The views in the policy paper do not necessarily represent the views of the Youth Leadership Development Foundation.

Executive Summary:

Yemen has been living in exceptional circumstances since 2015 due to the war that have led to the deterioration of all economic indicators especially after the imposition of air, land and sea blockade. Many economic crises have appeared, the foremost of which is liquidity shortage, exchange price and oil derivatives. The adverse impact of the war and blockade on the humanitarian situation were also reflected in the need of about 22.5 million people for humanitarian assistance.

Women and children are the most vulnerable group in the population. Women bear the biggest burden of such conditions. The Economic impact on women varies according to the areas they belong to – areas afflicted with conflicts or areas subject to bombardment – and based on their pre-war economic situation and the source of income they depend on.

There is no doubt that women have an essential role to play in supporting their families, especially in difficult circumstances. The paper shows the positive impact of women’s economic empowerment both in improving the economic and humanitarian situation as well as supporting peace-building and community cohesion.

Despite the severe deterioration in women’s economic situation due to the war, the volume of interventions aimed at their economic empowerment was limited and did not meet urgent and humanitarian needs. The paper recommended the importance of developing a comprehensive strategy to address the deteriorating economic situation of women, taking into account the adaptation of interventions to the needs and circumstances of impacted cases whether they are displaced women or poor families, or those who have lost their basic source of income and have not been able to find alternatives.

Introduction:

I. The Paper Overall Objective

The overall objective of the paper is to highlight the reality of women affected by the war and to clarify the reflections of this situation on the peace building process as part of a group of activities in a project carried out by the Youth Leadership & Development Foundation in collaboration with Oxfam under the theme of “Women Leaders for Peace”, which aims to ensure a comprehensive and gender sensitive peace building process through civil society organizations and strong community initiatives capable of communicating and representing the needs and voices of affected women at the local, national and international levels. Based on the above, decision-makers can be aware of the dimensions of the problem and take practical steps to solve the problem and its effects in all humanitarian, economic, political and social aspects.

II. Defining the Problem

Yemeni women have suffered from the effects of wars and crisis in Yemen for decades. Poverty as well as scarcity of water and food resources have been a major burden on women, especially when a woman becomes responsible for her families at an early age. Undoubtedly, the war that is ongoing since March 2015 is the most severe factor that affected the humanitarian situation in general and Yemeni women in particular. The majority of women have lost their sources of income in various aspects and situations. Some women have been displaced from their homes, others have lost their families and source of income either it was a government or private business salary or social security pension.

III. Paper Preparation Methodology

- The paper was prepared based on the descriptive analysis of the problem and the practical recommendations to address it based on the following:
  - National and international data, studies and reports on the humanitarian and economic situation of women during the war.
  - Field visits to relevant bodies to be briefed about the aspects of the current situation.
  - Capitalizing on the international experience in addressing and confronting economic damage to women as a result of wars and conflicts.
  - Study of factual situations that illustrate the problem from the viewpoint of women economically affected during the war, through a questionnaire containing open questions to investigate the pre-war situation and the economic damage and the women’s capacity for adaptation.
1. Assessing the Economic Repercussions of the War on Women

1.1. Economic Situation and the War Repercussions

1.1.1. Real Sector Indicators

The cumulative decline in GDP was estimated at 47.1% during the period 2015-2017, which is equivalent to cumulative losses of about $ 32.5 billion. These losses will continue to increase unless war stops and peace is achieved. As a result, per capita gross domestic product (GDP) fell from about $1247 in 2014 to $485 in 2017.

1.1.2. Financial and Monetary Indicators

Public Finance: The current war exacerbated the deterioration of public finance situation that began to decline in 2011. The budget deficit rates were unprecedented during the period 2015-2016 due to the sharp decline in public revenues, the economic blockade and suspension of production and sale of oil which was the main supplier to the state treasury in addition to the shrinking tax revenues. Consequently, public expenditures gradually contracted and led to the interruption of the payment of salaries and public wages since late 2016. Therefore, public sector employees lost their main source of income. Furthermore, the suspension of paying public debt and other operating expenses including maintenance have negatively affected the level of basic public services.

Monetary Sector: The cash flow crisis emerged in 2016 after the Central Bank of Yemen's available liquidity was depleted during the period from January 2015 to June 2016. The Central Bank depended on this liquidity due to the lack of tax revenues, the interruption of oil and gas sales, the suspension of donor support and the erosion of external reserves. On the other hand, it was not possible to issue new money under the circumstances of the siege while the issuance made at that time was in the circulation outside the banks. The liquidity crisis has also led to a decline in confidence in the banking system so the customers withdrew their money from banks. Banks also were unable to collect their receivables with debtors. Moreover, the government's inability to pay domestic debt has led to the deterioration of the banking sector which depended on its investments in treasury bills. The rest of the economic and political factors such as poverty, insecurity and lack of stability also reflected on the performance of the banking sector in general.

