YEMEN EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Support of Decentralization of Basic Education: Situation Analysis and Recommendations

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With the assistance of the Yemen Mission

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents a situational analysis and preliminary recommendations for assistance options that USAID might support under its Intermediate Result (IR) 2.3, “improved public sector environment for education,” focusing on the five Yemeni governorates USAID has targeted.

In 2001, the Government of the Republic of Yemen (GOY) began decentralization of public sector operations and service delivery. Authority for “funding, equipping, management, and maintenance” of public social and economic services was conveyed to two new levels of governance and administration—the governorate and district—consisting of elected local councils and executive organs. Nationally, many functions have been devolved as far as the governorate level (not districts), although not all and not to the same extent by all ministries and in all governorates. The GOY has put in place capacity building programs in planning, budgeting, and program execution at all levels, is developing national management systems, and is taking action to redress some key structural impediments to decentralization.

Within this context, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has prepared its national Basic Education Development Strategy 2003-2015 (BEDS) which establishes the policy and investment framework, identifies the benchmarks, and lays out its action and implementation plans for the programs and activities it will undertake to achieve its Education for All objectives. One of the four basic principles of the education strategy is to improve management of the sector and the orientation toward decentralization. During the initial 2003-2005 phase, the MOE will focus on: ensuring that the legal and legislative foundation is in place so that decentralized education sector operations can proceed; that capacity exists at all levels (school, district, governorate, and central) to implement BEDS; that effective planning, budgeting, management, and reporting instruments and procedures are developed and in place; and that a coordinated and participatory process links partners both within and outside the MOE.

MOE has made notable progress in decentralizing. It has developed the framework and mechanisms for managing the process, but still must clarify its structure and define duties. Governorate education offices have assumed many new duties, but most district offices are not yet functional. Key management systems—for planning, budgeting, EMIS—are under development at the central levels and plans have been made for their “roll-out” to lower levels. MOE training and capacity building efforts have been concentrated on central and governorate levels.

Decentralization in the education sector is constrained by (1) weak institutional capacity, (2) inadequate technical skills and management systems, and (3) deficient infrastructure and equipment. These problems are exacerbated by national systemic constraints. Specific constraints and needs include:
• Staffing requirements, job descriptions and routine operations have not been detailed so that governorate and district offices are clear on how they should work.

• District offices need to be established. District offices that do exist are seriously understaffed for the job.

• The lack of fiscal decentralization has starved the governorate and district authorities resources for “operations and maintenance,” restricting the education offices’ ability to underwrite essential operational expenses for sound management, such as meetings, stationary, utilities, communications and transportation.

• Many education staff lack the qualifications to carry out assigned tasks. The shortage of qualified staff is most acute at the district level, but district education offices have been the least likely to receive training. Codified management systems and detailed, accessible guidance—in planning, budgeting, administration, etc.—are needed.

• The poor physical environment and lack of resources—infrastructure, furniture, and equipment—available to the district and governorate education offices constitute a binding constraint on their ability to operate and/or undertake certain tasks, and may in the aggregate place a serious brake on the ability of the education sector to decentralize. District education offices are generally without furniture, utilities, and office equipment.

Training was identified as a top priority at all levels of the education system. District education offices have enjoyed very little training and attention, and are the least prepared to take on new duties and carry out mandated tasks due to lack of staff, technical skills, and physical (and financial) resources. Local councils and education offices need to develop a clearer idea of how to work together, and training should address this. Both governorate and district education offices need assistance in establishing routine operations and procedures, based on central models.

Overall there is support and enthusiasm about decentralization at all levels and the certainty that the “re-engineered” state machinery will be better able to deliver services. The GOY and the MOE recognize that decentralization is a long-term process, especially given the resource-poor base from which they are starting. Within the education sector, the MOE welcomes USAID’s assistance and its focus on the five governorates that are considered among the most disadvantaged.

In 2004, the GOY, its executive entities, and several international multi- and bi-lateral donors to the education sector signed a Partnership Declaration that establishes joint GOY and donor objectives, roles and responsibilities, operational procedures, and coordination and implementation mechanisms. The Basic Education Expansion Program (BEEP) II, under development, is considered the “engine of support” for BEDS, and will
be implemented by MOE staff. At present, the World Bank and the Dutch plan to jointly finance BEEP II. German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) has provided the impetus and assistance for BEDS and, with strategically-placed technical assistance, it supports the MOE reform and decentralization efforts.

USAID should adopt an approach to supporting decentralization of basic education that is: *holistic*, *bottom-up*, *builds on existing activities*, *multi-sectoral*, and *phased*. Recommendations for institutional and technical capacity building are:

1. Provide orientation training to the education sector for district local councils.
2. Support joint training of district education executive offices and local councils on respective roles and responsibilities under decentralization of the education sector.
3. Assist EMIS development, adaptation, and training at governorate and district levels.
4. Support proposed Mobile EMIS teams.
5. Support data use and analysis at the governorate and district levels.
6. Support needs assessment training for districts.
7. Strengthen district-level capacity in planning, programming, budgeting, accounting, and reporting.
8. Strengthen district-level capacity in office administration.
9. Extend the number of pilot districts in the proposed World Bank-supported Decentralization and Local Development Project and UNDP-financed Decentralization and Local Development Support Project.
10. Expand ADRA-type grant program, emphasizing district education office and local council interaction with communities.

Recommendations for infrastructure and equipment are:

1. Construct or rehabilitate district education offices (or multi-sector district offices).
2. Provide furniture (desks, chairs, tables, cabinets) for district offices.
3. Provide basic office equipment to district education offices and local councils.
4. Provide EMIS-related equipment to district and governorate education offices.
5. Equip Mobile EMIS teams.
6. Install a communications (internet) and data (LAN, WAN) network.
7. Experiment with new methods and technologies for data entry.
8. Extend GIS/GPS to governorate level.

Next steps include:

- Developing a database on the education staffing, skills, infrastructure, and equipment attributes of the five target governorates, at both the district and governorate levels.
- Once this information has been consolidated, USAID may need to conduct its own survey—geared to activity areas of particular interest—in order to have complete information.
• Conduct a participatory planning workshop that brings together the MOE, target governorates, and other appropriate groups in order to review the “needs inventory” (see previous bullet) and prioritize USAID support and interventions.

• Alternatively, in order to provide immediate, but highly limited, assistance, USAID may wish to act on one of the “one-off” recommendations, such as providing computers.
I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

In 2001, the Government of the Republic of Yemen (GOY) launched an ambitious program to decentralize public sector operations and service delivery as part of its effort to reduce poverty, improve public sector efficiency, and move towards participatory governance and democratization. Law No. 4 of 2000 on Local Authority consolidates and conveys authority for “funding, equipping, management, and maintenance” of public social and economic services to elected local councils, allows local authorities to retain and manage locally-raised revenues, and has restructured the allocation of national budgetary resources. Over the past three years, the GOY has progressively devolved responsibility for planning and implementation of public services in all sectors, including education, to its 20 governorates (including the secretariat of Sana’a) and 332 districts, while retaining policy development as a key function of central government.

Within this context, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has prepared its national Basic Education Development Strategy 2003-2015 (BEDS) which establishes the policy and investment framework, identifies the benchmarks, and lays out its action and implementation plans for the programs and activities it will undertake with its partners in order to achieve its Education for All objectives of universal access to and completion of quality primary education (grades one to six). As decentralization sets the stage on which the national education reform will take place, one of the four basic principles of the education strategy is to improve management of the sector and the orientation toward decentralization. BEDS—itself the product of extensive stakeholder consultation—both incorporates fundamental decentralized approaches to improve educational access and quality, such as broad-based consultation and community participation in school construction and management, and addresses the technical capacity and procedural issues associated with the new roles and transfer of responsibilities to newly-created or re-organized institutions and inexperienced personnel at the governorate and district levels.

To date, the MOE has made significant progress in advancing its decentralization effort to involve the governorate education offices in program implementation. However, the MOE recognizes (and BEDS specifies) that more must be done to enable the executive “organs” (i.e. offices) and the local councils at both the governorate and district levels to plan, manage, and assess the impact of their education resources to ensure the successful implementation of basic education strategy. During the initial 2003-2005 phase, the MOE will focus on: ensuring that the legal and legislative foundation is in place so that decentralized education sector operations can proceed; that capacity exists at all levels (school, district, governorate, and central) to implement BEDS; that effective planning, budgeting, management, and reporting instruments and procedures are developed and in place; and that a coordinated and participatory process links partners both within and outside the MOE.
B. Purpose

As one of the three focus areas under its Strategic Objective 2.0 ("improved basic education in Yemen, especially for women and girls"), USAID will support the "improved public sector environment for education." Specifically, this will entail providing assistance in the five governorates USAID has targeted to build and enhance the capacity of local institutions to carry out the national education reform strategy, as well as support the MOE’s efforts to further decentralization.

