and continue in these classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Empower adult female learners through life skills training to help increase their awareness, of nutrition, child care, home economics, health, sanitation, and the environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Provide female adult learners (based on certain criteria) with selective grants, and train women on effective means of managing these grants, to initiate income generating activities (The BEST-Yemen Project Gender Equity Committee could be in charge of allocating those grants and follow-up on their disbursement and use. The project could also team-up with local NGOs (if any) working in the field of livelihood skills training. Finally, the grants could target in priority young women and men who have dropped out-of-school as well as mothers.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The Multi Purpose Community Center in all the districts can potentially house a library for women.</td>
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**AL- Facilitator Selection**

- Selection of secondary school female graduates from the communities and training them as AL facilitators, who will then serve as trainers in the adult literacy classes
- Gender sensitization should be carried out for the AL Facilitators and trainers.
- Empowerment of the AL facilitators and Inspectors through continuous refresher training so as to enable them to be accredited trainers with LAEO (governorate level AL trainers)
- Include the LAEO Officials and Inspectors (especially the female inspectors) at the governorate and the district level in our AL trainings and refresher trainings so as to assure sustainability in these governorate

Selection is done in coordination with the communities where these facilitators will serve, and not solely by the local authorities or project staff, so that communities are convinced that these are best suited to teach their daughters and wives. This way facilitators get accepted by the communities and sustainability can be build into programs.

**Training**

**Gender sensitization training:**
Teacher trainers, headmasters, and inspectors will be trained on gender issues.

Trainings events will target both male and female teachers

- Make sure that the project, MOE’s different sectors invite both male and female trainees to attend different training events.
- Transportation arrangements will be made to facilitate/ensure greater female participation.

[^8]: Project Component
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<tr>
<th>Project Component</th>
<th>Gender-Oriented Interventions&lt;sup&gt;8&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If few female teachers attend the training events, this will seriously be addressed with the MOE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training Locations:</td>
<td>The project will help conduct all its trainings in locations as close as possible to the female trainees (e.g. within the same district) to encourage female teachers to participate</td>
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<td></td>
<td>If training is located in another district or governorate, transportation and accommodation arrangements will to be made for her and her chaperon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteer female teachers:</td>
<td>To help address the problem of shortage of qualified teachers, the project will consider training volunteer female teachers, who have been teaching for some years. .</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Negotiate with central MOE to avail official employment opportunities for them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre- test to assess teachers performance (classrooms observation)</td>
<td>Review the tools used in assessing teachers’ performance for gender sensitivity such as seating arrangement for girls and boys, how active or passive the classroom is, how girls and boys interact, is the teacher giving more attention to boys or girls, how are children been disciplined, is corporal punishment been used etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headmaster and teacher school years annual plan</td>
<td>School headmasters, teachers and social workers when preparing school activity plan, should put girls in mind. Almost all activities focus on boys and girls are often excluded, especially in sports</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The project will consider providing simple sport facilities for girls in the school compound.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer tutoring:</td>
<td>In order to enhance leadership, promote gender equity, and improve students’ learning, the project will propose peer tutoring system for under-performing female and male students who would be assisted by the best performing male and female students (same grade or upper grades and same sex tutoring). The tutors should be rewarded for their efforts, which will boost their self-esteem. The tutoring session would be organized in the classroom under the supervision of a teacher or a designated member of the MFC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review the Training Curriculum (In consultation with MOE Girls Education Sector) (Teacher &amp; headmasters, social worker, fathers and mother, adult literacy training materials)</td>
<td>Curriculum and other instructional materials should be reviewed for gender-biases that hinder gender equality.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>These include examining images and content perceived as perpetuating negative stereotyping. (Should be brought to the attention of the Girls’ Education Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Component</td>
<td>Gender-Oriented Interventions[^8]</td>
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<td>within the MOE so that appropriate changes can be made by them when the curriculum is revised.</td>
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</table>
| **EMIS**          | **Gender disaggregated data:** The project will ensure that education data and indicators are disaggregated by gender, geographical area, administrative level (governorate, district), and urban/rural.  
|                   | **Gender sensitization training:**  
|                   | - Provide gender sensitization training for the statistic directorates at the different MOE levels, in collecting, processing, analyzing, and disseminating data.  
|                   | - Assist the MOE planners at the different levels in the elaboration of gender sensitive educational plan  
|                   | - Train the decision makers to utilize the EMIS reports and to take gender sensitive educational decisions. |
| **M&E**           | **Example of case study that will be conducted by the project:**  
|                   | - One case study could seek to establish concrete data to show that mothers’ education and livelihood skills training has a positive impact on their daughters’ education as well as on the conditions of life of the entire family, while modifying the redistribution of resources and decision-making in the household. The study could target mothers who have received life skills as well as livelihood skills training.  
|                   | - Some of the questions the study would try to answer would be: (a) how mothers’ involvement in adult education and training program has impacted on their daughters’ education and learning performance; (b) what are the factors that contribute to the successful or unsuccessful involvement of mothers in the education and training program and/or in the MFC; (b) how could the BEST project better target mothers so that they become positive agent of change in their community and in the school. |
Appendix F
List of BEST Materials and Products

The following is an illustrative list of products and materials produced under the BEST project, which will serve as a working document for BEST staff to update and refine in preparation for the final handover of finished products to the Ministry of Education and USAID.

