Dear readers,

I am pleased to introduce you to the second newsletter of the project "Empowering Yemeni Youth Towards Peace: Ensuring Access To Information And Participation" managed by UNESCO GCC and Yemen office. This newsletter aims at raising the voices of Yemeni youth through sharing their perspectives and stories with decision makers, duty bearers, and international and regional actors. Through its different sections, this newsletter edition will shed light on some of the activities done part of this project and by the youth in support of the peace building process in Yemen, from January to March 2021. Field activities, survey findings and success stories of young Yemeni peacebuilders will be highlighted periodically through this series of newsletters.

I hope you will find this reading interesting and that it will contribute to support and empower the voices of the Yemeni youth.

Yours sincerely,

A. Paolini, UNESCO
In February 2021, RNW Media in partnership with UNESCO GCC and Yemen office launched a survey to capture the perspective on peace negotiations in Yemen. Through a mixed method approach, the team was able to gather 934 responses from youth aged 18-30 from the different Yemeni governorates. The survey included questions around peace negotiations approaches, priorities, expectation and participation.

The results of the survey show that almost half of the Yemeni youth (47%) tend to perceive that the best approach for negotiations is to have the talks between Yemeni parties exclusively and without any external influences or any influences from regional states or international actors. In terms of expectations, 53% of the youth think that peace talks could result in only a relative success and resolution of certain issues.

While there was no strong agreement on one of the matters, according to the youth surveyed, the most pressing issues for negotiations are forming a national government that represents all the parties (55%), discussing the economical crisis and preventing a total sectoral collapse (51%), and the disarmament of all the parties and restricting weapon ownership to only the government (49%).

The youth strongly agree that the negotiation sessions between the parties to the conflict should be live broadcasted in order for the general public to keep up with the talks, and that there should be a quota for youth and women participation in the peace talks. Finally, the majority of the youth perceive their participation in the peace negotiations as crucial. They see that they could positively contribute to the discussions by raising the voices and suffering of a large segment of the population, and also by spreading awareness to other youth and the public on the importance of the peace talks and working towards resolving the conflict.

In August 2020, UNESCO GCC and Yemen office and RNW Media launched “My Solution”, a call inviting young Yemenis to submit their ideas for achieving peace building projects. In the first cycle, 7 proposals were selected and supported, among which were Sameh and Human Voices, two youth-led peace development initiatives.

As part of the “My Solution” project, Sameh initiative trained 20 peace builders on the basics of peacebuilding and conflict resolution and empowered them with the skills needed to undertake new projects. This allowed them to build a peace proposal that was later funded by another local initiative. Sameh initiative launched an online campaign featuring youth, lawyers and renown community figures who shared peace related quotes. They also aimed to reach a younger audience by creating a digital booklet featuring 3 illustrated stories, on the importance of rejecting discrimination, promoting community collaborations, supporting gender equality and women education. Amani, director of the initiative, explained that by participating in “My Solution” they were able to expand their volunteers team from 25 to 45 individuals and increase their visibility which placed them steps closer to reaching their goal of becoming an established organization.

On the other hand, Human Voices opted to create an awareness raising campaign on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250. The first component of the project was a capacity building activity that trained 15 young Yemeni youth on the resolution and empowered them to create peace building content. Then, Human Voices utilized social media to promote 6 awareness raising posts, and a promotional video, discussing the role of the youth in the peace building process. Additionally, Human Voices created 3 short videos showcasing examples of overcoming conflict from other countries to encourage the youth to work towards peace building in their own country. Tamim Al-Ariqi, a founding member of the initiative, explained that “The support provided pushed our initiative forward by further reaching and engaging with the youth on peace related issues.”

For more information, please visit: https://en.unesco.org/news/sameh-initiative
Activity in the Highlights

Subsequently to the training of trainers organized by UNESCO empowering young Yemeni journalists with the skills and capacities to transfer their knowledge on peace reporting to other journalists across the country, two trainings were organized by RNW Media in partnership with UNESCO and delivered by the qualified trainers. The activities aimed to enhance the skills of young journalists in reporting on the peacebuilding process.

Each of the capacity building activities, organized in February and March 2020, invited 6 women and 6 young men journalists, to participate in hands-on sessions. The participants acquired skills and knowledge on peace reporting allowing them to better understand conflict sensitivities and ensure balanced coverage of the peace building process. Among the topics covered were conflict and peace journalism, journalists role in the coverage of conflicts, and ethics and standards of journalism. Mariam a journalist and participant expressed “I learned a lot of information, digested important concepts and learned how to use them in my reports and articles to create content resolving the ongoing conflicts as well as highlighting humanitarian issues in the society”.