The monetary sector, additionally, witnessed an unprecedented rise in the US dollar exchange rate from around YR 215 in March 2015 to YR 436 in December 2017. The main reason of this increase is the limited foreign exchange resources as well as the depletion of foreign exchange reserves. In light of the exacerbation of exchange rate and in addition to the other factors resulting from the liquidity and energy crises, the consumer price inflation rose to a cumulative average of 38.7% for food and beverages, 62% for health services and housing, and 88% for electricity, gas and fuel.

1.1.3. Investment and Private Sector

The rapid survey made in 2015 on the impact of the war on the private sector activities in the most affected governorates revealed that 26% of the projects were closed down and laid off most of their employees and workers. The physical damage to these projects and properties as a result of bombardment and armed clashes in cities was, in addition to the continued lack of security inside the provinces, the most impactful factor. The economic reasons resulted through the economic blockade and high prices especially the energy and fuel price, and the deterioration of exchange rate and decline in incomes, contributed to the closure of many projects.
The results of the survey showed that the governorates of Saada, Hajjah and Aden were the most affected provinces in terms of the proportion of projects that were closed. Therefore, the employees were released and thus increased the rate of unemployment. Although the governorates covered by the survey are the most directly affected by the consequences of the war, the situation is not very different in the rest of the other provinces at varying rates, especially as the unfavorable economic factors adversely affected the continuity of economic activities in general even within those provinces not affected by the war.

The most important new factors and challenges that have affected the sustainability of private sector activity can be summarized in the following:

• The destruction and physical damage to business facilities, the weakness of the state and the lack of security.
• The embargo and the consequent closure of land, sea and air ports in a way that hindered the movement of foreign trade, import and export and thus increased the cost of shipping and insurance.
• The energy crisis, the shortage of fuel and the absence of electricity, led to an increase in the production costs and suspension of projects.
• Financial and monetary imbalances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governorate</th>
<th>Percentage of Closed Projects</th>
<th>Percentage of Employees Laid Off</th>
<th>Three key factors that led to the closure of projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saada</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Physical damage to property, loss of capital, equipment damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sana’a</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Absence of security, loss of capital, high prices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abyan</td>
<td>16</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</table>


I.1.4. Labor Market and Unemployment

The Yemeni labor market, according to the workforce survey made in 2013/2014, has a number of features, most notably are:

• The young population structure is 40% less than 14 years old, and the rural population represents about three quarters of the total population.
• Low participation rate in the labor market at 36.6% of the activists in the economic fields.
• The rate of women’s participation in the formal labor market reduced to 6%.
• Low educational achievements for both workers and unemployed, about two-thirds of people completed their primary education.
• About three quarters of workers have their jobs in the non-regulated work sector.
• About 42.4% are self-employed or work for the family.

The survey of the impact of the crisis on employment and the labor market in Yemen conducted in Sana’a, Aden and Hodeidah showed that female employment which represented 10% of employment in 2014, declined to 28%. The impact was noticed on the two young and old age groups. Sana’a was the city most impacted with 63%, while the percentage of female workers in Aden increased by 11%.

The agricultural sector is the most affected one by the loss of 50% of the employment including about 58400 jobs in Hodeida. It is followed by the services sector, which lost about 8.1% of its workers, including 50,000 jobs in Sana’a and 27,000 in Hodeida. The industrial sector declined despite its modest contribution, while the labor force in the construction sector increased about 8%. On the other hand, the interruption of wages and salaries of civil servants for a long period of time led to the disconnection of the employees from performing their duties either in whole or in part. This resulted in a new form of unemployment that is closer to the situation of those released

<table>
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<td>Aden</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
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</table>


Table (1) Closed projects by size and employees laid off

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<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Big</td>
<td>17</td>
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Table (2) percentage of closed projects and employees laid off per governorate

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from the private sector. The governmental employee starts searching for available alternatives to save income sources after he spent his savings and resorted to a lot of debt or he tried to adapt to deprivation.

1.1. Poverty and the Humanitarian Situation

The exacerbation of political crisis since 2011 and earlier years and the outbreak of war 2015 have had a profound impact on deepening and widening of the poverty cycle that include the majority of the population. The results of the household budget survey made in 2014 showed that the percentage of people below the poverty line reached 49% and about 78% of the population during the years of the war from 2016 to 2017\(^5\). It has been taken into account the assessment of the impact of the main factors that led to the interruption of the main sources of income which could be summarized as follows:

- Economic activity has stopped at a high rate of private sector projects since March 2015
- Government salaries and wages have been cut since September 2016.
- Disruption of social security welfare since 2015.
- Low local and external transfers.

1.2 Economic situation of women and the repercussions of war on them

The economic and humanitarian conditions have been extremely difficult especially for the most vulnerable sectors of society such as women and children. The women’s economic suffering as a result of the war varies depending on the situation and on the nature and severity of the damage whether the damage resulted from displacement, the loss of the breadwinner or the interruption of the source of income either it was government or private salary, or social aid.

