



# *SOUL for Development*

## **Strategic Plan**

*2010 - 2012*

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## **SECTION I: SOUL**

### **1.1 - OUR VISION**

We seek to be a pioneer organization dedicated to the attainment of a higher quality of life for the children, youth and women in Yemen.

### **1.2 - OUR MISSION**

SOUL strives to offer distinguished services that aim to improve the status of children, youth and women in Yemen through: establishing effective and sustainable development projects and services and enabling the local community to build viable partnerships.

### **1.3 - OUR INTERVENTIONS**

The following core interventions are often implemented simultaneously to strengthen and enhance project impact and to achieve our institutional aims.

1. We conduct research and studies.
2. We promote education and raise awareness.
3. We advocate for and support the rights of women and children.
4. We conduct effective training and capacity building for the empowerment of individuals, professionals, and institutions.
5. We provide feasible and viable local-community services.

### **1.4 - OUR VALUES**

#### ***1.4.1 - Quality***

SOUL is committed to striving for excellence to provide exceptional quality and value in all the services it provides for our stakeholders; to attain the best outcome for all. This is achieved through the staffs' dedication to professionalism, team-work, valuing and supporting partners' concerns, recognizing community needs, providing feasible solutions and pioneering new ideas; as reflected in the organization's accomplishments.

#### ***1.4.2 - Trust***

SOUL believes that transparency, honesty and commitment are the key components to building a reliable and trustworthy relationship among all stakeholders for the present and the future.

#### ***1.4.3 - Respect***

SOUL is committed to equality and the respect of all. SOUL reveres fulfilling obligations efficiently, valuing others time and assets as key to a respectful relationship.

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#### ***1.4.4 - Openness***

SOUL timelessly remains open to new ideas, values the participation of all stakeholders and works with the understanding that continuous learning, improvement and growth are key components which enrich the working environment and lead to the success of all ventures.

### **1.5 - OUR CORE GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

#### ***1.5.1 - Community First Approach***

Foremost, within the context of sustainable human development, we are committed to: recognizing, honoring and protecting human rights by adhering to the basic principles of democracy, social justice and equality; serving the community's needs and aspirations, while protecting their independence and autonomy; encouraging the people to recognize that participation in the development process is not an option or a privilege but a social duty and; helping inspire people to recognize and apply a community participatory approach that will create better educational, occupational and economic opportunities.

#### ***1.5.2 - Building Partnerships***

SOUL maintains a multi-stakeholder approach building partnerships, which will enhance project impact, sustainability and long-term success. These partnerships are built upon transparency, trust, equality, shared vision, responsibility and accountability and may be comprised of a variety of key social development players, including: all levels within the Yemeni government (local, regional, district, governorate etc...), non-governmental actors, international institutions, private sector and the project beneficiaries. All partners must remain committed to their role in achieving the agreed upon objectives and goals.

#### ***1.5.3 - Governance***

SOUL was established as and remains a completely independent organization and has no affiliation of any kind to any person, entity or group; nor is it a sub-affiliate to any organization, nor does it have political or ideological affiliations or leanings. SOUL drew up and implemented an institutional constitution to guide all electoral processes and the long-term direction of the organization. SOUL develops an institutional strategic plan, every three years, to determine the primary working goals and areas of focus for program initiatives and internal needs. All general management is guided by policies and bylaws and all people elect and otherwise must maintain high moral values and integrity.

#### ***1.5.4 - Promoting an Enabling Environment***

SOUL will maintain an enabling environment, which supports productivity, creativity, resourcefulness, consciousness and independence. This environment will support the team members to fulfill the organization's mission and provide room for growth, as well as, facilitate and support communities/beneficiaries through empowering them to take responsibility and ownership and more effectively participate in the development issues that affect their lives.

#### ***1.5.5 - Dissemination of Knowledge***

SOUL believes that it has a social responsibility to promote and support the accessibility and dissemination of public knowledge to all stakeholders (without compromising confidentiality). Distribution of reliable information through knowledge sharing, publications, networking and exchanging learned experiences, facilitate the attainment of the Yemeni national development goals and UN-MDG's, as well as, reduces competition and duplication of activities.

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## SECTION II: PROGRAM'S STRATEGIES

### 2.1 - INTRODUCTION

#### 2.1.1 - Country Background

The Republic of Yemen is located on the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, in the MENA Region. Historically, it has remained primarily an agricultural society with presently more than 70% of the population living in rural areas and less than 30% living in urban centers. The country is divided into 21 governorates, all of which vary in their levels of social-economic development; with a population of 22.38 million (WB/2007<sup>1</sup>).