This report presents a situational analysis and preliminary recommendations for assistance options that USAID might support under its Intermediate Result (IR) 2.3. Its purpose is three-fold; it provides:

- a description of the status of decentralization in the education sector;
- an assessment of needs to support and advance the GOY and MOE agendas for decentralized management and service delivery in the sector; and
- recommendations for USAID’s support approach and possible activities.

Because all education operations and services in Yemen are taking place in a decentralizing environment and any USAID support activity potentially falls under IR 2.3, it is important to provide a working definition of decentralization that distinguishes the analysis and recommendations in this report from the other focus areas of USAID’s education strategy (IRs 2.1 and 2.2) and conforms to USAID’s request for a “limited and highly targeted” programming approach. For the purposes of this report, support of decentralization in education refers to education sector management systems and procedures (as opposed to service delivery, such as teacher training, school construction, etc.), specifically:

- policy development
- planning and programming
- budget and finance
- statistics and EMIS
- monitoring, evaluation, and reporting

C. Methodology

Data collection for this report was carried out over a twelve-day period in February-March 2004 by a three-person consultant team. The data collection methods used for the rapid assessment were:

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1 These governorates are Al-Jawf, Amran, Ma’areb, Sadah, and Shabwah.
2 The report does not assess the viability of GOY’s concept or approach to decentralization. It also reflects a revised scope of work developed with and approved by USAID/Yemen.
• Document review, including statutes and regulations on the local authority law, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the Fast Track Initiative Proposal and Plan, the National Strategy for Development of Basic Education, and other related materials, including donor reports and proposals (see appended list of documents).

• Meetings at the central level with GOY offices and officials (including the MOE, Ministry of Local Authority, Ministry of Planning, and Ministry of Finance), funding agencies and donors, and international assistance projects (see appended list of meetings).

• Field visits to Amran, Sadah, and Shabwah governorates and meetings with governorate- and district-level officials, including:
  o At the governorate level: the governor or deputy governor, the general director of education and staff, and local council committee heads.
  o At the district level: the general district director, the education director and staff, local council committee heads, and school directors in three districts.

Following a presentation and discussion of initial findings and recommendations with USAID/Yemen, data analysis and report preparation were completed after departure from Yemen. Because of the extremely limited time in-country, the reader is cautioned that this report should be considered an initial attempt to understand and describe the evolving picture of education sector decentralization in Yemen. Further design work will require additional inquiry, data collection, and analysis, as outlined in the report.

D. Organization

The report is organized into seven sections. Following this *Introduction*, the *Decentralization of Basic Education* section describes the context for decentralization, Yemen’s decentralized government structure, and the education management system under decentralization. The *Status of Decentralization* section examines the current status of the education sector’s implementation of decentralization. The *Gaps, Constraints and Needs in Education Decentralization* section presents the findings on technical and institutional capacity, infrastructure, and equipment at the central, governorate, and district levels. The *Decentralization Myths and Realities* section examines some of the earlier assumptions made about the constraints and progress of decentralization. The *Funding Agency and Donor Support* section summarizes the framework for assistance established by the MOE and current or planned donor activities to support sector decentralization. The concluding *Recommendations* section outlines an approach for USAID assistance, proposes possible support activities, and notes some immediate next steps that USAID should consider in preparing its support package for IR 2.3.

Annexed to the report are lists of people interviewed and reference documents.
II. DECENTRALIZATION OF BASIC EDUCATION

This section examines the status of decentralization in the education sector. First, it reviews the context of decentralization, describing the impetus for the GOY’s determination to decentralize, the situation of the education sector under a centralized system, and its framework for decentralization. It then describes how the decentralized system is supposed to work both government-wide and within the education sector.

A. The Context of Decentralization in Education

In 1990, the unification of North and South Yemen united two states with different political histories and economies. It also amalgamated a wide range of problems. The end result was a centralized system characterized by severe impediments and inefficiencies in the delivery of public services. By the end of the century, Yemen’s social indicators were among the worst in the Human Development Report: 47 percent of the population was below the poverty line, the unemployment rate was 18 percent, and population growth rate was 3 percent. The scarce resources available for essential services, such as health and education, were being wasted by misuse and misapplication, inefficient management, and lack of accountability.

The impetus for decentralization derives from two major factors: (1) the GOY’s commitment to democratization as expressed by the Local Authority Law, and (2) the urgent need for poverty reduction. Decentralization of public sector operations was seen as a way to reduce poverty, improve public sector efficiency, deliver improved and more public services, distribute public resources more equitably, and advance towards participatory governance and democratization.

Under the centralized system, the Ministry of Education was characterized by its bloated bureaucracy and weak institutional capacity to manage the education system from its Sana’a-based headquarters, where a disproportionate number of its management personnel worked. The system suffered from inadequate personnel tracking systems (with a high percentage of “ghost teachers”), lack of accurate information for planning and evaluation, and limited financial resources. At the school level this resulted in dilapidated school buildings, high student-teacher ratio, poorly qualified teachers, and inadequate classroom structures, furnishings, and supplies. Its young rural population was geographically dispersed and many had no access to schooling, with acute disparities in rural-urban enrollments. In addition, traditional biases against girls’ education caused both its overall enrollment rate and female enrollment rate to number among the lowest in the world.

Policy-making, planning and budgeting were conducted from the central level and passed down as completed instruction to its field offices in provinces and districts. This process of governance created many bottle-necks and obstacles. Restricting the staff at MOE regional offices from performing tasks such as planning, budgeting and decision-making, ensured that they would never develop the capacity to make and implement sound management decisions. Their authority was limited to the distribution of services to
schools regardless of their needs. Second, there was little relationship between the supply of services imposed at the center and the needs at the governorate and district level. For example, as the geographic proximity of districts increased, the less likely there would be any resources left to reach the remote villages. Consequently, the gap between the center and periphery widened and was reflected in the inequality in access to basic education between urban and rural areas.

New challenges emerged with the new millennium. At the international level, the GOY’s commitment to Education for All (EFA) by 2015 required that it improve from 67 percent enrollment among 6- to 14-year-olds in less than 15 years. It also committed to closing gender and urban-rural disparities in enrollments. At the national level, the GOY’s commitment to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) presents additional pressures. Decentralization of the GOY was the key strategy for social and economic reform, including two accentuated principles, a pro-poor approach and community participation. Since improvement of basic education is a fundamental strategy for enhancing human resource development and poverty alleviation, the MOE was compelled to act aggressively in formulating a strategy to achieve the dual and overlapping objectives of educational reform and decentralization.

Within this context, BEDS was formulated to define the policy and investment framework, objectives, and programs for the GOY and the MOE to achieve national and international policy targets. Decentralization is viewed both as a means to enable and enhance the educational reform to occur through improved efficiency in the planning and delivery of educational services and as an obligation on the part of the MOE to restructure and build capacity at all levels so that decentralization can occur. Consequently, BEDS aims to:

- raise the level of basic education, with the emphasis on decreasing the gender gap;
- focus on the poorest groups by developing legal and administrative frameworks to support basic education;
- improve the overall education environment; and
- improve the management of the educational process and move towards decentralization.

**B. Framework for and Structure of Decentralization Overall**

The framework for decentralization of the GOY is provided by Local Authority Law, Article 4 for year 2000. The local authority system introduces the principle of the decentralization of the administrative and financial state and the inclusion of popular participation in decision-making and management in all spheres of economic, social, and cultural development. Accordingly, the country is divided into administrative units. As

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3 Male NER is 81% and female NER is 52%.
4 This was in response to the downward spiral of the economy and social indicators during the 1990s that consisted of a decade of national and international political instability and economic crises. For example, it is estimated that 47 percent of the population was living below the poverty line (World Bank, 2001).
5 *Law No. 4 of 2000 Concerning the Local Authority*, August 2000. p. 2.
illustrated in Chart 1, the Administrative Unit is headed by the Governor (also referred to as the Capital Secretariat, General Director). The Governor, who serves for four years, is appointed by a Republican Decree and has the rank of minister. He is accountable to the President and the Council of Ministers. His duties involve the supervision over the implementation of laws and the general policy of the state in all spheres. The Vice Governor (also referred to as the General Secretary) is also Vice Chairman of the governorate local councils. His responsibilities include supervision over public affairs or the management of one or more activities of the governorate.