1.2.1. Displaced Females

The displaced women who have been forced to leave their homes and flee from the conflicts and the war and move to uninhabited areas and places are considered as the most affected cases. Displaced persons constitute an additional burden on the host areas. The number of displaced women is about one million and eight hundred out of three and a half million displaced men and women. This means that women represent more than half of the number\(^7\).

The situation of displacement is different for there are displaced who live in high rents or with relatives. The most vulnerable cases are those that have been forced to stay in temporary public facilities and camps. The displaced women suffer the hardship to obtain their livelihoods because they are exposed to many health and psychological risks and sometimes violence and exploitation which are compelling and unfavorable conditions that

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\(^{5}\) A letter about poverty in Yemen, World Bank, June 2017
\(^{6}\) Op. Cit
\(^{7}\) Statistics of displaced people per governorate until February 2018, Executive Unit for IDP Management, Main Information Center, 2018.
During the year 2017, it was implemented the cash transfer project for beneficiaries of the Social Welfare Fund financed by the World Bank and was overseen by UNICEF.

Some public and voluntary institutions continued to pay salaries. At the geographical level and due to political considerations, salaries continued to be paid in the southern residences with relatives and such families in particular.

1.2.3 Women whose salaries are cutoff

There are 114,5 thousand female employees out of 612,2 thousand employees working in the civil government sector who bread about 6.9 - 8.4 million. The majority of females are working in the Ministry of Education where they form 60% of all employees. This category of workers is often classified as limited income. In light of the economic difficulties in Yemen, women’s income has become an essential part of their families’ income and in many cases they are fully dependent. In the last quarter of 2016, women working in the government sector lost their primary source of income after the government decided to transfer the central bank to Aden. It was decided to pay half or sometimes full of the salary or purchase vouchers in 2017.

Many middle-income families who relied on government salaries moved from their homes to modest housing because they were unable to pay rents or move to rural residences with relatives and such families spent most of their savings on food and necessities while some of them relied on the help of some relatives and benefactors.

As mentioned above and due to the public financial crisis and the suspension of external support, the public budget of State has been suspended since 2015 in addition to the transfers of social security and despite its little value, it covers about 1.5 million of the most deprived groups who constitute about 42% of the landless population, women constitutes 45.4% of the cases and 24% had no breadwinner. The proportion of women without a breadwinner is likely to rise during the war because a large number of families have lost their breadwinners either as dead or wounded while there are (62,052) dead and injured till December 2017, males constitutes (85%). These figures are based on official statistics and the real numbers are higher especially if we add the dead on the battlefronts and this show the number of families that lost their breadwinner and woman became the breadwinner.

A Case Study of the Economic Situation of a Poor Woman supported her family after the interruption of the breadwinner’s salaries

Fatima Hammoud, 36, lives in a room on the roof of her husband’s relatives house with her husband and four children: two daughters aged 17 and 9 and two boys aged 16 and 11. The younger boy left his school two years ago and the rest continued their studies. In 2011, the husband lost his extra income from an institute for teaching Arabic to foreigners after the institute was closed due to the crisis. In the same year, the government office he was working on was affected by a terrorist incident implemented at Al-Ordhi hospital. The husband had only the basic salary of YR 48,000. Due to inadequate salary, debts accumulated during four years to reach one million seven hundred riyals. After the governments salary was cut in 2016, the husband was completely unable to pay off the creditors, he was subjected to a psychological state and his family situation shifted from a breadwinner to an additional burden on the wife due to his permanent need for psychotherapeutic drugs which she could provide only one type (sedative and hypnotic). The wife and her family live in difficult circumstances where she tried to improve her situation by starting to learn sewing in a hope that she could acquire a sewing machine in the future. In general, the family suffers from a difficult economic situation and needs urgent intervention to enable the wife economically.

A case study of the economic situation of a poor woman without a breadwinner and rely on social security:

Mariam Ahmed is 45 years old, widow and lives in a rented room with her four children: the eldest daughter is 28 years old, physically and mentally disabled and the other 18 years left her education in eighth grade and two boys aged 21 and 15 who also left school in the ninth and sixth grades. Since the father’s death in 2002, the family has relied on social security as well as welfare aids. Since 2015, after the interruption of social security transfers, their living conditions have deteriorated sharply and the assistance received by the family in the past has diminished. The widow and her children have not been able to cope with the situation. The debts have accumulated and everyone refuses to lend them, as well as they are requested to leave the room where they live. The widow has a great deal of difficulty in providing health care for her disabled children, and the eldest daughter failed to find a job as well as her older brother because they lacked qualifications and experience. The aid of charitable organizations has not reached this family and only some have made promises. The family is suffering from a tragic humanitarian situation and needs urgent interventions.