The physical geography and topography of the country varies and covers a surface area of 528\_sq. km from barren desert coastal regions to rich tropical fertile lands, to rugged and seemingly desolate mountains, including the island of Socotra located in the Indian Ocean near the mouth of the Gulf of Aden. Yemen has a rich, long history and currently holds 4 recognized and protected World History Sites; including 11 other tentative future sites (UNESCO). Although it is located in a prime global position (potential global trade-hub) and offers diversity, antiquity, natural beauty and resources, it continues to be underdeveloped and remains classified as an LDC (middle level); despite the noted socio-economic development progress it has made in the last decade.

Furthermore, in the last century, Yemen has witnessed political and economic change. Primarily, this includes civil wars and political power shifts; all of which decrease its capacity and unfortunately, slow down the development process within the country. This was witnessed in 1990, as a consequence of the Gulf War, approximately 850,000 Yemenis returned from Saudi Arabia and the Arabian Gulf. Additionally, in the same year, the Republic of Yemen was formed on May 22, uniting two different political-economic systems, respectfully joining both the northern and southern regions of Yemen. This was a very strategic approach toward building a democratic state; even though the country did experience some setbacks. These are some of the most recent events, which have had an impact on the development process of the nation.

The social-economic development sectors have continued to make some progress since then, especially in health and education, even though in general not marked. Much more improvement and national progress can be noted during the last decade, since the government has put into action several development reforms. These collective efforts have led to improved development strategies and policy changes; especially in regard to democratization reform and attempting to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

#### 2.1.2 - Current Development Overview

Yemen was selected to be one of the eight United Nation's Millennium pilot project countries, and for this reason an MDG needs assessment was conducted to identify investment requirements to achieve the Goals by 2015 (MDG Monitor Tracking). Although all sources on the subject agree that Yemen will be unable to attain all of the MDG, the country continues to strive forward in the development process; not by leaps and bounds, but by continuing to make slow and steady progress forward.

According to the *Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation - MDG Needs Assessment-Yemen Country Report of 2005*, the Yemeni government is in the process of making structural long term development changes as stated in the *Yemen's Strategic Vision 2025*, which aims at transforming Yemen to a middle human development country with a diversified economy and social, scientific, cultural and political progress. The 2005 assessment report shows the investment plan to facilitate the achievement of the MDG's by 2015. This states that it will accomplish several goals in regards to food security, education, health, sustainable environment and infrastructure.

Presently, the government is attempting to achieve the objectives, set for poverty reduction, as stated in the *Third Five Year Development Plan for Poverty Reduction (TFYDPPR) for the period 2006-*

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2010. It incorporated the recommendations of the second *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* (PRSP), and was formulated and aligned to the MDGs, based on the *MDG Needs Assessment Report*. It aims to generate economic growth, create job opportunities, reduce poverty and secure economic stability.

According to the UNDP Human Development Report of 2007-2008, the status of the country can be measured by the following key indicators and demographic trends. The human development index measures the average progress of a country in human development, per: life expectancy, educational level and standard of living and the HDI of Yemen ranks 153 out of 177 countries. The human poverty index (HPI-1) value for Yemen is 38; which ranks 82nd among 108 developing countries; and the GDP per capita is 930 US\$ (index 0.372). Furthermore, the population living below the national poverty line is 41% (under 1\$/day =15.7% and under 2\$/day=45.2%). Additionally, according to the country fact sheet, 2005 estimates, which are based on a total population of 21.1 million for that year, other key indicator include: (*economy*) unemployment rate is 11.5% (of labor force); (*education*) adult literacy rate is 54.1%, youth literacy rate is 75.2 (ages 15-24) combined gross enrollment is 55.2%; (*health*) children underweight (under age five) per age is 46% (under-height=60%), IMR is 76/1,000 live births, under-five mortality is 102/1,000 live births and MMR (2004) is 370/100,000live births. From a global perspective these indicators reflect the status of the general population's position, many of which remain living in chronic poverty, many of whom have limited access to basic social services or infrastructure.

Moreover, among them are those who suffer even greater difficulties and challenges; these underprivileged and marginalized groups have very limited opportunities to better their circumstances. These groups consist mainly of the women, youth and children within society, and collectively make up the vast percentage of the total population. These are the people who hold the keys to the future of Yemen; the women who are raising the next generation and the youth who are to become the next leaders and decision makers for the country. They continue to live without a collective voice to raise and support the issues which they confront. More sustainable feasible efforts must be initiated immediately to facilitate the overall development of the country; as the present situation, represented by gender disparity and isolated discouraged youth, may lead only to further lack of development and a fruitless future.

