

The National Children and Youth Strategy of the Republic of Yemen

2006 – 2015

2. Executive Summary

The National Children and Youth Strategy of the Republic of Yemen is a document of national significance. It seeks to provide all citizens and groups committed to the protection and development of Yemeni children and young people with -

- a national vision and framework;
- a declaration of the relationship between children and young people and Yemen's Millennium Development Goals and targets;
- a statement of guiding principles;
- an instrument to raise the profile and importance of children and young people;
- a set of areas of strategic focus and priority interventions;
- a tool for improved communication, cooperation and coordination between all agencies focussed on the development of children and young people; and
- a tool to benchmark and monitor children and youth interventions against the country's declared Millennium Development Goals and targets.

The National Children and Youth Strategy is the result of three years collaborative effort by a wide range of government, civil society and international agencies. Through extensive consultation, discussion and consensus, this statement of intent and commitment has been achieved.

While Yemen has a wide range of sectoral strategies, the Government of Yemen recognized that it lacked a national strategic framework through which it could implement its obligations as a signatory for the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, and respond in an integrated fashion to the Millennium Development Goals and targets related to children and youth development as stipulated in the Country's *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* and *Five Year Development Plan*.

Yemen is the first MENA country to adopt the Life-cycle Framework as the basis for a national children and youth strategy. This Framework recognises the risks, vulnerabilities and opportunities faced by young people and the required action on multiple fronts, including a multi-sectoral, holistic approach. The Life-cycle Framework focuses on the critical stages in a person's lifecycle, and the selection of priority interventions aimed at those critical times to achieve cumulative intergenerational positive impacts.

The National children and Youth Strategy focuses on three critical life stages, and a set of 12 areas of strategic focus namely –

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| A. 0 – 5 years | (I) Strengthening IMCI
(II) Strengthening routine immunization
(III) Creating a comprehensive National Nutrition Plan
(IV) Developing a national ECD program |
| B. 6 – 14 years | (I) Enhancing inclusive education
(II) Strengthening and scaling up school health and nutrition
(III) Increasing qualified female teachers
(IV) Protecting disadvantaged children |
| C. 15 – 24 years | (I) Creating a national youth employment environment and plan
(II) Strengthening national identity, youth inclusion and participation
(III) Increasing leisure options and creating child/youth friendly urban planning
(IV) Preventing early pregnancy and reducing the risks to reproductive health |

The National Children and Youth Strategy also identified a set of nine guiding principles which act as the context and as driving forces for the Strategy and its interventions. These are -

- Islamic faith and values and Arab cultural identity;
- national unity and loyalty;
- civil and human rights
- gender equity:
- accessibility and equity;
- integration and holistic development;
- children and youth participation;
- partnership and collaboration; and
- accountability and transparency.

The National Children and Youth Strategy acknowledges that its effective implementation will require new thinking and actions to achieve the desired outcomes. It proposes the formulation of a *National Action Plan* to outline at central and Governorate levels, the details of 'what, who, how and when' in terms of implementation.

Secondly, the *National Children and Youth Strategy* proposes a set of new structures to achieve the required communication, collaboration and cooperation necessary within Government, and between Government, civil society and the private sectors. The *Strategy* proposes the creation of a new national coordination body with political status and adequate resources, and the formation of an inter Ministerial Committee on Children and Youth Affairs, a National Children and Youth Forum and a Youth Advisory Committee.

In summary, *the National Children and Youth Strategy* is focused on enhancing the protection and development of all Yemeni children and young people. Its underlying focus is four fold –

- enabling all children and young people to reach their potential ,and become active contributors to Yemeni society;
- preventing children and young people from becoming disadvantaged in their childhood and youth, through specifically targeted multi sectoral intervention, at critical stages of their life-cycle;
- targeting children and young people already experiencing extreme levels of disadvantage; and
- creating new levels of synergies and collaboration between all stakeholders, committed to the protection and development of children and young people.

This purpose is expressed through the defined Vision of the *National Strategy*, namely-

“A society where all Yemeni children and young men and women are protected, valued and respected for their unique contributions and creativity; experience a deep sense of Yemeni identity and loyalty to their country and its true Islamic values; and have equitable access to a full range of social, health, educational, employment and leisure opportunities to reach their potential and develop as healthy, responsible and active citizens within a peaceful and prosperous Yemen.”

Finally, this *National Children and Youth Strategy* is a component of a trilogy of documents. The other two documents are the *National Children and Youth Strategy Resource Paper* (entitled *Making Multi –Sectoral Approach Work for Children and Youth*) and the *National Action Plan*.