A case study of the economic situation of a displaced woman whose income sources were cut off:

Samira Said, 27, is the second wife and mother of a two-year-old girl who fled from the city of Taiz to Sana’a in late 2015 after bombing and devastation of her husband’s and family house. Samira now lives with her daughter, mother and husband in rented flat of two rooms. The family relied on the husband’s income from the rental of real estate and the salary of the wife from a government job, and now these sources were cut after the property was damaged and the husband’s salary was cut. The husband resorted to selling land and buying a bus to work on it while the wife had to sell her gold, but the income of the bus is small and does not meet the need of two families, so the family in such difficult times, they are forced to beg to save some bread and be able to eat. The assistance received by the family was made by some charitable people who gave them bags of wheat, grain delivered to them by the displaced unit. Samira, who was studying at Taiz University, third year, was unable to complete her studies because of war and displacement which reduced her opportunity in getting a job.

(9) Some public and voluntary institutions continued to pay salaries. At the geographical level and due to political considerations, salaries continued to be paid in the southern governorates and the governorates of Marib and Taiz.
(10) During the year 2017, it was implemented the cash transfer project for beneficiaries of the Social Welfare Fund financed by the World Bank and was overseen by UNICEF for (1316449) cases in all governorates of Yemen.
1.2.4. Women whose projects are stopped or suspended:
The percentage of projects owned by women and closed since 2015 is about 42% of the total of projects, while the percentage of projects that were closed and owned by men is about 19% of the total projects. The most of the women projects are of medium or small size, and that these projects are more recently established and women do not have sufficient experience and material resources to continue and withstand in the conditions of war. These results confirm that women are the most affected party in the economic aspects of the war and this is widening the circle of women who have lost their income from their various sources\(^{11}\).

On the other hand, women represent about 55% of the borrowers within the microfinance network in 2015. The number of borrowers declined about 18% - around 11.7 thousand customers - during the period from March 2015 to October 2015. Thus, women in small enterprises who depended on financing their projects on microfinance foundation loans, lost a key source of income that they relied upon to support themselves and their families\(^{12}\).

As a result of the flexibility provided by these organizations to women, many women have entered the microfinance sector and pursued their clients either because of insolvency, death or displacement.

With the closure of the project, the workers were laid off (three employees in Yemen and one partner in America). Mrs. B. Al-Azani lost her main source of income from the project. She relied on her government salary for a period of time until its interruption and then tried to adapt to the situation through the disbursement of savings whether it was cash or gold, or sometimes she is involved in simple activities that generate income.

A case study of the economic situation of a woman forced to close her project which was her main source of income:

Mrs. B. Al-Azani, 37 years old, owned and operated a project specialized in exporting Yemeni seats to the state of Michigan in the United States of America. It was planned to expand the project to cover more than one state. The seats were shipped through the port of Hodeidah, but at the beginning of the war, the project was stopped because the road to Hodeidah was no longer safe and the transport and freight costs doubled. The decision to close the project was final after the last shipment achieved many losses.

With the closure of the project, the workers were laid off (three employees in Yemen and one partner in America). Mrs. B. Al-Azani lost her main source of income from the project. She relied on her government salary for a period of time until its interruption and then tried to adapt to the situation through the disbursement of savings whether it was cash or gold, or sometimes she is involved in simple activities that generate income.

2. Women's Economic Empowerment during War and Peace-building Periods


Women have a key role to play in the resilience of their families during times of crisis. This role is compounded in cases of family breadwinner loss due to death or illness. In addition to the traditional role of women in taking care of family members, especially children, they do not hesitate to seek income in order to support their families. They seek to get employed or do simple craft and commercial businesses and may search for assistance and subsidies. However, women's opportunities are very limited in war and crisis situations, particularly in societies where illiteracy among women is rife, along with the prevalence of destitution and lack of productive assets.

In Yemen, moreover, there are limited mechanisms for the economic empowerment of women, the most important of which are the micro financing mechanisms provided by specialized and supported organizations located in all governorates of the Republic. Those institutions have emerged since 2009 and rebounded during the period 2012 through 2014. As a result of the flexibility provided by these organizations to women, they represented more than half of the borrowers, yet the percentage of women borrowers is still insignificant when compared to the overall number of poor women. A feature of projects owned by women and financed by microfinance organizations is that they are small and easy to be implemented. These projects can be started from home, so women can pursue their family responsibilities at the same time as they conduct their work. The most popular of these projects are sewing, making incense, perfume, cosmetics, selling and buying clothes and raising livestock. However, few women have found the opportunity to undergo specialized training and develop their activities and projects\(^{13}\).

Since March 2015, the war hindered many mechanisms for empowering the poor, both women and men. Microfinance mechanisms have been adversely affected by disruption of businesses due to physical destruction of facilities and the dismissal of a large number of workers. On the other hand, liquidity has declined owing to the suspension of donor support, and the organizations’ inability to collect their dues and pursue their clients either because of insolvency, death or displacement. The risk of lending has also increased due to the deterioration of the security situation. In the end, poor ambitious women have lost hope of improving their living standards, and their living circumstances became even worse as the number of women borrowers has declined during the war period. The number of active clients fell from more than 100,600 pre-war clients to 42,800 clients in the end of 2017, about half of which are women. Furthermore, the worsening of the situation of microfinance organizations has contributed to the fact that they did not have integrated crisis-response matrices, thus they faced major difficulties in profitability, productivity efficiency and the quality of the loan portfolio\(^{14}\).