Gender inequality has been recognized as a fundamental source of poverty throughout the world and for this reason it is conditional that all who work to attain the MDGs, directly support women's rights and empowerment. Presently, Yemen suffers from many gender disparities, as recognized especially in the social, political, educational and economic fields. Fortunately, the government has signed and agreed to uphold many international human rights instruments, which specifically support mainstreaming gender issues in development; these are in accordance with the *Convention of Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*. According to the UNDP Human Index Report of 2007-2008 the GDI (gender-related development index) value in Yemen is, 0.472 and ranked at 135; thus the GDI value is 92.9% (in respect to the HDI value). Out of the 156 countries with both HDI and GDI values, 155 countries have a better ratio than Yemen's.

Furthermore, the UNDP Human Index Report states that the GEM value in Yemen is 0.129(Gender Empowerment Measure, as indicated by the political and economic positions of women). Presently, it ranks 93rd out of 93 countries in the GEM; the following indicators reflect some of these main disparities. Political indicators include: seats in parliament held by women is 0.7%; women in government at ministerial level is 2.9 % of total; seats in upper house or senate held by women is 1.8%; and seats in lower house or single house held by women is 0.3%. Economic indicators include: economic activity level is 29.7% (15 and older); the economic total percentage of female employment in agriculture is 88% (mostly unpaid labor); in industry is 3% and in services is 9%. Some additional key indicators which show gender disparity include: adult literacy rates (15 and older) for females is 34.7% and males is 73.1%, and the combined gross enrolment education ratio is 43% for females and 67% for males. Additional economic factors, according to the World Bank's gender stats from 2007, estimate that the earned income for females is 424 as compared to males 1,422(PPP US\$) and the labor force participation for females is 31.1% as compared to males 77.4%. These figures are representative of the current status of women; whose state is reflected by marked inequity and moreover, it reveals a lack of unawareness of the true impact and value that women can have collectively within society.

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Additionally, the youth of Yemen, representing almost half of the population, is given disproportionate social development support through lack of public services and initiatives, which may lead to social exclusion. This is witnessed especially in regard to the lack of services and public programs provided for and by them, which foster and support their particular needs and cultivate their potential. Although presently there is a growing understanding of youth potential, the development of programs targeting youth remains disproportionate to fulfill the needs of the total youth population. Support of youth can be observed through several means, mainly: the existence of the *National Children and Youth Strategy for 2006-2015* developed by the Yemeni government (which includes youth plans for employment, inclusion/participation, leisure activities and reproductive health); increasing number of community youth groups; some NGOs do provide youth specific programs/activities (i.e.: IEARN, YEDI etc...); existence of technical/vocational training and skills development institutions (i.e.: language institutes, ITC centers); access to scholarships for higher education and; an increasing awareness about the importance and practice of volunteerism and supporting young entrepreneurs. The development of the youth in Yemen must be taken into serious consideration and more focus must be given toward understanding and fulfilling their needs and instituting viable sustainable programs. The lack thereof will only lead to very negative social ramifications in the near future and may even become a leading cause for social development decline and recession.

Another large group of society which remains marginalized and underrepresented is the children; as perhaps they are the most deprived and underprivileged group and those who remain most at risk. Fortunately, the government has adopted measures as per the *Convention on the Rights of Children*. They (with support from the international donor community) continue to maintain and improve the quality and quantity of educational and health-care service institutions; although some major problems still remain. Four of the main problems in the educational system include: lack of access and quality to public schools especially in rural areas; overcrowding in urban areas; lack of qualified teachers and; general overall student gender disparities. Additionally, children living in rural areas are more likely to suffer from lack of adequate health services (as compared to those in urban areas), such as: lower levels of immunization, lack of quality health-care facilities, lack of clean water and proper sanitation, etc. Furthermore, over the last decade, according to some sources, there has been an increase in child-labor, street-children and child-trafficking in Yemen, compounded by the general lack of public knowledge of the potential hazards and risks which children may be subjected to. Investing in the safety and proper development of the nation's children is of utmost concern and must remain a priority for the interest and prosperity of the county.

In conclusion, many obstacles remain in Yemen and national progress in development remains slow; even with all the efforts made the country persistently faces the challenges of a developing nation and most of its people remain living in chronic poverty. For this reason the government of Yemen, with support from the international development community, has committed itself to: economic reform, improving the level of human development and upgrading Yemen to join countries which represent the middle human development level. The government, per the *Yemen MDGs Needs Assessment Report-2005*, is following a policy to enhance governance through decentralization and allowing for social participation in the decision making process and optimize the country's resources. This includes changes in policy which support: good governance, civil service modernization, enhancing and strengthening democracy, implementation and enforcement of laws and regulations, strengthening local authority and decentralization and increasing the roles of the private sector and civil society organizations.

