



Final Report

Baseline Survey of The Yemen Adult Life Skills and Literacy Education (YALLE) Project

STUDY CONDUCTED: September 2003 to January 2004

CONDUCTED BY :SOCIETY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN & CHILDREN

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Executive Summary

This is the Final Report on the baseline survey for the *Yemen Adult Life Skills and Adult Literacy Education* program (YALLE Program) that was conducted by the Society for the Development of Women & Children-SOUL in the period from September 2003 to January 2004.

CARE International Yemen contracted SOUL to conduct this survey in the 5 districts of the Amran Governorate; ALSouda, Dhaibeen, Khamer, Shahara and Amran Distircts.

The purpose of this baseline survey was to study and analyze the socio-cultural context and the socio-economic strata of the five target districts in the Amran Governorate so as to nominate 40 villages that would qualify as implementation sites for the YALLE Program.

The very first phase of the survey accomplishment process was the consultative workshop with the districts' authorities held on September 16, in Amran city. The workshop identified some selection criteria according to which *potential survey areas* were to be designated. From a total number of circa 400 villages making up the 5 districts only 126 villages fulfilled these pre-set criteria and were therefore recorded as suitable survey locales. Moreover, and after accomplishing the office literature review, the list of survey candidate villages was reduced to 97 villages. A further on-site investigation made by the field-team supervisors during the reconnaissance lead to further discussions and consultations according to which a final list of only 73 potential survey villages was produced and approved. These locales were visited and equally studied within the context of this baseline survey so as to define 40 villages that are most legible as implementation sites for the YALLE Program.

This Final Report gives a differently detailed briefing on each village in addition to a short conclusion section demonstrating the village's main weak and strong points as well as a comment or recommendation on the village's legibility for the YALLE Program.

The above-mentioned selection process was based on specific criteria initially defined by the YALLE Program for this baseline survey and further finalized and approved by the local districts' authorities in the consultative workshop. The following paragraph displays these criteria:

- § availability of educated girls in the villages; i.e. graduates of the new or former school systems; these girls would be trained to teach in the proposed *women literacy centers* but also to contribute and later lead the program's activities in their home areas;
- § non-existence of women literacy classes;
- § non-existence of women NGOs; and
- § security; i.e. non-existence of tribal or other conflicts in the area

Three different data collecting tools were designed and utilized to collect the information sought by this baseline survey; these were

- a. 3 versions of *questionnaires*; the first of which addressed the targeted women in the age groups of 15 to 40 years; the second was used to collect information from individual guardians (those were male members of the communities); and the third version was directed at community leaders in these villages.
- b. an *observation* check-list

c. a *mapping* of the targeted villages was also conducted

In addition to the specific pre-set selection criteria, the survey was concerned with primarily the socio-economic and the cultural aspects in the targeted regions as further indicators for the acceptance and/or success of the YALLE Program there. Therefore, the tools were designed to collect information on:

1. demographic features; e.g. location, population, etc.
2. infra-structure and mainly water sources and availability
3. socio-economical status
4. educational status
5. communities' acceptance and motivation to participate in Adult Literacy and Life Skills Program
6. the communities' internal relations and external dealings; i.e. security, conflicts, as well as relations with neighborhood and local authorities.

The survey results demonstrate some similarities in terms of the findings related to the following 2 main baseline survey aspects:

A. *The YALLE Program*

- § a generally very positive attitude towards the YALLE Program; this was a common manner shared by all communities' groups
- § the type of community participation proposed by the interviewed representatives; this included financial support, advocacy, community mobilization, and encouraging local women to partake in all proposed activities
- § the income generating program was highly appreciated especially if it would be run by local village women and its proceeds would fund women education and women related activities
- § a considerable fraction of interviewed individuals didn't know what an NGO was; after understanding the NGO concept their majority welcomed the idea; they explained that women were actually used to a similar concept of *collective work* in the families big events and the community's public activities
- § the women literacy centre was the component mostly valued; the communities seemed to generally value education or at least had no reservations in regard to this aspect
- § this was very obvious in their response to the section about girls' qualification to work as teachers; the targeted girls/women and their guardians demonstrated high acceptance of the whole idea of sending their girls for training and later recruiting them for teaching in their own townships and also in the neighborhood villages