(14) Draft Study on Measuring the Crisis Impact on Microfinance (Phase II), Social Development Fund, 2018
### 2.1.1 Examples of Women Economic Empowerment Interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executor</th>
<th>Program &amp; Year of Implementation</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Development Fund</td>
<td>Cash for Work (2015) and Cash for Work (2016)</td>
<td>Providing income from work wages in the program projects to protect poor families against shocks and provide community assets that will generate future benefits</td>
<td>The total number of projects completed during the year was 66, while the number of beneficiary families was more than 26,700, generating more than 1.5 million jobs. The number of direct beneficiaries was approximately 173,600 (50% female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small and Micro Enterprise Development Agency</td>
<td>Developing Small and Smaller Enterprises (2015) and 2016</td>
<td>Reducing unemployment and raising the standard of living for low-income groups by providing financial and non-financial services to programs and organizations that support small productivity and service and improve skills.</td>
<td>The number of projects planned to be 37 in the development of small and micro enterprises, but the number of implemented projects was 22 projects due to unfavorable conditions. The percentage of active borrowers was 93% out of the total planned which is 93118 persons, 55% of which are women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Training Projects Owners” Project (2015)</td>
<td>“Yemeni Women Exist” Project (2015)</td>
<td>Delivering business development services to small and micro entrepreneurs by training women entrepreneurs in management</td>
<td>Implementation of several activities during the year, including training of project owners in the project-specified program, and implementation of follow-up workshops and mentoring sessions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Initiative” Project (2016)</td>
<td>“Initiative” Project (2016)</td>
<td>Qualifying women to manage small and smaller enterprises whether they are project owners or are in the process of establishing their own businesses</td>
<td>Training 634 young women in how to create their own businesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Al-Amal Bank</td>
<td>Getting Rid of Poverty (2015)</td>
<td>Aims to help the poor get out of the poverty line, by providing services that help people covered by the Social Security Program to establish sustainable activities</td>
<td>Funding 5674 beneficiaries at a total of $2,192,000 (an average of $386 per person). However, funding was interrupted after the first quarter and the provision of financial services was resumed under provisional measures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Services for Women (2015)</td>
<td>“Economic Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs” Program (2016)</td>
<td>Aims to provide financial services commensurate with the conditions of women in terms of social conditions and financial status, and to facilitate guarantee and identification procedures.</td>
<td>Funding 27,274 women and 47,830 women were encouraged to save until the end of the first quarter of the year. Women account for 40% of total savers.</td>
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<td>“Economic Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs” Program (2016)</td>
<td>“Economic Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs” Program (2016)</td>
<td>Promoting entrepreneurial principles among targeted groups</td>
<td>In Sana’a and Aden governorates, 50 women were targeted in three stages: 1) Preparation of women entrepreneurs 2) funding through white loans 3) technical consultancy provision for six months.</td>
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<td><strong>Youth Leadership Development Foundation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sustainable Opportunities for Livelihoods, Vocation &amp; Employment in Yemen (SOLVE) with Mercy corp. (2018)</strong></td>
<td>To strengthen the economy of Yemen and enable actors, particularly youth, to recover more quickly and sustainably from the crisis.</td>
<td>The program targets youth-female and males from Aden and Sana’a. The component of the program aim to: Increasing job-oriented skills, Increasing soft skills required to obtain jobs, Launching viable small enterprise and Engaging government to advocate for improved business environment.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Upgrading Informal Apprenticeship 1 &amp; 2 with ILO</strong></td>
<td>Develop the informal Apprenticeship implementation and sustainability mechanism in Yemen to increase the capacity of local actors and strengthen Partnership with the private sector to encourage economic recovery.</td>
<td>Target youth-females &amp; males in Al-Hodidah, Hejah, Abyen, Lehaj. In collaboration with the Ministry Vocational Education, the program prepared toolkits for several vocations and then provide work opportunities for the apprentices.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Tadhafur for Safe Age of Marriage1 &amp; 2</strong></td>
<td>YLDF in partnership with UNICEF is seeking to to further build on the results of its previous work with women for more than 10 years to support women and their rights (Antelak Program, Tadhafur Program, Women in Politics, Women in Conflict and many others). This program will specifically build on Antelak program that has been implemented twice to advocate for Safe Age of Marriage</td>
<td>The program address both gender and age identified needs based on gender analysis in relation to child marriage in Yemen, with a specific focus on adolescent girls, whether married or at risks. The wider community addressed through communication and awareness activities, as well as adolescent boys through peer education. And providing work opportunities.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>“Resilience and Peace Building” Project (2017)</strong></td>
<td>Empowering women and girls affected by the current war economically</td>
<td>A number of 280 women received unconditional cash assistance. A number of 80 women received training and qualification in life skills for their income</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.2 Features of Women’s Economic Empowerment Interventions and the Difficulties Encountered:

Through the intervention examples, during the war, the following were noted:

- These interventions were small-scale interventions that target limited number of women affected as compared to the quantity and quality of the suffering. They barely cover a small percentage of them.
- They are dedicated for small and smaller lending areas, thus, they are often not associated with training and enabling, which ensures that the loan is channeled towards successful and sustainable projects.
- Most of the interventions are traditional and do not correspond to the circumstances and developments of the war.
- There are no economic empowerment programs for displaced women, where the focus is on short-term relief interventions such as food baskets and the provision of temporary shelter.