CSOs and NGOs, for many years, have continued to play distinctive and critical roles in facilitating the development of society, working along side the Yemeni government and the international community to be active and dedicated partners in the attainment of the MDGs for 2015. In this endeavor, SOUL has continued to work toward the attainment of the MDGs through supporting key issues which affect the children, youth and women in Yemen. Hence, in recognition of this effort SOUL was awarded with Consultative Status by the UN- ECOSOC in 2007; a status which we will continue to up-hold and honor in all our projects and activities.

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### **2.1.3 - SOUL for Development**

SOUL works for the Yemeni community and as a locally based NGO is well placed to respond to the needs of society and adopt culturally and socially appropriate development strategies. SOUL takes a people-centered approach to development and places great importance on the need for community-level participation and co-operation in all stages of project design and implementation. SOUL seeks to mobilize communities to achieve their highest potential through partnership and shared leadership, enabling them to become an active and sustainable factor in community development. SOUL aims to always provide the highest standards of service to its beneficiaries, the public and partners. SOUL strives to fulfill all of its responsibilities in a professional, transparent, efficient and credible manner.

Since its establishment, all the projects, programs, researches and services have supported the UN-MDGs, as they are parallel to the needs within the Yemeni society. SOUL build's partnerships based on mutual respect and shared responsibility, which complement national and international development goals and globally agreed commitments. Furthermore, as an NGO dedicated to development, SOUL supports all people, but is particularly interested in serving the children, youth and women, especially the disadvantaged and poor among them. In this, SOUL has remained constant and active in its direct support of the MDGs, especially those under health, education, poverty reduction, gender and global development issues.

SOUL has always supported the belief that all women and children must be given access to equal human rights; and they can not be bypassed by any society wishing to progress toward a bright and self-sufficient future. SOUL has designed its organizational strategic priorities to facilitate and support those groups most in need.

The programs and internal institutional strategic goals for 2009-2011/12, were developed to directly support and have a lasting impact on fulfilling the community's needs and facilitating institutional professionalism and growth. The strategies selected are recognized as the most important areas to be addressed over the next three years and are in line with and based on several key observations from:

- The Yemeni Government's strategic plans; (those which represent the present ongoing development process).
- The UN-MDGs, especially as they pertain to development in Yemen and in regard to the international support thereof.
- Outcomes of SOUL's 2005-2008 strategic goals; an internal investigation of the institution's most urgent and imperative needs; and SOUL's continuous observations of societal needs and resource availability.

SOUL developed its Strategic Plan for 2009-2011/12 based on these observations. SOUL remains committed to helping the women, youth and children of Yemen and has selected to implement its main activities, projects and programs in the fields of health, poverty reduction, education and ICT. SOUL believes that all people, regardless, must be given access to equal human rights; which is fundamental to any society seeking economic development, social harmony and a prosperous future.

### **2.1.4 - Strategic Issues Overview**

#### **2.1.4.1 - Health**

Health issues affecting women and children have remained on the forefront of the government's priorities for many years. Since 1990, slow but progressive changes can be witnessed in the quality and quantity of health care providers and institutions throughout the country. There has been marked advancement in the development in the health field in Yemen, especially since the influx of international support starting in 2000, geared toward supporting the attainment of the MDGs. Although the support continues and access to health care is increasing, some indicators show a negative trend or barely any improvement. Most sources agree that the causes are many and are not necessarily connected to flaws specifically related to the health care system alone. It is noted that the health care field in general does suffer deficiencies in manpower and infrastructure to cover the needs



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of the population, but other issues also add to the problem. These issues generally lead to negative ramifications in society, but are made even worse when combined. Some of these factors include: a stagnating per capita income level compounded by recent global economic changes; increase in the consumption of non-nutritious processed snacks; increased usage of cigarettes (and tobacco products) and qat; an increase of cancerous disease; rapid increase in population and; dwindling natural resources, especially water, etc.

Several indicators show some advancement in the 1990's, but then begin to slow in improvement in the 2000's; while others show slow continuous improvement, as per the *Country Report of Yemen for the Regional MDG Project*. Those which show a negative trend or ones which reflect limited to no progress include: underweight children under five, under-five and infant mortality, MMR (has not changed significantly since 1997 and still remains the leading cause of death among women of reproductive age), and the prevalence of malaria and TB cases remains high. Also, it was noted that there was a marked reduction of certain communicable diseases, such as measles and polio, but in 2005 there was a resurgence of disease from Africa. Furthermore, it was noted that Yemen will also not be able to meet the MDG target to reduce the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water.