Also part of the Administrative Unit at the governorate level are the executive organ and the local council. The executive organ is comprised of the offices and branches of ministries that represent the administrative, technical, and financial functions of the GOY. The local council is not an elected body, but consists of two representatives appointed from each district council. The local council representatives head the seven management bodies, which are: Finance and Administration, Revenues, Zakat, Research Development and Administration Training, Statistical Data, Information and Public Relations, and Technical Secretary and Monitoring. They are presided over by the governorate Local Council Chairman, who is also the Vice Governor (General Secretary). According to Article 12, their joint functions include the preparation of the overall plans and annual budgets of the governorates, implementation of services and development projects within their scope at the governorate level, and supervision of the implementation of public policies, such as those in education, public health, social development, and social welfare.6

Chart 2 depicts the decentralized system at the district level. The district administrative unit is headed by the District General Director. Similar to the governorate, it comprises the executive organ, representing ministry branches and technical offices, and the local council, which is—in contrast to its governorate counterpart—popularly elected every four years. The size of the local council for each district depends on its population. For example, a district with a population of 35,000 or less would have a local council of 18 members, while a district whose population exceeds 150,000 would have a local council of 30 members.7

The fundamental responsibility of the district local council is to represent the needs, demands, and interests of their local populace. It is through the district local councils that popular participation is seen to be integrated into governance.8 The local council is organized into three committees: Services; Administration; and Planning, Development, and Finance. These committees supervise and control the activities of the district executive organ and its offices.

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6 These are only some of their functions; for more detailed information on the executive organs, see Republican Decree No. (269) of 2000 Concerning the Executive Regulation of the Local Authority Law, Ministry of Legal and Parliament Affairs, September 2000, pp. 12-18.
7 Ibid, pp. 20-21.
8 It has been argued, however, that the current structure integrates them into government, rather than governance.
CHART 1: Decentralized System at the Governorate Level

Central Government

Executive Office
Committee of Planning & Finance

Governor
Chairman of Exec. Office
Chairman of LC

Vice Governor
Sec. General
i.e. (LCs Governorate)

Local Council
Reps./Governorate

Implementation Offices

Finance Administration
Revenues
Zakat
Research Development & Admin. Training
Statistical Data
Information & Public Relations
Technical Secretary & Monitoring
CHART 2: Decentralized System at the District Level

Governor

District General Director
General Secretary
(also Vice Chairman of LCs)

Executive Organ

Local Council Representatives

Administration Committee
Planning, Development & Finance Committee
Services Committee

District Local Council Members
C. Framework for and Structure of Decentralization of the MOE

1. Strategic Objectives

The process of decentralizing the MOE is carried out according to the framework of BEDS, which outlines the programs and benchmarks for the MOE. The goal is to have universal education for grades one to six and 90 percent access for grades one to nine by 2015. During the first three years (2003-2006) of this process, the aim is to improve access, quality, equity, and efficiency by strengthening capacity-building at the central, governorate, and district levels. This is described in two strategic objectives: (1) reform and development of basic education programs, and (2) development and modernization of strategic performance of basic education.

In the first objective, the expected outcome is the improvement of the efficiency and effectiveness of the current basic education system. This involves building capabilities to undertake the development and modernization of the education system by improving the primary axes of the education process, including:

- teacher and guidance axis
- curriculum and evaluation axis
- school administration axis
- education funding axis
- decentralization of education axis
- girl’s education axis
- school building axis
- community participation in education axis

In the second objective the expected impact is a qualitative transformation. This includes providing every Yemeni 6- to 14-year-old with equal access to quality education. Qualitative transformation of the educational system will occur on several levels:

- level of coverage and spread
- level of quality
- level of internal competence
- level of sufficiency and diversification of funding sources
- level of openness and dynamism of the system

Three programs will be implemented at the central, governorate, and district levels. These include:

- Restructuring the MOE to improve management and institutional building of its offices in the governorates and districts. This includes formulating and implementing a plan on executive and supervisory leaderships at the Ministry and its offices in the governorates and districts. This also includes establishing a comprehensive education information system that links the Ministry to its offices in the governorates, districts, and schools.
• Establishing the legal organizational and administrative structures to incorporate the Local Authority Law and its Executive Regulation. This involves reformulating the relevant financial, education, and administrative laws and regulations to enable the devolution of administration and finances to the governorate and district offices.

• Strengthening the institutional and technical structure of the governorate and district offices by training cadres in management and administrative work such as local planning, evaluation, and application of the School Map project in the governorates.

2. Decision-making and Implementation Roles

New roles and responsibilities have evolved as a result of BEDS and its implementation within a decentralized MOE. The central level continues to be the policy-making nucleus, with two new oversight and coordination structures added--the Inter-ministerial Steering Committee (ISC) and the Technical Team (TT). Primary planning responsibility is to be devolved to the governorate level, where the education offices will work with the governorate local council to develop sector plans and budgets to carry out overall MOE policy and standards. At the district level, the education office in coordination with the district local council will be responsible for implementation. The structures and functions of each are described below:

Central Level
The decentralization of the MOE has not affected its policy-making role, but it has made certain adjustments in response to the evolving needs of the current national policy of BEDS. This is reflected in the establishment of two committees, the ISC and the TT, to oversee the management of BEDS and its implementation within the decentralized system.

The ISC is chaired by the Minister of Education and includes the Vice Minister, the Deputy Minister, other MOE department heads, the BEDS Technical Team, and the Director of the Education Research and Development Center (ERDC). Other members include representatives from other national committees and agencies (such as the national Committee for Women, the Social Fund for Development and the Public Works Programme), three civil society representatives (teacher’s representatives, Sha’biya Al-Kheiry and Islah Charitable Organization), the Ministry of Local Authority (MOLA), the Ministry of Planning (MOP), the Ministry of Civil Service and Insurance, and a donor representative (on a rotating basis). The composition of this committee signifies an interdisciplinary and participatory approach to the implementation of BEDS. The tasks of the ISC are to monitor the implementation of BEDS at the national and local levels and provide immediate solutions if problems or bottlenecks are detected. It also is responsible for endorsing annual progress reports and programs for BEDS.

The Technical Team (TT) consists of full-time professionals and reports directly to the MOE. Its roles and responsibilities are temporary in guiding the reform and expansion of
the MOE BEDS objectives. Its mandate is to operate as the technical advisory and managing team in overseeing the implementation process of BEDS within the decentralized levels. Yet, it does not have any implementation role per se. It retains the integral responsibility of coordinating the planning of projects and programs in the decentralized system and within the context of BEDS. This includes reviewing annual plans at each level (central, governorate, and district). In conducting this activity, they have developed a practical manual/handbook explaining methods of planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation for MOE offices at the governorate and district levels. In addition, they are the coordinating body between the MOE and foreign donors, as described in the Partnership Declaration, for the planning and coordination of projects for BEDS and their implementation within a decentralized system.

Governorate Level
At this level, BEDS should be translated into an action plan appropriate to the needs and resources of each governorate. The Governorate Office of Education (GOE), a member of the executive organ, represents the MOE at the governorate level. Its responsibility is to draft plans and annual budgets that reflect BEDS objectives. It is also responsible for carrying out studies and surveys that would assist in the identification of their development priorities, needs, and projects. Under Article 12, their mandate includes the supervision and follow-up of the progress of the education process in the various stages; provision of curricula requirements; determination of the school schedules and holidays; conducting examinations for the basic education certificate; and ensuring that these all are in agreement with the central directives. The local councils study and evaluate the GOE plans and accordingly submit recommendations and proposals. They also ensure that joint resources (governorate and district) are used for a wide range of development programs.

District Level
The District Office of Education (DOE) under decentralization has expanded to include lower-level planning (i.e. needs identification and qualification) and full implementation of education services (the executive organs of the administrative unit) in conjunction with the district local councils. The DOEs are expected to formulate their annual education plans and budget. The local councils at the district level participate in this process by presenting their proposals and recommendations to the DOEs, establishing priorities, and giving final approval of the education sector plan before it is forwarded—as part of the overall district plan—to the governorate level. The local councils are also expected to monitor DOE progress towards program implementation.