B. *Women Status*

- § a mainly unfair and discriminative attitude towards women; this was obvious in the women's restricted participation in the decision making process even at family level
- § fetching of water –which is a heavy duty- was the women's responsibility in the majority of the studied communities

- § the women often defined men's negative attitude and the heavy domestic work load as constraints against their involvement in the future YALLE Program activities
- § the communities were generally against the idea of women marketing and selling their products in the markets unless imposed by serious need; they explained that tribal regulations and family traditions wouldn't tolerate this manner from women. In the main, the urban Yemeni society sees all outdoor duties and obligations as men's responsibility; but in the rural areas women are the main working force in farming and agriculture activities
- § remarkable was the unmistakable contradiction between men's discriminative conduct and harsh behavior when dealing with women and the very positive statements in relation to women issues they were making through-out the interviews.
This could be interpreted as unconscious enforcement of inherited perceptions despite the conscious rejection of this negative concept. But it could as well demonstrate another observation made by most field researchers; i.e. people in the remote needy areas wouldn't mind showing the researchers positive responses so as to attract any proposed project or support.

Other similarities included parts of the socio-economic features; e.g. the mainly poor infrastructure, the division of many communities into social classes; and the popularity of tribal courts.

Of course there were some differences on district level and less discrepancy amongst villages especially those in the same one or other district. Main differences were those related to

1. the presence of the literacy centre at district level; e.g. there was
 - § only 1 center in Dhiebean District
 - § 1 centre in Shahara District
 - § 6 women literacy centers in AlSouda District
 - § 5 in the Khamer District, and
 - § 7 centres in Amran District.
2. the economical status; these was estimated on the families monthly average income.
 - § the Shahara District had the highest family average income estimated by the interviewed groups at 23000YRs; and
 - § the lowest family average income was the one estimated for Al-Souda District; i.e. 2000 YRs.

At this point it is worth mentioning that more villages in some of the 5 surveyed districts had a previous experience in establishing *women literacy centers*; however these were later closed due to 2 key factors namely

1. lack of financial support
2. absence of qualified teachers

a third factors mentioned in few cases was *women's disinterest*. Factors 1 and 3 contradict with the enthusiasm and commitment demonstrated by the communities in regard to women education. Nevertheless, all 3 factors were the tangible visible factors; the survey was not concerned and therefore didn't explore whether there were other drives behind these visible causes.

Within individual districts similarities were much more evident than the tiny differences amongst the surveyed villages. This fact makes the selection of villages as implementation sites for the YALLE Program a really hard task. The *ranking system* presented in this Final Report offers a reasonable support in this aspect; this system was based on the results of the pre-set *scoring and weighing scheme* developed in advance by the survey consultants. It gave the different survey aspects relevant weights / scores according to which a total scoring percentage was calculated for each village. It is proposed that the selection of the first 40 villages for the forthcoming Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) will be based on the results of this ranking system.

This Final Report incorporates a closing chapter on conclusion and recommendations that could be summarized in the following:

1. the population statistical data presented here were estimations made by interviewed community leaders; these need to be confirmed or adjusted. The YALLE Program team will have to decide on appropriate procedures for this task.
2. it is significant to focus on clarifying the *concepts* of the individual program components (NGO, an income generating project, self marketing, girls' training,) before their implementation in selected areas. The field-team did elaborate on these terms so as to collect the sought information; however, the communities need explicit understanding of the different program components before starting.

women mentioned men's negative attitude and guardians' disapproval as one main constrain for their partaking in the different program components; it is therefore advisable to secure the approval of individual guardians by women involvement in all of the program activities .