Additionally, according to the World Bank's health indicators from 2007, there appears to be moderate overall improvement since 1995, as per the following: life expectancy at birth is 63 years, malnutrition prevalence (weight for age) is 47.6% of children under 5, 32% of the population is undernourished, immunization of measles of children ages 12-23 months is 74%, infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births is 55, under 5 mortality rate per 1,000 is 73, fertility rate is 5.5 births per woman, adolescent fertility rate is 71 births per 1,000 women ages 15-19, births attended by skilled health staff is 36% of total, contraceptive prevalence of women ages 15-49 is 28%, MMR per 100,000 live births is 430, incidence of tuberculosis is 76 per 100,000 people, 46% of the population have access to improved sanitation facilities and 66% have improved water source.

In conclusion, several sources agree that Yemen will be unable to attain all of the MDGs by 2015. In regard to the health related goals, the MDG-Monitor org. maintains that: reducing child mortality is likely to be achieved; improving maternal health and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases both hold the possibility of being achieved (if some changes are made); but that eradicating extreme poverty and hunger and ensuring environmental sustainability are both off track.

Since inception, SOUL has worked in the health sector. It is based on this experience and belief that it can make an impact in this field, that it will continue to support health issues and remain an active partner in seeking to attain the MDGs. This will be achieved mainly by offering a health-care program which will include: enhancing the quality of services provided, promoting health awareness through preventative approach and disseminating accurate knowledge to individuals, local communities and professionals on pertinent health issues.

#### **2.1.4.2 - Poverty Reduction**

Poverty reduction is one of the main development challenges of the MDGs. As noted earlier the Yemeni government has developed the *TFYDPPR (06-10)* and PRSP to facilitate the national poverty reduction process; setting in motion the policies, infrastructure and activities necessary to advance the level of development in all social sectors. It is worthy to note that Yemen has made substantial advancements in development when compared to its position in the 1970's. The social development process started to increase soon after the reunification of Yemen in the 1990's and by 2000, in support of the MDG's, it intensified and took on a new form; although there has only been a slight overall impact on poverty reduction.

A comparative view reflects a small decline in national poverty among the populace. In all of the development sectors, there are quite significant disparities noted, especially between urban and rural values, individual governorates and gender comparatives. As per the *Country Report of Yemen for the Regional MDG Project* there is evidence of a slight decrease in income poverty since 1998, as reflected by a comparison of household budget surveys from that year and 2005/6. It shows a

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reduction in the percentage of the populace living below the poverty line falling from 40% to 35%. Among this, 35% live under the national income poverty line, 22% reside in urban areas while 42% are in rural areas; proposing that the poverty rate has fallen significantly in urban areas but remains quite high in rural areas. Another comparative which reflects changes in poverty status among the populace is the food poverty line, which was over 20% in 1998, but by 2006 had dropped to 12.5%. To date, there remains marked disparities between different governorates' poverty incidence, as reflected by comparing the highest value in Amran which is 64% to the lowest value found in Al-Mahrah at 9%. Additionally, for women the status of poverty is much more detrimental and signified by extreme gender disparities; as briefly stated earlier, especially in regard to their political and economic status.

According to the World Bank, as of 2007, some of the main indicators which reflect the current situation in relation to poverty (as compared from previous years) in Yemen are: employment to population ratio, 15 and above is 39%; employment to population ratio, ages 15-24 is 22% (both of which have only increased by 1% since 1995); GDP per person employed according to the annual percentage of growth is 0% (while in 1995 it was at 7%, then falling to 1% by 2000); vulnerable employment as of 2000 was 31%; total income share held by lowest 20% is 7.2% (having risen approximately 1% since 1995); poverty gap at \$1.25 a day (PPP) is 4% (rising slightly since 1995) and; poverty headcount ratio, at \$1.25 a day, is 18 (having more than tripled since 1995). According to these indicators, there appears to have been very little impact on or improvement in poverty alleviation for the general population since 1995. These indicators certainly forecast the inability for the attainment of eradicating extreme poverty in Yemen as per the MDGs; although it is worthy to mention that the causes for this are many (especially the rapid rise in population and the recent global economic crisis) the donor community. The Yemeni government and other key actors remain steadfast in their approach to making continued efforts toward poverty alleviation.

SOUL's poverty reduction program will provide activities which support: offering quality service provision, empowering individuals through capacity building and advance occupational opportunities. It is a firm belief at SOUL that offering feasible programs which provide people with practical and viable skills and empowering and educating them is the key to creating a sustained impact; thus relieving poverty within the society. Moreover, these individuals, as well, may become advocates for their families and communities encouraging and assisting them with the belief that they can also make a difference, by relinquishing their sense of apathy and hopelessness and seeking opportunities to better their circumstance. In this belief SOUL established the *AZAL Micro-finance Program* in 2001, which to date has had a total of 19,033 beneficiaries, of whom 84% have been female.