These activities are part of a series of five trainings that are being implemented throughout different Yemeni governorates to enhance the skills of young journalists throughout the country to provide balanced coverage on peacebuilding developments, and improve access to information for Yemeni youth to better understand the process and their role within this framework.

With the same objectives, UNESCO in partnership with Community Media Network (CMN) in Jordan launched a training aiming to build the capacity of five Yemeni radio stations in producing peacebuilding reports and programs targeting Yemeni youth. The activity will provide the participants with the tools and steps needed to prepare radio reports, programs and podcast; while ensuring gender and conflict sensitivities and promoting peacebuilding discussions. Following the training, Yemeni radio stations will be supported to produce 140 radio programs, 70 field radio reports and 10 podcast episodes in the upcoming months.

Peacebuilding Story

This section aims to shed light on a peacebuilding effort implemented by the youth in Yemen, which does not necessarily fall within the scope of the project or was implemented by any of its partners.

On February 20th 2021, coinciding with the International Day of Social Justice, The Adalah Foundation and the Yemen Model United Nations, launched the United Nations Simulation Model Conference in the presence of 92 young women and men and over 20 top ranking officials and guests. The conference, which was the first of its kind in Yemen, aimed to prepare and train the youth to be involved in the decision-making process according to the United Nations model.

The conference addressed crucial issues such as strengthening international peace, security and efforts to combat terrorism, securing humanitarian needs in conflict areas, the future of education after COVID-19, and the national responsibility to achieve the sustainable development goals. Through their participation, the youth were trained on the modus operandi of the United Nations, and on formulating resolutions and international agreements that reinforce the goals of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and sustainable development. In particular, the youth participated in simulated workshops covering the United Nations Security Council, United Nations Economic and Social Council, United Nations Human Rights Council and UNESCO Educational Simulation Model. Additionally, debates and negotiations sessions were organized. The hands-on activities allowed the youth to participate in the discussions, draft and present resolutions to the simulated Council, form simulated countries alliances, and vote towards decisions.

The 3-days event succeeded in enriching the youth’s leadership skills while drawing the attention of the international community on the Yemeni youth capabilities, with the aim of enhancing their participation in the peace process and on global matters. Through their participation, the Yemeni youth succeeded in exchanging their skills and knowledge which fostered the spirit of coexistence between them.

For more information, please visit: https://www.facebook.com/YemenMUN/
UNESCO, in partnership with Media Association for Peace (MAP), organized in December 2020 a training on International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights for Yemeni Journalists. The training workshop is part of the project “Empowering Yemeni youth towards peace: ensuring access to information and participation”, funded by the United Nation Peace Building Fund. This workshop has received support by the UNESCO’s Multi-Donor Programme for Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists (MDP).

This 7-days workshop aimed at empowering Yemeni journalists with the knowledge and tools to gain a better understanding of International Humanitarian Law and Human rights and their application to journalism, as well as providing them with an in depth understanding of the legal framework protecting them. The training was attended by 13 young Yemeni journalists (7 women/6 men) from each of the five Yemen regions (Aden, Hadhramout, Hudaida, Sanaa and Taiz).

The young journalists were introduced to the concept and practice of human rights journalism, elaborating on the role of the media in relation to human rights and journalists’ responsibility in reporting on human rights abuses and violations. It focused particularly on the Yemeni context, explaining how human rights journalism could support the peacebuilding process.

One of the participant to the training highlighted the importance of this training for his work as a journalist in Yemen: "The topics of human rights and international humanitarian law are somewhat new to me; I received many useful information in this training, and I’ve learned a lot. I also liked the interactive training methods used and I found the training materials very rich and important for my work as a journalist”.

The training is now available online in Arabic (with English subtitles) for every journalist to access.

You can access the full videos of the training workshop on the following link: https://en.unesco.org/Training%20resources
Empowering Yemeni Youth Towards Peace: Ensuring Access To Information And Participation

ABOUT THE PROJECT

This collaborative project, led by UNESCO in partnership with RNW Media and funded by the United Nations Peacebuilding, is a timely and much-needed intervention to reconnect Yemeni youth with the peace-building process, by raising their voices, fostering the free flow of information and having a two-way communication. The project aims to empower the Yemeni youth through its different activities with the skills, knowledge and tools to create information, content and dialogue in support of the peace-building process.

For more information about the project, its activities or this newsletter, please visit the project website page:

https://en.unesco.org/YemenUNPBFProject