3. How Does the Decentralized System of the MOE Operate?

An explanation of the operations of the decentralized education system starts with the district level in order to show how the district administrative units (i.e. the combination of district director, executive organ, and local council) have been endorsed with authority to assess their needs and plan for their districts, as well as how they are incorporated into the governorate work plan.
The local council, based on its direct interaction with the local community and survey of schools, discusses prevalent problems and needs with the DOE. The local council does not have expertise in education, and the law does not dictate that members do so. Generally, the issues of greatest concern involve conditions of the schools and the support (materials, personnel, resources) provided to them; complaints regarding overcrowded classrooms, insufficient teachers, or the need for school construction are among the most commonplace. The DOE is to take these issues into consideration and incorporate them into their annual plan by identifying need and quantifying the resources required to address them. Frequently, due to the district’s limited budget and resources available for education, the local council is requested to prioritize its needs, in conformance with MOE policy and other parameters. The DOE then formulates a draft plan and resource request (not always monetized). It is reviewed by the district head as part of the annual district plan that includes plans from other sectors.

Once approved, it is forwarded to the District General Director (General Secretary) at the governorate level. In the governorate offices, the executive organ and the administration offices review each district plan, and then prepare a plan and budget which represents the needs for services and projects for the governorate as a whole. The Local Authority (General Secretary) must approve this plan. Meetings are then held with all the relevant parties at the governorate level to discuss the plan and budget with the Governor. The process is finalized by the Governor’s endorsement of the annual plan. The Governor then submits the annual plan and budget to the central level. Once the budget is approved at the central level, the process reverses to a top-bottom approach in regard to allocation and distribution of resources (finances, projects, and manpower). Due to the poor resource base of the education sector, the demands of the governorate and its districts are seldom met.

The operational role of the GOE could be perceived as intermediating between the central and district level in relation to the interpretation and application of BEDS. In other words, the GOE has the responsibility of ensuring that their annual plans and programs are targeted to achieve BEDS objectives; yet these plans and programs also have to be governorate-specific. Conversely, they have to ensure that the plans submitted from the DOE are also responsive to the BEDS objectives. At all levels, priorities may differ and challenges arise. Moreover, the extent of implementation of governorate plans will also be dependent on the resources that will be allocated to them from the central level.
III. STATUS OF EDUCATION DECENTRALIZATION IMPLEMENTATION

This section examines the status of decentralization implementation in the education sector, specifically the progress made towards and extent to which education sector management has been devolved to lower administrative levels, as called for by the Local Authority Law. Since education sector decentralization takes place within the overall context of national decentralization, the sector’s progress is not only affected by national policies, plans, and practices, but also by the MOE interaction with entities outside of the sector, such as other ministries (e.g. Ministry of Finance) and local councils at both the governorate and district level. The discussion below, therefore, is presented in two parts: first, a summary of some of the actions taken outside the education sector, and second, a status report on the actions taken within the education sector by the MOE and its administrative units at the governorate and district levels. The reader is reminded that due to limited time in-country and very brief visits to three governorates, the findings are more impressionistic than empirical, largely based on interviews and anecdotal information rather than extensive surveys or data verification.

A. Status of Decentralization Implementation Nationally

As described earlier, Yemen’s national decentralization effort involves the creation and devolution of decision-making, planning, and implementation responsibilities to two new levels of governance. While the framework has been defined and regulations developed, the process of implementation has only begun within the past two years. GOY officials at the ministries of Planning, of Finance, of Local Authority, and of Education all emphasized that decentralization was at a very early stage and the GOY was on a “steep learning curve.” Nonetheless, most functions have been devolved as far as the governorate-level, although not all and not to the same extent by all ministries and in all governorates. Governorate performance has varied, and in general, MOLA and MOP officials do not think that districts have the capacity as yet to produce and execute credible plans. Recognizing both the challenges inherent in the decentralization plan and weaknesses in the ability to implement it, a highly-placed MOP representative characterized the decentralization process as “messy and difficult,” but one to which the GOY was committed. Consequently, its “staff” ministries and partners have undertaken or initiated a number of actions in order to build capacity, develop management systems, and redress structural constraints required to “operationalize” decentralization.

To build capacity:

- The National Program to Support Decentralization addresses three areas (“axes”) critical to implementation: planning, budgeting, and management. Identifying the
lack of qualified cadres, the Program aims to build capacity of personnel at the
national level to manage the process and at the governorate level to plan for, support
and supervise districts. Several workshops have been held for central and
governorate personnel in charge of these management functions, addressing both their
new duties and responsibilities and the new procedures.

- Programs are developed to build capacity at the district level to deliver public
services, focusing on the preparation of fiscally-realistic and needs-responsive plans,
programs, and budget. Approaches and techniques will be developed through two
coordinated pilot projects—the World Bank-funded Decentralization and Local
Development Project (DLDP) and the UNDP-supported Decentralization and Local
Development Support Project (DLDSP)—and implemented by MOLA in 40 districts
(also with Social Fund and Public Work funding). District Facilitation Teams will
assist districts in preparing and executing district development plans, investment
programs, and budgets. Formal and hands-on training will be provided in
participatory planning and needs assessment, work plan development, financial
management, operations and maintenance, and procurement. Performance-based
fiscal transfers will be awarded to districts based on achieving agreed standards and
results.

- MOLA, itself a newly-created ministry, is establishing a training center to teach local
administration officials and central staff leadership and management techniques,
technical skills (e.g. local government accounting), and detailed application of the
Local Authority Law and by-laws.

- All governorate-level local councils have received training on their roles and
responsibilities in decentralization through the Social Fund and Public Works. Many
(but not all) district-level local councils have received similar training through a
variety of donors, notably the Netherlands.

To improve management systems:

- MOF has developed a general manual on budget preparation, aimed at local councils,
and has provided training at the governorate level. The governor in Sadah said that
because of this assistance, the governorate was much better prepared to develop its
annual plan.

- MOLA plans to develop an information management system (MIS), establish
information and statistics units at the governorate level, introduce GIS into the district
planning process, and set up an online information exchange for local authorities.
(The DLDP will fund the design study.)

- MOF and MOLA will coordinate MOLA’s financial and accounting programs at all
levels with MOF formats to facilitate intergovernmental budget data analysis.
• An annual Local Authorities congress is held, providing the opportunity for representatives to voice concerns and suggest how to advance decentralization.

To redress systemic structural constraints:

• The MOP has proposed revisions in the treatment of recurrent budgets, which now derive exclusively from central funds. The law prohibits local authorities from using their own resources to supplement their recurrent budgets, thus contributing to the critical shortage of “operations and maintenance” resources and the resulting failures.

B. Status of Decentralization Implementation in the Education Sector

MOE has made significant progress in decentralizing. It has developed the framework and mechanisms for managing the process, but still must clarify its structure and define duties. Governorate education offices have assumed many new duties, but most district offices are not yet functional. Key management systems—for planning, budgeting, EMIS—are under development at the central levels and plans have been made for their “roll-out” to lower levels. MOE training and capacity building efforts have so far been concentrated on central and governorate levels.

1. Overview

The MOP states that the education sector “is in better shape than other ministries,” as it has developed a framework and strategy in which sectoral decentralization can take place. The General Education Law sets out the broad parameters, stating that sufficient schools, adequately equipped and tuition-free, should be provided. BEDS sets out the MOE’s goals and plan, with decentralization informing all its activities and its implementation requirements being specifically addressed in the “axis” on education funding and decentralization of education. The Partnership Declaration outlines the conditions for education sector support and provides for donor and BEDS coordination mechanisms, including a Steering Committee and Technical Team. Additionally, under the Basic Education Expansion Project (BEEP) II, an international expert in decentralization will be funded to provide technical support.

Overall, the MOE education offices at the governorate level have begun to assume many of the planning and implementation duties. According to officials in Amran and Sadah, although the governorates now have paper authority for planning, school construction, procurement, books, teacher deployment, and exams, the MOE still retains some key authorities. For example, in Amran, the governorate education office has prepared the annual plan and budget, but has not been allowed yet to issue tenders for school construction. In Sadah, authorization to appoint personnel has not yet been granted by the MOE, although the MOF has granted budget authority. In some cases, the MOE states it has delegated authorities to the governorates, but that other concerned ministries, such as the MOF and Ministry of Civil Service, delegate “mandates” according to governorate capacity, resulting in an uneven “roll-out” of decentralization in the sector.
For instance, while teacher salaries are supposed to be calculated and paid at the governorate level, only nine of the 19 governorates have been allowed to assume these tasks.