### **2.1.4.3 - Education**

Education has remained a high priority for the government and it has had an overall marked impact within the development sector. According to the *TFYDPPR (06-10)*, the *National PRSP* considers education key in reducing poverty and sustaining human development. To facilitate the process to achieve primary education according to the MDGs, the government developed *BEDS- Basic Education Development Strategy*, in accord with its development partners. According to the MDG Monitor and several other sources it is agreed that it is very likely that this goal can be achieved.

An educational comparative overview, according to the *Country Report of Yemen for the Regional MDG Project*, shows marked progress in this sector since the 1990's; although gender and geographic disparities remain. Overall there has been an increase in gross enrollment rates in basic education from 58% in 1997/8 to 66.5% in 2003/4 and adult literacy had risen to 50% by 2003. Additional improvements include: the gender gap in primary enrolment has been steadily closing in from 1990-2003 and the intake rate is increasing; although as stated it is noted that boys compared to girls and urban areas compared to rural are receiving greater educational benefit.

Presently, according to World Bank estimates (2007), improvements have continued in education; as witnessed by the following indicators. In primary education the total enrollment increased from 59% in 2000 to 75% in 2007 and primary completion rates (relevant to age groups) increased from 55% to 60% over the same time-frame. The female to male ratios for enrollment on all levels of education have also risen from 2000 to 2007: primary was 63 and rose to 74; secondary was 42 and rose to 49;

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and tertiary was 28 and rose to 37. In addition to this, youth literacy rates have also increased from 1995 to 2007: females were 35% and rose to 67% and males were 83% and rose to 93%. If these figures continue to rise, from 2007-2015, it is foreseeable that the attainment of the MDGs which support education may be possible.

Over the last few years there has been an increasing awareness of the need not only for quantity in education, through providing adequate facilities, but also in quality of the services provided, through offering advanced trainings for educators. Within this context, ECD- Early Childhood Development, theories, strategies and approach have taken hold in the educational community. Greater awareness has been given to the real age appropriate needs and abilities of children (and to a lesser degree is the growing awareness of the existence of learning disabilities). Prior to 2000 these concepts were virtually unknown in Yemen. Presently, ECD concepts and approach are taking hold and the government and the private educational sectors are beginning to promote them within the educational facilities; either through offering services and/or trainings or both. SOUL with support from UNICEF was fortunate to have been one of the first institutions pioneering ECD concepts in Yemen.

Since inception SOUL has remained active in supporting the education sector, especially for females. SOUL's educational concerns not only focus on quantity but also on quality and for this reason SOUL will continue to work on decreasing gender disparities in education and increasing literacy among youth and women. Additionally, SOUL has continuously offered and supported the advancement of quality education; as witnessed by the many educational trainings and workshops it has hosted over the years and its participation, as advocators and service providers, in ECD- Early Childhood Development. As a pioneer in ECD, SOUL established a private preschool in Sana'a in 2006, which promoted and applied ECD theory and approach for children ages 2-8. The following year, the *Manarat Sana'a International School and Kindergarten* was established and has continued to utilize ECD in all educational levels.

SOUL will continue in its endeavor to provide educational activities and programs which will create opportunities that support both women and children through offering quality service provision and advocate against the social barriers and injustices which prevent their access and use of these services.

#### **2.1.4.4 - ICT**

Over the last decade ICT has made an immense impact on the economic-social development sectors worldwide. In Yemen, for the last several years there has been a marked expansion in the use and development of ICT across the nation; primarily due to the interest and support of the government, private sector and international community. The Yemeni government has been working hard to improve the ICT market in the country by increasing investments in ICT development. Several government programs have already been initiated to help spearhead and facilitate the advancement of ICT understanding and usage around the country; especially in governmental and educational facilities and in programs which support an increase in public awareness about ICT. These programs focus on increasing the usage of ICT through offering capacity building and integrating appropriate ICT technology. Educational facilities perhaps will benefit the most, as in most countries around the world.

Overall ICT usage has increased in Yemen as witness by the following indicators. According, to the World Bank (*ICT at a Glance*) it was reported that from 2000 to 2006 (as per 100 people): the telephone mainlines increased from 1.9 to 4.6; the mobile telephone subscribers rose from 0.2 to 9.5; internet users rose from 0.1 to 1.2 and; personal computers increased from 0.2 to 1.9. More recently the Public Telecommunication Corporation (PTC), (as reported by the ITU-International Telecommunications Union), reflects an even sharper rise in ICT usage from 2007 to 2008, as noted: the number of internet subscribers rose by 79,139 (2008=295,215); the total number of dial-up users rose by 65,160 (2008=270,773); subscribers to Super Yemen Net (ADSL) service rose by 13,978 (2008=24,442); and the number of internet cafes rose by 48 (2008=925). This marked increase in ICT usage shows an ever growing interest and understanding of the importance it holds within society; especially among the youth who appear to be the most interested and active within the ICT field in Yemen.

