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YEMEN WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP PROGRAM (YWLP)

EDUCATION | INDEPENDENT MEDIA | CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT

KEY ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES

- Build the technical and professional skills of young women for leadership roles in civil society and media
- Increase women's participation in public life in Yemen for a stronger civil society

PROJECT PLAN

- Leadership training for more than 100 women
- Work-study opportunities for 100 young women
- Funding and completion of 20 civil society and media projects



Photo courtesy of GWCC

IREX IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Since 2003, IREX and its partner IREX Europe have been implementing regional and country programs in the Middle East. Programs provide study and internship opportunities for professionals, foster the development of civil society and professional media, and support educational development. IREX maintains a regional office in Beirut, Lebanon with local representatives throughout the region.

IREX has been implementing women's empowerment programs since 1998. The Yemen Women's Leadership Program (YWLP), launched in 2006, is a three-year program that builds the technical and professional skills of young women, age 22-25, to become leaders in civil society and media.

YEMEN IN PROFILE

Since unification in 1990, the Republic of Yemen has pursued strategies for modernization to overcome global isolation, but still maintains much of its traditional character. Yemen is one of the least developed countries in the world, with 42% of its people living in poverty.

Although the government has made progress in establishing laws regarding women's rights, women in Yemen fare worse than men on almost all quality of life measurements. Women's secondary status and their poor access to services and resources pose a major constraint to development in Yemen.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- **Technical Skills Training:** Young women participate in intensive English language, computer skills, and organizational management classes. Participants also have the opportunity to choose between specialized NGO management or media training tracks.
- **Leadership Training:** An important aspect of the program is training in life skills—decision making, goal setting, self-confidence building, and negotiation skills—to reduce women's isolation and teach them to make choices for themselves or in a group dynamic.
- **Study Tours and Site Visits:** Trainees participate in study tours to NGO projects sites, media outlets, and donor offices to learn through observation and interaction with staff.
- **Work-Study Program:** Young women work as volunteer interns at NGOs and media outlets for 4 to 6 weeks, honing their skills and gaining exposure to the work environment.
- **Small Grants:** All participants have the opportunity to design a proposal for civil society and media projects, of which twenty will receive program funding.
- **Newsletter:** Students produce a newsletter to serve as an informational and networking resource as well as a practical skill-building tool.



IREX is an international nonprofit organization providing leadership and innovative programs to improve the quality of education, strengthen independent media, and foster pluralistic civil society development.

Founded in 1968, IREX has an annual portfolio of \$50 million and a staff of over 500 professionals worldwide. IREX and its partner IREX Europe deliver cross-cutting programs and consulting expertise in more than 50 countries.



Photo courtesy of GWCC

PARTNERS



The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)

promotes UK interests abroad and works with international bodies to support a strong world community. Through its newest program, the Global Opportunities Fund (GOF), the FCO promotes action on global issues in areas of strategic importance to the UK and co-ordinates its projects through programs in counter terrorism, climate change and energy, engaging with the Islamic world, reuniting Europe, economic governance, and sustainable development.



The Girls World Communication Center (GWCC) was established in 1998 as a non-profit

organization and as the first language center in Yemen catering exclusively to girls. GWCC has since expanded its activities to include courses on human rights, democracy, the environment, and business management. Through the resources at the Center, women and girls have the opportunity to develop language and computer skills, engage in work experience opportunities, and can access the Center's Internet Club, library, and the various creative courses offered.

IREX WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS

In many countries where IREX works, women face challenges with respect to illiteracy, immobility, lack of control over fertility, reduced access to credit, and limited participation in decision-making processes.

In response to this need, IREX works closely with local women's NGOs to strengthen their organizations, expand their services, and support their initiatives to improve the lives of women and girls. Since 1998, IREX has designed and implemented women's empowerment programs through support to local women's organizations. Activities include:

- Long-term organizational development and targeted technical assistance
- Local and international networking of women's organizations
- Grants for expansion of services, creation of pilot projects, and roll-out of proven best practices
- Information distribution, awareness raising, advocacy, and dialogue on issues of importance to women

Directly and through its local partners, IREX provides assistance and mentoring to individuals in areas that include:

- Empowerment and leadership training for women and girls
- Job skills training for women, especially economically disadvantaged women
- Business and entrepreneurship training
- Computer and Internet skill building for women and girls
- Sensitive and appropriate media coverage of gender issues
- Training of trainers in the above topics