In none of the three governorates visited had the district education offices notably assumed their new duties, with the exception of the few districts located in the governorate center. In general, district offices are not considered functional. Said one governorate education official, “We have nothing yet at the district level—we need to build from scratch.” In general, the governorate education offices appear to be largely responsible for most planning and service delivery, in some instances by-passing district education offices altogether.

“Decentralization is successful by 50 percent,” stated the governor of Amran. “We have good experience, but it will take more people and money.” In Shabwa, a governorate education officer noted that it was difficult to decentralize when there was no money to support operations, reflecting inadequate levels of sector funding and inadequate funds allowed for operations and maintenance. These problems are compounded by national fiscal regulations prohibiting local revenues to be used for recurrent budgets.

According to BEDS, from 2003-2006, the MOE will focus on: ensuring that the legal and legislative foundation is in place so that decentralized education sector operations can proceed; that capacity exists at all levels (school, district, governorate, and central) to implement BEDS; that effective planning, budgeting, management, and reporting instruments and procedures are developed and in place; and that a coordinated and participatory process links partners both within and outside the MOE. Specifically during this period, it will have:

- developed a plan and received authorization for restructuring the MOE and the education offices at the governorate and district levels, with defined organizational structures and detailed executive regulations. (Decentralization Axis)

- reformulated relevant financial, education, and administrative laws and regulations to enable devolution of powers to the MOE offices at the governorate and district levels, and formulated a program for its governorate and district offices to progressively assume these roles. (Decentralization Axis)

- rechaptered the education budget, separating basic education from secondary education, increased non-salary recurrent budget and devised a school funding formula, increased its investment budget, and trained its cadres in budgeting and financial management. (Education Funding Axis)

- established a comprehensive database and education information system, linking the MOE to its governorate and district offices through an electronic network. (Decentralization Axis)
• developed and implemented a training plan to enable governorate and district education offices to undertake planning, management, administrative, financial, and reporting tasks. (Decentralization Axis)

• established laws and regulations relevant to community participation in education, parents’ councils to all primary schools, and community participation units at MOE and governorate education offices. (Community Participation Axis)

To date, the MOE has initiated action on all of the above, but most are still in the nascent stage, and their progress is discussed below.

2. Restructuring the MOE for Decentralization

Although some references were made to Executive Regulations for Education which details how the public education sector would operate under decentralization, this document proved elusive. It appears that the development of the MOE’s plan for its restructuring and re-organization of duties for its central, governorate and district offices has been complicated by the evolving national statutes and regulations associated with the Local Authority Law. Moreover, the Civil Service modernization program has created additional pressure for clarifying roles and responsibilities in the sector. A committee, headed by a deputy minister, is currently reformulating the MOE’s Plan for Structure and Duties. In the mean time, the MOE and its offices are operating without precise or codified guidance, although it has attempted to establish a working understanding of the implications of decentralization by holding several workshops in Sana’a (financed by the Dutch) for central and governorate education staff. The MOE has also invited donors to underwrite more extensive training on the roles and responsibilities for its offices in individual governorates.

3. Staffing and Office Set-up

The newly delegated authorities have increased staffing requirements at the governorate and district levels. For example, the governor in Sadah pointed out that whereas formerly the governorate had three offices, it now has seven. However, as the MOE’s restructuring plan is still under development, no definitive or standard staffing pattern exists, although between 15 and 17 departments were identified in both the governorate and district offices. Since staff positions, duties, and qualifications have not yet been formally defined, the education officers interviewed in the three governorates visited indicated that staffing at both the governorate and district levels was done on an as-needed basis. At these levels, most education personnel carry more than one title (such as Financial and Administrative Affairs Officer and Personnel Officer), although in some cases it seems that the post is exercised in name only, and the tasks under these position titles are not performed. MOE officials indicated that the situation is even murkier at the district level, where both the number and the qualifications of staff vary considerably.

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9 Although with nearly 50 percent of government employees, the MOE was not included as a “re-engineering” partner in the civil service modernization program, as it was grappling with the politically-sensitive merging of religious and secular schools.
especially in hard-to-recruit-for remote and disadvantaged districts, with the result that not all district education offices had been established or were functional. To compensate for lack of district staff, the Directors General of education in two of the governorates indicated that they had assigned multiple districts to existing district education offices.

As the governorate and district education offices are considered units within the executive organ which unites all the administrative and implementation functions of government, basic infrastructure and facilities are generally provided for through general budget accounts (i.e. non-sectoral). At the governorate-level, existing offices house the executive organ units. However, at the district level, such facilities often do not exist or have not been put in place. Governorate education offices have in some cases rented space, but office construction is not a feature of the MOE’s strategy (the emphasis, instead, is on school construction). The provision of equipment and furniture is an MOE responsibility, and BEDS envisions properly equipped offices. External funding is seen as the source of provisioning.

4. **Planning**

The BEDS Technical Team stresses the imperative for all its offices at all levels to understand the education strategy and framework, and to prepare annual plans that respond to both national priorities and local needs. This was reiterated at the governorate level, where the planning function was singled out as one of the education offices’ most prominent new duties.

Currently, the planning process centers on the use of forms sent by the central MOE—with no instructions—to the governorate offices in which requests for schools, teachers, desks, etc. are recorded. The governorate offices then adapt the forms and forward them to the districts to fill out, or will otherwise visit the district themselves to complete the forms. By all accounts, planning consists of “straight-lining” what has been done the year before with some adjustments to reflect population growth (e.g. set at 2 percent) and available budget resources. The process does not reflect or provide for meeting increased student enrollment targets or making significant improvements in educational quality.

The MOE has given considerable attention to developing and establishing a rational and technically-sound planning process. It has already developed guidelines on (1) how to prepare an annual plan, and (2) how to prioritize amongst needs to avoid a “shopping list.” From workshops conducted with central and governorate staff in 2003, it discovered that both capacity and training needs varied.

Several MOE personnel have recently received training from IIEP (International Institute for Educational Planning) in Paris. Starting in March 2004, they will conduct a series of workshops on planning for the governorate education offices, working with three or four governorates at a time. The MOE reasons that the governorate level is where primary “planning responsibility lies and where implementation starts.” The focus for the governorates is “implementation planning” as opposed to “strategic planning.”
District education offices reportedly have no planning capacity, and while the MOE is not focusing on their needs at present, some donor-funded programs are. GTZ is working in four governorates, at both governorate and district levels, on planning and budgeting. ADRA has conducted detailed technical planning with district education offices and with local councils in its five target districts.

Centrally, the MOE has adopted a school-mapping system to inform and rationalize its school construction program. The school mapping effort (with World Bank support) will be completed this year, and the MOE is planning to procure GIS software to aid future efforts. A simulation model adapted from Sri Lanka was used in the development of BEDS, and is available for use at the MOE.

However, there is no structured planning department at the MOE. GTZ is helping to coordinate and work with a variety of departments on planning, but the function is not yet consolidated at the central level. Ultimately, under decentralization, the MOE’s primary “planning” function will be “strategic planning” to develop policy, setting overall funding formula allocation, and consolidating and reviewing governorate-level plans. The World Bank has proposed to the MOE that a “think tank” (if not a planning department) be created for policy and resource mobilization.

5. **Budgeting/Financial Management**

Like planning, the development of a rational budgeting system is in the early stages at the MOE. In addition to the incremental increases in the percentages of the national budget allocated to education, to basic education, and to non-salary expenditures, one of the first steps, currently in process and awaiting approval, is restructuring the budget—which now mixes basic education with secondary education—in order to make line item expenditure more transparent and facilitate analysis.

MOE officials said one of the biggest challenges at the central and governorate levels was to estimate costs of the annual plan. Cost norms have been developed in some areas of expenditure, but these need to be expanded based on expenditure analysis and codified. This is somewhat complicated, as the expenditure and accounting function is the responsibility of the MOF. The MOF representative housed in the MOE indicates that the office has not undertaken such analyses.

Several approaches to education sector budgeting have been developed by various donors, and the MOE acknowledges that these must be synthesized into one standardized approach with guidance prepared. GTZ has provided budget preparation assistance, and is about to “float a tender” to procure technical assistance in developing the MOE’s budgeting system and guidance.

At the lower levels, the past year’s budgeting process was made somewhat easier, because not only were the governorate and district offices informed in advance of the budget parameters, but the MOF had prepared a general (non-sector specific) budget manual for joint use by the executive organs and local councils. It also provided training...
at the governorate level, and some education staff participated. To a large extent, however, the authority for budgeting is constrained by the lack of funds. In Shabwa, a district education officer indicated that districts would claim more budgeting responsibility if they had discretionary funds to budget.