Although women's economic empowerment interventions in the years before 2015 have been inadequate and not keeping with actual needs, the situation has worsened during the period 2015 – 2017, which has seen a decline in interventions despite the increase of poverty and unemployment rates, due in part a number of factors, notably:

- Clients of the financing organizations faced difficulty to borrow in light of the income levels decline, high collateral costs and the tumeble of the overall economic situation.
- Security factors have limited access to geographical areas where conflict has intensified and been cut off.
- The physical destruction of microfinance, microenterprise and civil society organizations working in the areas of economic empowerment, as well as the decline in the number of workforce in these institutions.
- The suspension of foreign grants in development areas and directing them towards short-term humanitarian relief in its various sectors, which has had a significant impact in reducing economic empowerment interventions.
- The rise of the poverty rate to unprecedented rates, which require intensive and sustained interventions that exceed the local potential of institutions and organizations, both in terms of funding.
2.2. The Importance of Women’s Economic Empowerment

Policies and interventions in the area of women’s economic empowerment are of paramount importance and have a wide positive impact on all members of society, the most important of which are:

2.2.1. Humanitarian and Economic Impact
With the deterioration of humanitarian situation in Yemen to unprecedented levels and the expansion of poverty to more than two thirds of the population, the economic empowerment of women has become imperative to alleviate human suffering, especially for the most vulnerable groups; women and children. However, women have latent energy that can be exploited in the development of families and society in general. Many successful examples demonstrated how women have been able to contribute effectively to the drive of the economy. The need to integrate women into economic activities is all the more necessary and important in situations of war and conflict that result in economic decline and low income levels. Furthermore, with higher male mortality rates, the role of women in supporting their families is becoming more important. It is no longer limited to contributing to economic development as much as to ensuring the lowest levels of decent living for poor families, which are growing daily as the war continues and the economic blockade is imposed. Women are the safe-side for the stability of society and they ensure social cohesion among its members. Any intervention directed towards women has a positive impact on society as a whole.

2.2.2. The Impact on the Peace-Building Process
The relationship between women’s economic empowerment and the peace-building process stems from the important role of women in influencing their family members, especially their children. In the early stages of their lives, the role of women in providing psychological and physical security, in many cases, contributes to the creation of a climate conducive to the nurturing of a generation free of societal hatreds that reverse. In many cases, mothers send their children to engage in armed groups, either for financial reasons if they belong to poor families or for political convictions and affiliations. It can be remedied by focusing on improving the economic status of women, as well as raising their awareness on issues related to the peace-building process. In most places of conflict, women play a key role in the reconstruction process. This role was emphasized in the Peace-building Commission’s declaration on Women’s Economic Empowerment on 26 September 2013, which stipulated the importance of women’s role in peace-building. The declaration stressed on the importance of economic empowerment in economic recovery policies stating: “We recognize that the economic empowerment of women contributes significantly to the effectiveness of economic activities and post-conflict economic growth, improves the quality of economic recovery measures and policies and their social consequences and leads to sustainable development. We stress the importance of taking into account gender, as appropriate, when undertaking post-conflict economic activities”. The resolution also stressed the need to include economic empowerment in United Nations initiatives and programs for post-conflict economic recovery.

2.3. Recommendations for the Economic Empowerment of Women

2.3.1 General Recommendations
The economic empowerment of women requires the development of an integrated strategy for pressing women’s issues, particularly in war and conflict situations, encompassing all economic, social and cultural aspects. In light of the same, the potential for the implementation of this strategy is being assembled. Women’s economic empowerment interventions are concentrated in four main topics:

- Economic empowerment in business and service enterprises that suits all women in their different environments, ages and cultures, although the type and magnitude of the activity is influenced by those factors.
- Economic empowerment in agricultural or artisanal activity targeting rural women in particular, which is the largest group among the poor.
- Economic empowerment and rehabilitation of those affected by war and conflict, targeted through interventions by women who have lost their source of income or breadwinner during the war and need support to prepare their income-earning capacity, whether they are internally displaced, returning home after the period of displacement or still living in the affected areas.
- Sustainable economic empowerment by focusing on interventions in the areas of education, training, awareness-raising and culture among women so that they can enter the labor market in accordance with their acquired qualifications.