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In this ever growing world of ICT, especially within the context of social development, it is essential for both males and females alike to have, in the least, a basic understanding of ICT and computer skills. All sources, which discuss the subject, agree that based on the available statistics, gender-gaps in Yemen, as in all social sectors, also persist in relation to ICT. There remains throughout the years, a persistent lower number of females to males (often half or less) who attend ICT institutes of higher learning, obtain degrees in ICT sciences or use ICT (internet) services. Due to traditional social beliefs and practices women tend to underutilize public facilities where a mixed gender atmosphere is present. Institutions and service providers who understand and recognize the importance of either providing an all female environment or providing separate areas, find that female participation is much higher. Furthermore, there also remains disparity between urban and rural areas with even more severe gender-gap problems.

To combat these disparities the *WIT- Women and Technology Program* was initiated in Yemen, implemented by SOUL (IIE/MEPI-2005). It presented the primary proof that women were interested in and willing to participate in the field of ICT; by providing them an all female environment to access these services. This pilot project spearheaded an all female ICT learning unit, which utilized the Microsoft-UP curriculum. Due to the success of the program it was replicated in 9 other countries under IIE/MEPI. It was from the positive growth and outcomes of the WIT program which inspired SOUL to continue in its endeavor to provide quality ICT skills training and services. SOUL presently provides ICT services for women and youth through several means: continuing to implement the *WIT Program* in Yemen, (which has since grown nationally and is presently being implemented in 5 sites); the establishment of the *SOUL-CLDC (Community Learning and Development Center)* in 2007; and in 2008, the establishment of the *ANTEE for Student Services*, an all female telecenter (with support from the IDB) and the *ICT Training and Learning Center for Women*. In recognition of the importance of ICT in the development of the nation, SOUL will continue in its endeavor to provide quality ICT services, programs and skills development, especially for women and youth.

The ICT program includes both providing skills and educational opportunities in ICT and PD-Professional Development, which support women (adults and youth); thus, providing them with quality services that empower and equip them to participate in the ICT and business sectors.

## **2.1.5 – Program's Goals & Objectives**

### **2.1.5.1 – Health**

**Strategic Goal:** Improve the health status of women and children.

#### General Program Goals:

- Participate in decreasing the maternal and child mortality rates.
- Participate in decreasing malnutrition in children.

#### Program Objectives:

The health program objectives are to participate in:

- Increasing the number of women who attend antenatal care.
- Increasing the use of family planning methods.
- Increasing the number of births attended by professional health care providers.
- Improving health care service provision by offering training/capacity building for para-professional health care providers.
- Decreasing Qat use and smoking (tobacco) among pregnant and lactating women.
- Increasing the number of women utilizing proper methods early detection of breast (and cervical) cancer.
- Decreasing the rates of transfer/incidence of communicable diseases (HIV, malaria, hepatitis, tuberculosis, etc.) through preventative approach.
- Increasing awareness of proper nutrition for women and children.
- Advocating for health and safety rights of women and children.

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- Promoting environment awareness through supporting water safety and general health related issues.

### **2.1.5.2 – Poverty Reduction**

**Strategic Goal:** Contribute to alleviating poverty.

General Program Goals:

- Contribute in making the quality of life better for the underprivileged through participating in increasing employment opportunities, especially among women and youth, by providing practical and marketable professional/development skills.

Program Objectives:

The poverty reduction program objectives are to participate in:

- Preparing and qualifying women for the business field.
- Expanding micro-finance service provision, especially for women.
- Offering trainings for women entrepreneur in small business start-ups and investments.
- Encouraging the private-sector to participate in supporting training program scholarships for the underprivileged.
- Breaking down social/cultural barriers and isolation, which prevent women from attaining economic growth and participating in the public forum.
- Decreasing gender disparities in the workforce by equipping women with essential marketable skills, which can be used to facilitate occupational opportunities.
- Providing job-placement assistance through: volunteering, internships and employment.
- Advocating for the work and employment rights of women, especially the underprivileged.

### **2.1.5.3 – Education**

**Strategic Goal:** Participate in achieving education for all.

General Program Goals:

- Participate in decreasing gender disparities in primary and secondary education.
- Participate in increasing literacy among women and youth.
- Participate in achieving optimal development for children (0-8), through promoting ECD (Early Childhood Development).