So far, the GOY has generally made the fiscal transfers to governorates as planned (although not necessarily for the full amount). Transfers to district levels are complicated by the fact that not all districts have bank accounts. Shabwa officials reported that every district will get a bank account. Without bank accounts, the districts must apply to the governorate for its funds.

6. **Education Management Information Systems**

The MOE has an acute interest in quality data because of myriad reporting requirements linked to funding through the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Fast Track Initiative, the Millennium Development and the Education for All goals, and—of course—BEDS.

Although it has not yet assigned EMIS responsibility to a particular department, the MOE has begun the development of a national EMIS that will address data supply and demand at all levels, from the center down to the schools. The groundwork has been laid with the development of data collection instruments, as well as the process and procedures for data collection, data entry, and data reporting. *Concept Development for EMIS*, prepared by GTZ, lays out how the EMIS would work, the various levels’ roles and responsibilities, and staffing, training, and resource needs.

The impact of decentralization on EMIS is two-fold. First, data entry will be done at the governorate level, rather than centrally, decreasing time delays by an estimated 90 percent. Second, both district- and governorate-level data needs have become more important, as their planning and reporting responsibilities (to local councils) have increased. According to GTZ, the MOE’s annual school survey form is of good quality, its instruments are well designed and comprehensive, and the EMIS could be ready to roll-out within a few months, if capable staff and equipment were available. GTZ has developed training plans and is soliciting bids from a regional company to provide assistance and develop guidance on data management and analysis. It will also provide an international EMIS expert. However, extending training and operations for EMIS to the governorate and district levels is largely dependent on donors opting to underwrite training and equipment expenses.

Based on the Social Fund’s experience, the MOE is also procuring GPS equipment and GIS software for central use, with future hopes to extend these to the governorate and even district levels.
7. Monitoring and Evaluation

The BEDS identifies numerous results and indicators against its various axes and their components. The MOE has already developed guidelines on standardized indicators for use across governorates. The Social Fund is building a Monitoring and Evaluation Center, and the BEEP II project will provide additional monitoring and evaluation assistance to the MOE.

8. Community Participation

The general goal of a decentralized education system is to devolve to the community primary responsibility for school management. Based on the work of several innovative donor projects, including those run by GTZ and ADRA, the MOE has developed an approach to forming parent councils at the schools and a manual to guide community participation. Under BEEP II, GTZ will train parent councils and build capacity. It is currently producing a handbook that the MOE will use to help guide school social workers in establishing and building school council capacity. The expanded Social Fund program will also work with school councils. The MOE is also establishing its Community Participation Unit and plans to place two people in each governorate education office to facilitate community interaction.
IV. GAPS, CONSTRAINTS TO, AND NEEDS IN EDUCATION DECENTRALIZATION

This section examines the issues and factors that are impeding the implementation of decentralization in the education sector. It identifies the constraints to advancing the education decentralization agenda, the gaps in the MOE decentralization program, and the needs of the education sector. Some of the overarching, national decentralization issues affecting the education sector are included in the discussion of education sector-specific issues.

Overall, the lack of human, physical, and financial resources limits the implementation of decentralization. Decentralization in the education sector is constrained by (1) weak institutional capacity, (2) inadequate technical skills and management systems, and (3) deficient infrastructure and equipment. These problems are exacerbated by national systemic constraints, such as the continued centralization of fiscal resources, a lack of coordination among levels of governance, and unclear understanding of the operational roles and responsibilities of the various entities—executive organs, local councils, community groups (e.g. parents’ councils)—at the governorate and district levels. These problems are most acute at the district level.

A. Institutional Capacity

The ability of institutions—both within the MOE and part of the national governance and administrative structure—to fill their required roles is essential to sound education management and service delivery. At present, both the education offices and the local councils at the governorate and district levels are not prepared to assume the full range of their decision-making, administrative, management, financial, and technical responsibilities under decentralization. As discussed in the previous section, while governorate-level education offices, in conjunction with the local councils, have taken on some planning and most implementation tasks, many district education offices are not functional and “exist in name only,” according to MOE and governorate officials. Several “ingredients” of institutional capacity are examined below.

1. Institutional Structures, Roles, and Responsibilities

While the frameworks are in place for both decentralization (The Local Authority Law and Executive Regulations) and for the education sector (BEDS), the by-laws and other official regulations are not sufficient to guide day-to-day operations. Staffing requirements, job descriptions, and routine operations have not been detailed so that governorate and district offices are clear on how they should work. One donor education project in Amran indicated that at the district level, it is unable to find anyone in the education office who is responsible; at the governorate level, however, too many people claim responsibility, resulting in unnecessarily “packed” meetings. The negative impact is particularly felt at the district level, where compensatory factors—such as experienced staff—are least available and service delivery demands are the greatest. In the education sector, the district offices are closest to the school and must deal with personnel and
student issues, provisioning, management, and inspection. But, the MOE has not yet defined the functional structures that describe task authorities in ways that are clearly understood by sector personnel.

The lack of clarity also complicates coordination between the district and governorate offices. For example, the ADRA-run education project reports that despite its success in recruiting 40 qualified female teachers and ostensible district authority to hire them, final appointments have been blocked at higher levels. The problems caused by the lack of official guidance are compounded by the bureaucratic culture and “mindset” of education personnel. Although decentralization is embraced, in principle, the social and personal attitudes needed for implementation have not entirely shifted. Reportedly, delegation of authority is not well understood nor universally welcomed. Cadres have relatively little experience with teamwork, and managers tend not to divide or share tasks. Although this type of “work style” training has been conducted centrally at the MOE, it has not been planned for governorate and district offices and would likely benefit them.

The education offices at the governorate and district levels face particular challenges. As executive organ units, they have double accountability: to the MOE education office at the higher level, but also to the local councils. While reporting responsibilities may be delineated in the Local Authority Law, in practical terms it is not always so clear. Says one governorate education official (somewhat mistakenly), “The education offices report to the MOE, but local councils believe that they should report to them.” Reporting lines are made even more complicated at the district level, where interaction with school councils (who believe they have certain authorities) are added to interaction with higher levels of the MOE and the local council.

The local councils are grappling with their new duties. Several GOY officials indicated that the local councils, especially at the district level, do not understand the local council law, despite GOY training received, and are having difficulty in its practical application. One also added that the law itself “is possibly unclear.” Education personnel at the governorate and district levels report that local councils “are trying to assume every responsibility.” “They think that they should provide services, supervise the budget, and dismiss the head master,” says one governorate education officer of the district local councils. Significantly, some of the responsibilities he mentions do seem to legitimately belong to the district local council, underscoring the confusion about roles, as well as the subtleties involved in their application to everyday management realities. Paradoxically, some education personnel also complained that the district local councils were not pulling their weight: “They are supposed to participate in planning and budgeting, but they expect the executive offices to do job.”

Communities also have expressed concerns about district local councils. Some parents’ councils and schools see local councils as predatory, as the local councils appropriate the school fees previously retained at the school. “They do nothing except collect money,” said one local development worker, “The people think that they are the losers by decentralization.”
There is fertile ground for conflict and misunderstanding between school councils and local councils. School councils appear to have outpaced the legal and institutional framework for their participation in the decentralized system. Many of the non-formalized authorities they claim for school management and decision-making are in conflict with those interpreted by the local councils. And neither, according to some district education personnel, “understand or follow the national education priorities or understand the technical issues and requirements in education.”

The above discussion suggests that the education sector could benefit from the development of practical guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the different actors in the education sector at the local level, in which the various laws and regulations are distilled into unambiguous and actionable terms as they apply to education sector management. Few district education personnel have received training on their roles and responsibilities. In contrast, both governorate and district local councils have received general training through MOLA, Public Works, and the Dutch (although local council members interviewed felt the initial training was not sufficient and no longer valid.) Even school councils have received training from the Dutch, GTZ, Social Fund, and USAID.

Not only should attention be focused on the district education offices, but more and different types of training are required. Specifically, training and guidance should focus on the interaction and joint action of the local council (especially the committee assigned to deal with education), education office, and community, so that the disarticulation of roles is overcome and there is better understanding of each group’s concerns, contributions, and areas of expertise.

2. **Staffing**

Decentralization calls for more personnel at the governorate and district levels. Although not all posts (however inadequately defined) are filled at the governorate level, it appears that there are sufficient personnel to undertake the basic tasks currently assigned to them. Each governorate education office appears to have numerous departments. In Amran, for example, 17 were listed. Although eight of them were not staffed (one person per department), these appear to be those that are not absolutely essential to the operation of the education system, such as school health and nutrition, although deleterious to student well-being and system improvement. One key area not yet staffed in any of the governorates visited is the community participation department that could—if appropriately used—help forge productive working relationships among the district players in education.

