Background

Youth continually prove to be the driving engine in many communities, in both social, cultural and economic aspects of societies.

Half of Yemen’s 27 million people are under the age of 18. Over 20% of Yemen’s population is aged between 15 and 24, and, according to United Nations, estimates suggest that by 2025 the youth will have increased by 69% - the second fastest growth rate in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Yemen has a high rate of illiteracy, and together with Egypt and Iraq makes up three-quarters of the 10 million illiterate youth in the region in which two-thirds are girls. According to ILO figures published in 2006, the MENA region has the highest unemployment among youth at 26%. This is 8% more than sub-Saharan Africa.

The Yemeni youth has had an essential role influencing the direction and development of Yemen. A representation to the Youth of Yemen engaged in the National Dialogue Conference in 2013 to amplify the voice of the youth in the future of Yemen.

IOM Yemeni Youth Year A collective action by the youth of Yemen and active engagement will contribute to build a better future for Yemen. The lack of attention, illiteracy, unemployment against the surrounding circumstances and the suffering will hinder their innovation and chances to positively influence Yemen.

IOM believes strongly that the youth of Yemen should be considered as agents of change. Support to empower them to feel and act to represent their perceptions accordingly would imply positive changes to the future of Yemen.

Therefore, supporting youth throughout Yemen has been identified as a priority for intervention by IOM Yemen programmes in 2018-2017. The approach is based on past actions where 512 activities benefitting youth were implemented by IOM throughout the country.

IOM Yemen have reached youth populations through several sectors of intervention, these include: rehabilitation and the provision of equipment in hospitals, schools, youth facilities, as well as support to basic community services such as water and electricity. Further to this IOM implemented activities to directly engage youth in participatory and community based activities to enhance their leisure time.

The effort of the Yemeni Youth Year strives to amplify its work at both national and local levels to ensure youth be given sufficient opportunities to share their voice, express their concerns and rebuild Yemen.

The programme will engage youth through continued interventions but also looks at soft interventions implemented by civil society organizations to engage youth in trainings and discussions that will support youth population of Yemen to contribute to this pivotal phase in their country history.
Strategy for 2017-2018

This strategy is aimed to bring fractured communities and frustrated and marginalized youth together on a constructive path forward to end a recurring cycle of violence that has ruptured in a country which has some of the highest levels of poverty in the world.

IOM Yemen, in coordination with other counterparts and similar initiatives will keep the momentum and support the youth, with special focus to female youth, and voice their concerns and contribute to the long-term stability and development of Yemen by addressing the psychosocial impact of the protracted crisis they have been facing.

The strategy will address and promote the recovery and stability of Yemen by engaging youth in communities into activities that assist in the social, institutional, psychological and economic recovery in Yemen. This will compliment IOMs wider efforts and strategy outlined in the Pockets of Stability paper and the IOM Yemen Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF) 2018-2017.

The objective of YYY is to strengthen the youth’s and Communities’ capacity in IOM Islands of Stability by:

I. Capacity-building
   a. In coordination with the Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training, and local community leaders, vulnerable Youth will be selected to participate in intensive vocational training opportunities. Additionally, specific training modules will be designed for Youth with disability who will be selected to participate in intensive small business start-up training courses.
   b. Capacity-building of communities’ and religious leaders through workshops aimed at gathering together all the prominent figures who can play a role in developing a strategy to reach out the youth.

II. Arts and sports
   a. YYY will utilise arts and sports as tools to develop discipline, confidence, positive leadership, tolerance, cooperation and respect. The arts and sports fora will be used to sensitize particularly vulnerable youth to restore lost livelihoods opportunities (by providing employment) with the aim of creating a basis for a stable environment necessary to advance the peace process.
   b. Arts and sports will also be used as an important tool for social mobilisation to support health, disability, gender and environmental conservation interventions towards ensuring inclusion and consideration of cross cutting factors while addressing issues related to youth.

III. Employment creation
   Upon successful completion of the training curriculums, completion of a business plan and proof of a suitable location, in-kind business start-up kits will be issued by IOM to the beneficiaries (Youth). The beneficiaries will be accompanied during the implementation of their businesses by IOM Livelihoods specialists with ad-hoc visits and monitoring trainings.

IV. Engagement of the Yemeni diaspora
   YYY will mobilize and engage the Yemeni diaspora community and associations to provide human and financial investments towards poverty reduction in targeted Islands of Stability in the short-term and to promote sustainable, gender equitable local economic development in the medium to long-run.

The Strategy will have a causal effect on the direct socio-economic environment of the returnees, their families and communities. By working at individual and collective levels, this approach will positively contribute to refocusing the efforts of the targeted communities on social cohesion, stabilization, and job- and income-creation.

The strategy is designed in response to community feedback and special youth needs, which includes:

- Youth mobilization and capacity-building, with the support of the Yemeni diaspora;
- Civic education and information dissemination, to ensure making youth full-fledged citizens in their communities;
- Individual counselling (for those presenting with mental health & psychosocial support issues);
- Focus Group discussions on topics of interest to adolescents;
- Life-skills sessions (education sessions, discussions and activities relevant to self-care, problem-solving, resilience development, etc.);
- Recreational activities (football, volleyball, table tennis, arts and crafts with an emphasis on building relationships between different community members; including educational components and discussions on areas relevant to youth);
- Education support to the youth, and preparing schools to integrate marginalized youth;
- Social cohesion activities;
- Vocational training and livelihood support- promoting youth employment;
- Capacity building support for civil society actors and civil servants;
- Advocacy campaigns, debates, workshops, national/international policy tours, reports and short films to extend the reach of youth messaging on good governance and peace.