Program Objectives:

The education program objectives are to participate in:

- Increasing girls' enrollment rates in school.
- Decreasing girls' dropout rates from school.
- Increasing literacy rates among women and decrease social-cultural views which may support a rise in illiteracy.
- Promoting comprehensive educational development approach and community participation.
- Training educators to provide services which integrate personal development skills (with each literacy program), which foster a sense of personal identity, empowerment and civic responsibility.
- Training educators in applying ECD techniques and approach.
- Providing high quality professional educational services which utilize ECD methodology.
- Advocating for educational rights of women and children.

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#### **2.1.5.4 – ICT**

**Strategic Goal:** Contribute to the development of the ICT sector in Yemen and participate in decreasing the digital-divide.

General Program Goals:

- Participate in contributing in the expansion of service access and participation of women and youth in the ICT field.
- Participate in strengthening the capacity of women and youth to share in the process of development.

Program Objectives:

The ICT program objectives are to participate in:

- Increasing computer literacy and promoting ICT understanding and utilization.
- Closing the gender gap in ICT.
- Providing high-quality services, which facilitate national efforts in service provision availability through establishing centers and local NGO partnerships.
- Facilitating a national forum/network that fosters knowledge sharing and facilitates development.
- Empowering women and youth with marketable high-tech skills, to facilitate further educational and occupational opportunities.
- Fostering partnerships within the public sector to encourage women participation in the ICT field through internships, volunteering and employment.

### **SECTION III: INTERNAL INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES**

Our internal institutional strategies have been recognized as being the key components which will lead to the stability and growth of SOUL over the next three years. These central strategies when attained will provide a firm foundation, creating an overall positive institutional impact, which leverages SOUL's position as a leading national organization in development.

#### ***3.1 - Financial and Administrative Stability***

Financial and administrative stability are recognized as core strategy issues which will be addressed, in order to reinforce and secure central institutional capacity.

**Strategic Goal:** To achieve full financial and administrative stability.

Objectives:

- Develop a financial stratagem and monitoring system, which is represented through a clearly defined, feasible and measurable written set of bi-laws, policies and procedures.
- Develop an administrative stratagem for human resources, which is represented through a clearly defined, feasible and measurable written set of policies and management guidelines.
- Establish investment projects that are self-sufficient and sustainable and act as fiscal generating entities, which will be utilized to support/cover direct institutional financial needs, obligations and unforeseen expenditure.
- Develop a reliable, effective and transparent fundraising system (methodology and approach) that will add to fiscal stability, which will leverage institutional identity and capacity to be an independent partner in development.

#### ***3.2 - Institutional Professional Capacity***

Institutional professional capacity will be achieved through recognizing the undeniable value in facilitating the development of each team member, based on their individualized capabilities and needs. SOUL is committed to building the professional capacity of each team member in order for

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them to respond more effectively to the needs and aspirations of those they serve; within the community and in partnerships.

**Strategic Goal:** To maintain a professional, up-to-date leading team of qualified professionals.

Objectives:

- To maintain qualified, professional and dedicated staff to ensure quality of services provided.
- To provide internal and facilitate external trainings opportunities (financial, administrative, and technical) in order to empower and equip the staff with advanced professional skills.

### **3.3 - Monitoring and Evaluating Systems**

The monitoring and evaluation system will facilitate and define our project's implementation assessment tools and relevance. Monitoring will provide continuous and reliable feedback, for all project actors, to establish clear and feasible mechanisms on which to make decisions based on early identification of actual or potential successes and/or problems. Evaluation will allow for periodic assessment of a project's relevance, performance, efficiency, and impact, (as they relate to the objectives and offer potential design for other initiatives, best practices, lessons learned and transferable models.

**Strategic Goal:**

To improve SOUL's ability to monitor, evaluate and report on programs, so it is better able to document its experiences, communicate them, learn from them and incorporate that learning into future programs.

Objectives:

The M&E established unit will assist the organization to:

- Design high quality programs & implement them efficiently and effectively.
- Measure outcomes and impact.
- Document experiences and share them across the agency, with partners and all stakeholders.

### **3.4 - Marketing Strategies: "Pioneer NGO"**

Marketing strategies will be initiated as a key component in promoting SOUL as a pioneer NGO. One which lives up to its values and guiding principles to fulfill its mission; thus, building a trusting and viable relationship with all stakeholders, leading to the successful growth and development of the institution.

**Strategic Goal:** To introduce SOUL as a leading professional NGO and have it recognized as a pioneer organization dedicated to development by all stakeholders nationally and internationally.

Objectives:

- Improve and sharpen SOUL's image among nationally and internationally stakeholders.
- Promote SOUL as a leading national institution and best option as partner in development.