The picture is dramatically different at the district level. Although MOE “branches” existed previously in districts, their modest duties have now expanded as they are transformed into “executive organs.” District offices need to be established in all sectors, including education. In some cases, the district education office is said to exist in “name only,” with no staff assigned or in place. In Shabwa, the governorate education office has assigned the duties of these un-staffed district offices to the closest existing office. In
Sadah, some district education offices are “still incomplete,” according to most accounts.¹⁰

Unfortunately, those district offices that do exist are seriously understaffed for the job, and often with unskilled and unqualified staff as well. Staff recruitment presents a problem. Governorate offices say that they prefer to recruit locally, but the pool of personnel is limited. Consequently, they attempt to recruit nationally, but believe this can only be successful if incentives are offered, and they have little authority or means to do so. Even if the posts are filled, district education staff still lack a complete description of their duties and may face a discouraging work environment, with low salaries, poor facilities, and lack of guidance from and contact with governorate colleagues, isolated by inadequate communication and transportation resources.

3. **Systemic Constraints**

While it is beyond the scope of this report to assess the viability of the GOY’s decentralization scheme overall and constraints to its implementation, there is one issue in particular that negatively affects the ability of the education sector, as well as other sectors, to implement decentralization and make operational its administrative and management structure. Quite simply, local authorities are prohibited by law to use local resources for recurrent expenditure. All recurrent expenditure funds are transferred from the center to the governorates and districts, and local authorities cannot increase the recurrent allocation. They are permitted to contribute to the investment budget through funds raised locally, mainly through administrative fees and user charges.

The lack of fiscal decentralization has several pernicious effects. In particular, it starves the governorate and district authorities of resources for “operations and maintenance.” This restricts the education office’s ability to underwrite essential operational expenses for sound management, such as meetings, stationary, utilities, communications, and transportation, among other things (e.g. school and office maintenance and repair).¹¹ It also may contribute to the local councils’ reported propensity to retain school fees, which are sorely needed by schools to deal with running costs. Another impact, not fully explained, is that it limits the use of matching school grants to investment-type activities.

The following exchange occurred in one district which demonstrates some of the frustration felt at the local level:

District Executive Office Director: “Decentralization makes life easier since it saves us from having to go to the central government for permission and limits follow-up to only to the district local council.”

Local Council Head: “But what’s the use of delegating and getting closer to the problem, if we don’t have enough resources to respond?”

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¹⁰ A governorate representative claims to have full staff in place and offices rented in all 15 districts.

¹¹ UNDP reports that entire districts are allotted less than $2000 per month and operations and maintenance account for less than 1 percent of the recurrent budget.
B. Technical Capacity, Training, and Support

Although staffing patterns, (informal) job descriptions, and qualification requirements necessarily have changed with decentralization, in reality much of the staff has remained the same. The employee retains his position, regardless of his suitability for the job. The result has been that many education staff lack the qualifications to carry out assigned tasks. The shortage of qualified staff is most acute at the district level, where the job responsibilities have expanded most and where the recruiting challenges are the greatest. The need for training is obvious, but district education offices have been the least likely to receive training, apparently standing at the end of the MOE training queue. The center generally extends training only as far as the governorates, and the governorates do not have the funds to “cascade” training to the districts, an expensive undertaking given that districts outnumber governorates 16:1. Consequently, governorates make separate applications to donors for training, creating a patchwork of governorates, districts, and skill areas where training has been provided. Moreover, governorate education offices have expressed the priority of their needs for training over those of the districts because—somewhat illogically—of their supervisory role. Finally, within the context of low salaries, the financial incentives associated with training have been mentioned as a reason for training not being routinely extended to these offices.

Also required to enable unskilled or inexperienced personnel to do their jobs are codified management systems and detailed, accessible guidance. While the MOE (or other appropriate ministry) has initiated the development of several of these systems—such as planning, budgeting, EMIS, and M&E, among others—useful operational guidance has not yet been prepared or disseminated. That which does exist is not specifically geared toward usage by the governorate and district education offices. For example, a director general of education in one governorate says his office needs manuals on planning and budgeting in order to interpret MOE and MOF instructions, complete their forms correctly, and undertake additional analytic tasks.

Most education offices that were visited could provide long lists of their training needs, were very forthcoming about skill deficiencies, and displayed little defensiveness about improving their competencies. Most often mentioned at the governorate level was the need for planning, budgeting, data analysis, and information management. In addition to these, some more basic needs were highlighted at the district level, including general office administration and management, such as establishing filing systems, personnel records, etc. Both levels pointed to the need for computer training, as very few governorate staff were computer literate and none of the district staff interviewed claimed to be. Computer training requests ranged from simple word-processing use and data entry to more sophisticated statistical analysis, data manipulation, and access to data banks. Governorate education offices cited that the new EMIS would require data entry work at the governorate level. Governorate local council members indicated that they lacked the knowledge to access data banks established for projects.
Finally, literacy training for district local councils was identified as another necessity; local council representatives pointed out that, at the district level, a significant percentage of local council members were illiterate.

C. Infrastructure, Furniture, and Equipment

In many instances, the physical environment and resources—infrastructure, furniture and equipment—available to the district and governorate education offices constitute a binding constraint on their ability to operate and/or undertake certain tasks, and may in the aggregate place a serious brake on the ability of the education sector to decentralize. The lack of these fundamental physical facilities is particularly acute at the district level and for the district education offices. The governor of Sadah states, “In the districts, we are starting from scratch.”

Reportedly, most governorate education offices are housed in the large governorate administrative office complex in the governorate capital city. While the education offices visited in the governorates of Amran, Sadah, and Shabwa were not spacious, they appeared adequate to house the personnel and allow them to function. Although fully staffed offices may present a tight squeeze, it appears that additional office space could be found relatively easily.

However, the situation is very different at the district level and for the district education offices. None of the meetings with the district education offices took place in their “office”; they were held either at the local council office or in a school classroom. The reason is that many district education offices either do not have any office space at all or are crowded into dilapidated space too small to house the staff, much less conduct a meeting of 5-10 people. In Amran, only 5 of 20 districts have offices; in Shabwa, only a handful of districts had office space; and in Sadah, it was reported that space had been rented for all 15 districts, a claim disputed by other education staff.

In districts without offices, the education officers operate out of their homes. Some district education personnel pointed to their briefcase or a plastic bag, indicating their office “location.” When the district education offices do have actual office space, it is seldom adequate to their needs. District education staffs average, in principle, about 12 persons, not including inspectors and advisors. Typically, they are housed in one room, although even in the better-off districts, each room contains four or more people, all vying for a desk and chair.

The deleterious impact on work is obvious. Without office space, there is no place for staff to work in concert, organizing and monitoring staff activities becomes impossible for supervisors, documents and materials cannot easily be accessed or stored (making them liable to destruction), and clients (e.g. local councils, governorate, education offices, teachers, and community members) have no point of ready contact. In Sadah, it was estimated that space limitations resulted in only three staff members—out of 15-person district offices—actually working.
These offices are generally without furniture or sufficient furniture. Several staff may “share” a school desk and chair, using it on a rotating basis. One district reportedly had only one desk and chair for its entire 20-person office. Other furniture simply does not exist at many of these district offices: there are no file cabinets, book shelves, or conference tables.

Basic services are also lacking: many offices reportedly have no telephone, water or electricity. This complicates the use of modern office equipment, which, of course, they also lack. Not only are there no computers at the district level (and only a very few at the governorate level), but both governorate and district offices lack telephones, fax machines, photocopiers, and even typewriters, making even routine correspondence difficult. Lack of vehicles or operating funds (see above) for transport limits mobility between the districts and schools, on one hand, and the governorates and districts, on the other. ADRA in Sadah routinely includes governorate education personnel in its visits to districts so that they can have some contact time.

All of the above hold serious ramifications for the productivity of both district and governorate education offices. Their inability to communicate with each other, either by phone or in person, undermines understanding and coordination. Not having modern equipment—and the space to house it in—makes it impossible for staff to fulfill certain tasks, such as computerized data entry and tabulation, data analysis, and report preparation. Currently, districts record and aggregate data manually before sending it to the governorate offices, slowing the reporting process and making it liable to error.