A Case Study of a Displaced Woman Benefited from Azal Microfinance Program in Establishing a Small Project:
Ms. Shams Saad Al Nussairi was a resident of Sa’ada Governorate. Due to the war, her property was destroyed and they displaced to Sana’a. After the interruption of all family income, the woman found no choice but to seek work to support her family. She went to Azal microfinance program to obtain funding for her project (making and distributing dairy). She was given YR 250,000 for the purchase of equipment and raw materials. Now, she distributes her products in the market and she has become the main breadwinner for her family.

A Case Study of a Displaced Woman Benefited from the humanitarian aid YLDF & the OTCHA
In Al Gaifi sub-district, Hamdan district, Sana’a, a woman in her thirties was abandoned with her seven little sons and daughters. Her husband, who used to be the only household of that family, passed away two years ago in a terrible car accident. Thus, Asma, the mother, started to work with a sewing machine, which she inherited from her mother, to feed her five sons and two daughters. Even though the family got a new source of money, but that money could barely cover their food needs. Asma said that there were still many things she could not afford. For example, the children were forced to leave school since their father died. “Due to the food aids provided by YLDF, which covered our need of food, I managed to save some money from my work and sent my children back to school”, Asma said.

(15) https://jusoorly.wordpress.com
Displaced Women Economically

Displaced women are the most vulnerable and the most in need for urgent interventions, taking into consideration the gradual assistance of this group according to a chronic mechanism and phases as follows:

Phase I: Provision of emergency and urgent assistance such as shelter, food, water, health and psychological care, as well as providing a safe environment that ensures the specificity of the situation of women.

Phase II: Economic empowerment of women to provide them with a suitable source of income to support their families, especially as emergency assistance is not sustainable and they are being cut off now and then. In addition, they do not cover all displaced persons.

Program to empower the displaced economically are to finance small-scale craft projects and provide supplies, which may require setting training courses in these areas and on the marketing side. In order to achieve the desired objectives, periodic exhibitions could be established to ensure the marketing of their products.

Phase III: To enable displaced women economically in order to return to their homes with life skills suited to their environment, whether agricultural, industrial or service environments. Here comes the role of small and microfinance organizations as a successful and flexible mechanism that assists displaced women to set up small enterprises with small funds suited to their potential.

2.3.3 Recommendations to Train and Enable Poor Women

Poor women represent the general and prevalent status of women in need for support and assistance to break out of the cycle of poverty. The number of poor women is increasing and their living conditions are worsening in times of war and conflict, particularly those who rely on small-scale micro-income projects or those who depend on the amounts of social benefits. It is preferable, in such situation, that interventions to empower poor women be more sustainable and can be divided into two categories:

First poor rural women: the vast majority of poor women in Yemen are located in rural areas. They need to acquire life skills suited to the environment in which they live in order to have access to a source of income. Interventions for the economic empowerment of rural women consist of:

- Far-reaching interventions, which are complementary in raising awareness of the importance of education, vocational training, health habits and awareness of rights and community issues. The impact of these interventions becomes clear in the future because it ensures that the poverty dilemma is solved from the roots and there emerges a generation of rural women who are aware, educated and have knowledge, skill and good health enabling them to find useful jobs.

- Real-time interventions that address the effects of the problem through intensive training programs for rural women in vocational and professional fields such as:
  - Methods of improving agricultural products depending on the produced crops in each region.
  - Methods of marketing agricultural products and market access.
  - Products that depend on inputs from agricultural crops.
  - Livestock breeding, care and development methods.
  - Sewing, embroidery and wool garments.
  - Ceramic products and handworks.

Second poor urban women: the economic situation in urban areas is relatively better than the countryside, although the repercussions of the war have also led to high proportions of urban poverty. In urban areas, professional and vocational training ranges due to the different levels of education and the different nature and breadth of the labor market. The most important areas of training can be listed as follows:

First: Training opportunities for women with a minimum secondary school education level:

- English language
- Secretarial and Computer Science
- Administrative and Accounting Sciences
- Nursing and First Aid
- Raising and Kindergartens

Second: Training areas for illiterate women or those who can read and write:

- Sewing, embroidery and woolen works
- Beautifying ladies (hairdresser)
- Food products (jams, pickles, bakery, sweets)
- Small businesses

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A Case Study for a Woman Benefited from YLDF SOLVE Training opportunity

Ms. Alaa Sultan, a young woman, aged 20 years, lives in Sana’a. Full of hop and ambition, Alaa graduated in 2015 with a BA Degree in Information Systems. Upon graduation, the great and apparently unachievable challenge she faced was to find a good job opportunity in a country affected with extremely difficult economic circumstances. Once offered to work as a Computer Teacher, Alaa immediately accepted the contract for two years during which she kept feeling the pain that teaching is not a satisfactory profession and it is far away from the Information Systems field she had specialized in. So glad to be affiliated with the Program, Alaa said that the SOLVE Program had more than one training aspect and it had benefited her and her family so greatly that she won a good job opportunity she competed with 57 applicants. Alaa has additionally narrated her story with the Program by emphasizing that it was the best training she received on the methodology to write up a CV and excel in personal job interviews to avoid the common mistakes that a job applicant usually makes. Alaa had also compared the CV she prepared before she joined the Program and the CV version she has recently written. She has found out a big difference between the two versions. Yet, Alaa was so eager to see the SOLVE Program had as equally emphatic weight on planning and setting goals as it had on the techniques to build and write up CVs. She, however, concluded that the Program was in general very beneficial at both the professional and personal levels.
2.3.4 Recommendations to Encourage Women to Develop Microenterprises