General Programming

1. Menu of Interventions
2. Job Descriptions booklet
3. Community Profile booklet
4. Performance Management Plan/Project Management Advancement Plan
5. Chart of Accomplishments
6. Selection Criteria for Governorate, District and School-Level Selection

Gender

1. Promoting Gender in Education within BEST-Yemen Project Activities (Menu of Gender Mainstreaming Approaches)
2. Community Profiles – from Gender perspective
3. Gender-Sensitive training manuals (for teacher and government administrators)
4. School-Related Gender-Based Violence manuals (teacher, counselor, student)

Training

1. Nine Teacher packages serving both trainers and trainees in Arabic and Math at Grades 1-3 and 4-9 levels, Reading Grades 1-3, Expression and Writing Grades 1-3, and Physics Grades 4-9, Chemistry Grades 4-9 and Biology Grades 4-9
2. Life skills coloring book for students in grades 1-3
3. Enhancements of GTZ-MOE school administrator training materials and an improved, piloted, field-based delivery mode (including content on leadership and headmaster roles and responsibilities), including Refresher Training Workshop manual to improve school administration and School Administrator Training Guide for School Work Planning
4. 2009-2010 Annual Plans of Targeted Schools

Monitoring and Evaluation

1. Battery of national instruments for measurement of students’ academic achievements and the impact of teacher training for Grades 1-9
2. School Data Collection Tools
Adult Literacy

1. REFLECT Methodology Facilitator’s Guide
2. Reading through Empowerment Facilitator’s Guide
3. Life Skills Facilitator’s Guide
4. Supplemental reading books for literacy and life skills (12 total)
   a. Pre-natal and maternal
   b. Post-natal and infant care
   c. Infant nutrition
   d. Child health and development
   e. Cleanliness (healthy environment)
   f. Eye injury and illnesses
   g. The female farmer and her health (nutrition, time management)
5. Adult Literacy Training Manual for teaching LAEO courses
6. Adult Literacy Facilitator Guide for teaching LAEO courses

Community Participation

1. Community Participation Sustainability Guide for Engaging the Community in Sustaining Successes of BEST Interventions
2. Awareness Raising Campaign “Messages” for Community Mobilization
3. Community Participation Training manual

School Renovation:

1. Guide for school construction, renovation and facilities improvement
2. School operations guide for implementing minor school repairs and renovations
3. Guide for school building and facilities maintenance to improve the school environment
4. Structural Assessment Profiles

EMIS

1. CD on The concept of EMIS, Educational Indicator, Educational Planning and two reports, each on “Management Skills” and “Basic Computer Skills”
2. Basic Computer Skills Training Guide
3. Basic Management Skills
4. Using EMIS for planning and decision making Training Guide
Appendix G:
Examples of Potential Activities for Addressing Key Educational Challenges and Their Link to Drivers of Instability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Activity 1:</strong> Incentives for increasing female student enrolment, retention and opportunity</th>
<th><strong>Driver of Instability Addressed</strong></th>
<th><strong>Education Intermediate Result</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short-term intervention</td>
<td>Long-term intervention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food rations</td>
<td>Gender-friendly school environment</td>
<td>Unequal access to physical service, opportunity and resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor school renovations:</td>
<td>Female teacher recruitment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Wells</td>
<td>Gender equity committees at GOE and school-level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Privacy walls</td>
<td>Unisex schools</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Furniture</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Activity 2:</strong> Establish partnerships between mother/father council and GOE/local council</th>
<th><strong>Driver of Instability Addressed</strong></th>
<th><strong>Education Intermediate Result</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short-term intervention</td>
<td>Long-term intervention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training of social worker, headmaster, GOE and local council in roles and responsibilities</td>
<td>Monitoring visits from GOE inspectors (paid by grant/MOE)</td>
<td>Unequal access to political power (vulnerable groups: women and illiterates)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparent council election/establish council</td>
<td>Refresher training/follow-up activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training MFC in school activity planning, execution, follow-up and proposal writing (following BEST model)</td>
<td>M/FC aware of roles of DOE and LC and approach them as needed to request education resources/financial assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establishment of bank account for basic school maintenance</td>
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</tr>
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</table>
### Activity 3: Teacher Training in Literacy, life skills and vocational training for youth and community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short-term intervention</th>
<th>Long-term intervention</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher- Training in:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Classroom observations; refresher training; school exchanges;</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.) teacher efficacy, child-appropriate pedagogies (child development/psychology, gender-sensitivity)</td>
<td><strong>Additional courses for community and out-of-school youth in life skills, vocational training and provision of grants for income-generating projects</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.) Reading and writing grades 1-3 to prevent dropout and illiteracy (BEST life skills coloring book and in training packages)</td>
<td><strong>Youth issues (unemployment and/or poor engagement in other legitimate activities)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.) Active learning in core subjects (BEST Reading, Math, Arabic, Social Studies training packages)</td>
<td><strong>Increased levels of performance on reading and writing tests in early grades</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.) REFLECT methodology (adapted for use with children and/or for use as accelerated learning for dropouts and illiterate)</td>
<td><strong>Increased literacy rates and development of life skills within the community</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Improved teacher performance, including practice of gender-sensitive teaching methodologies</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>