With the spread of poverty, women need support, funding and training to be able to set up small enterprises suited to their capacities and the environment in which they work. Here comes the importance of small and micro-financing, which proved success in many states that applied these mechanisms in accordance with correct practices. In Yemen, small and micro-financing, while evolving over the past decade, remain limited in its spread and in the size of its loan portfolio. The above requires a strategy aimed at the development of small and microenterprises that takes into account the following:

• Assembling the necessary resources from domestic and foreign sources and to take advantage of Yemen’s entitlement of external support for states that coexist in war and conflict.
• Reaching the largest possible segment of poor women through geographical expansion, which must be accompanied by awareness-raising campaigns for communities on the advantages of establishing micro-finance projects, funded by loans and instilling confidence in the soundness of procedures and the possibility of achieving the goals.
• Market study and diversification of lending products to suit different groups, levels and environments for women wishing to set up small businesses.
• The importance of associating loans with training courses on feasibility study, micro-enterprise procedures, the basics of setting up micro-budgets, calculating profits and how to repay loans or expand jobs.

A Case Study of a Woman Benefited from Azal Program to Empower Women Economically:
Ms. Hanan Abdullah Mohamed Ali is a resident of the Capital Secretariat and is a pioneer in the field of project management during the war period. She was awarded funds at YR 1,140,000 for the construction and expansion of the sewing workshop she owns, as she now has a large sewing workshop consisting of sophisticated cutting machinery, equipment and 10 employees, each one of them is breadwinner of a family.

2.3.5 Recommendations to Support Women-owned and War-affected Projects

As mentioned above, about 42% of women-owned enterprises have been closed until the end of 2015, as these projects are less resilient than those owned by males, which calls for interventions to support and revitalize these projects through the following:

• Provision of concessional loans so that project owners can repair or recover material damage and provide business supplies, depending on the project activity.
• To provide advice on how to resume investment in these projects under conditions of war and conflict or to transform the activity to adapt to the current situation and market requirements.
• To establish training courses for women entrepreneurs in the basics of business administration, accounting and strategic planning with a view to developing their capacity to manage, sustain, develop and upgrade their enterprises.

A Case Study of a Woman Benefited from Al-Amal Microfinance Bank Program:
Ms. Bushra Mahmoud Al-Faqih from Taiz Governorate, residing in the Capital Secretariat, is the eldest sister of an eight-person family. She has a sewing workshop for men garment. This workshop is the source of income for her and her family members. However, her conditions in the workshop have deteriorated due to the war and the interruption of electricity as the operating costs of the machines using the power generator have become higher, due to the high costs of oil derivatives, which caused the workshop to stop during the war and interrupted the only family resource. She was able to obtain funding from Al-Amal Bank, later, at YR 850,000 and benefited from this loan by purchasing solar system and sewing machines and iron. With that, she was able to expand and sustain her project, and the rest of her family joined her in the work where it became a family project consisting of five sisters and a brother. The workshop now provides a good and stable income for all family members.

2.3.6 Recommendation of the documentation of women’s financial and souls loss so not to be neglected at the recovery period and the implementation of transitional justice

During the war, women lost much of the property and lives of their spouses, who were the family’s breadwinner, so it is important to address these issues by reparations or other remedies.

• Ensuring the coverage of the compensation and response programs in respect of gender to cover all victims and their families.
• Ensuring equal gender representation in the Transitional Justice, and engaging women in various committees.
About YLDF:
Our vision is a Yemen in which skilled, well qualified and active young women and men play leadership roles smartly in all domains of society and enable Yemenis to contribute to a better world.
Our mission is “to increase youth participation in social, political and economic aspects of society through systematic training and education in vocational, communication, leadership and soft skills in order to bring them in the main stream to respond to community and labor mark.

Eiman Sharian
is a development expert who started her profession as an economic researcher in the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. Ms. Sharian holds an MA in economics from Sana’a University in 2010 and earned her BA in accounting also from Sana’a University in 1999. She also worked as a consultant for UNDP in the Advisory Support Project for the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, and later as National Coordinator of the Integrated Vision of Education in Yemen Project funded by the World Bank.
In the academic and research side, Ms. Sharian worked as teaching assistant in Macroeconomics and in Money and Banking at the University of Science and Technology. She has also prepared many studies and research in monetary and banking and development field, In addition Ms. Sharian participated in the preparation of many international and national reports,