Many of the MOE plans to decentralize planning, budgeting, EMIS, and other functions depend on modern equipment. In addition to having trained staff to use and maintain these new technologies, their successful application requires an environment that provides shelter, storage, electricity, and a communications network. “The situation is appalling,” concludes an education advisor. At best, the district education offices have a place for staff to try to work in unequipped and ill-furnished quarters; at worst the offices exist in name only.

**D. Expressed Priorities**

Often when staffs in least-developed countries are asked to present their “wish lists,” they are topped by big-ticket goods such as buildings and vehicles. In contrast, training was identified as a top priority by education personnel at all levels of the education system. Training was universally mentioned by executive offices and by local councils, although their specifications varied. Local councils requested—and education offices suggested they receive—more training on their roles and responsibilities under decentralization. They indicated that the one-off training they had received was not sufficient to master their jobs.

While each level of the education system suggested the other levels could benefit from a better understanding of their new roles, more often they were focused on improving technical competencies in areas that are designated under BEDS. The governor of Amran
stated, “We have good people, but they need more training on planning and budgeting.” The governorate offices also expressed a preference for governorate-based (as opposed to central) workshops, “so we can train more people and provide more incentives.” In fact, training-related infrastructure, such as a training center, was suggested in one governorate, which felt it lacked the space to conduct training programs for districts. At these levels, training was also defined as recurring, rather than one-time.

The individual governorates have put effort into obtaining needed training in education and other sectors: they have made separate application to various donors who have established themselves in the governorate. While the arrival of “new” donors and their potential support of training programs were enthusiastically welcomed, governorates expressed concern that their established partners not reduce their support.

Computers top the list of equipment needs at the governorate level. Education personnel are mindful of their use for data entry and analysis, and local council representatives are aware of databases that they can access. Governorate offices also would like to be “networked” into a computer-based communications and information system. In Amran, they wanted to establish a Department of Information with access to central statistics.

Priorities expressed by personnel at the district level are more modest. Clarification on their roles and comprehensive guidance and training on how to conduct their tasks are their top needs. While they acknowledged their desperate infrastructure and equipment needs, they did not place these as priorities, as they were seemingly resigned to doing without. Personnel admitted that they lacked the know-how to put equipment to use, but remarked that they were willing to learn with training.

In summary, district education offices have received very little training and attention, and are the least prepared to take on new duties and carry out mandated tasks due to lack of staff, technical skills, and physical (and financial) resources. Local councils and education offices need to develop a clearer idea of how to work together, and training should address this. Both governorate and district education offices need assistance in establishing operations and procedures and making them routine, based on central models.
V. MYTHS AND REALITIES: SOME PRELIMINARY IMPRESSIONS

Decentralization has involved a “changing of the guard” in roles and responsibilities to ensure compliance with the Local Authority Law. There is frequent reference to (and documented discourse about) confusion and conflict associated with the transfer of power to the governorate and district offices and between the local councils and their authority in planning and development. There has been speculation about tensions between the MOE and the MOF, between governorate- and district-level MOE offices and the local councils, and between the MOE and MOLA. The following section summarizes some preliminary impressions about the “myths” and the interesting “realities” that emerged in discussions with representatives at various ministries and in the governorate and district administrative units.

A. Myths

1. Obstructions by the Ministry of Finance (MOF)

Under the centralized system, the MOF was in control of the budgeting and financial management of all sectors, interacting with “line” ministries (such as the MOE) at the central level, with an MOF representative stationed in every sector. The MOF representative prepared the annual budget and oversaw all ministerial accounting activities and reports. Historically, for the MOE, there was little or no MOF interaction with its offices in the governorates or districts, as they had no planning or budgeting authority. Under decentralization, the MOF is expected to transfer most budgeting and financial management responsibility to the governorate and district Local Authorities, each headed by an administrative unit (e.g. the governor or district director) and consisting of the executive organ (including the education office) and local council. The Local Authority will prepare its budget and manage disbursements, including those for education.

Reportedly, however, the MOF was reluctant to transfer responsibility and resources to the lower levels during the initial years of decentralization because of concerns about the lack of qualified personnel in these offices capable of performing these duties. Consequently, it decided on a gradual transfer of authority to the governorate offices and the district offices, to give them time to train and develop their technical capacity. This was interpreted by many to mean that the MOF was resistant to relinquishing its authority in financial management.

Based on field visits and interviews with relevant staff and at central, governorate, and district offices, the team found that the MOF has begun transferring authority to the governorate offices. The MOF representative at the MOE explained that an immediate transfer would not be in the best interest of any ministry, including the MOE, because the governorate Local Authorities (including the line ministry offices in the executive organs) do not have the technical capacity to take over full responsibility. Moreover,

12 The MOF continues to maintain a representative at the MOE to assist with planning functions and oversee its accounts.
Support of Decentralization of Basic Education in Yemen: Situation Analysis and Recommendations

decentralization is welcomed at the MOF, because the Ministry is overburdened with the responsibility of budgeting and overseeing the finances of all sectors. The transfer, therefore, has been gradual and supported by training of the governorate staff, including the education office representatives, on how to prepare their annual budgets. The governorate staff will then train the district offices.

Since 2003, the governorate offices have begun preparing their annual budgets using manuals that were prepared by the MOF. MOF staff visit the governorates to provide support and supervise this exercise. The MOF has also conducted several training workshops, both in Sana’a and in the governorates, during which governorates have the opportunity to discuss their experiences and the difficulties they are encountering in finance management. A joint MOLA and MOF effort is planned to develop coordinated data “outputs” for financial and accounting functions at the governorate and district levels with MOF formats, in order to ease the budgeting and financial management process. MOLA and the MOF will also be collaborating on training programs.

Discussions in the three governorates that were visited indicated that, overall, governorate administrative units were satisfied with the pace of MOF devolution of responsibility. The Governor of Sadah, for example, explained that the governorate has assumed almost 70% of the designated authorities in conducting financial management. Other governorates expressed appreciation of the support provided by the MOF. Both the MOF and various governorates indicate that, although progressive, the degree of devolution is not uniform across governorates.

While the complexities of public sector finance and its management are beyond the scope of this report, the general impression is that, at least at the governorate level, many of the concerns and tensions that appear to have characterized the first two years of decentralization have been addressed and, to some extent, alleviated. However, all acknowledge that several challenges remain, both to decentralization of responsibility and to public sector financing itself: resolving local revenue generation and taxation issues, re-examining the sources of funding for recurrent expenditure, improving operation and maintenance budgets and procedures (including transfer of budgets to governorates and districts)13, and providing adequate sector resources to align with authorized plans, to name a few.

2. The Local Councils and MOE Offices

The Local Authority Law No. 4 grants the local councils substantial influence in the decision-making process at the governorate and district level, particularly in setting priorities and developing and finalizing plans and budgets. The team heard some reports of tension and “stand-offs” between local councils and education offices, particularly at the district level. As noted in an earlier section, there appears to be overlap in each body’s understanding of its respective responsibilities, especially in the areas of planning

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13 It should be noted that the education sector and MOF have made a start on this issue, at least on a pilot scale. The recently established “School Operation and Maintenance Fund” is considered a successful example of resource transfer and management.
and responding to needs. On the one hand, the local councils expressed the belief that, as representatives of the community, they were most aware of constituents’ needs, noting that the role of the local council itself had originally evolved as a result of the education offices’ inability to deliver necessary services. However, the education offices at the governorate and district levels believe that their expertise in education planning and implementation should take precedence. These views of their respective roles occasionally collide, especially in the area of setting priorities. The distinction between setting priorities and how best to achieve them is subtle, and political expedience often overrides technical expertise.

During our field visits in the three governorates, we did not detect tensions between the governorate and district education offices and the local councils, but rather a recognition of the potential for conflict and the desire to find ways to better understand their respective roles and build a collaborative relationship. Although these findings are based on a small sample and cannot be generalized, the general attitude from those interviewed was that the local councils and education offices were partners in education, but in need of guidance. Most of those interviewed expressed the need for a greater clarification of roles and responsibilities and operational guidance on how to work together, recognizing their mutual interdependence.

However, in one instance, it was explained that each party’s roles and responsibilities are defined in Article 4 of the Local Authority Law and in the Executive Regulations, thereby preventing the emergence of such conflicts. While in theory this is correct, the practical interpretation of the new Law and Regulations is still being tested at this time, and this sanguine remark may merely reflect this particular district’s relative lack of progress in assuming its new role. The potential for tensions to arise between the local councils and the education offices may increase as both parties attempt to assume their decentralized roles, underscoring the need for greater clarity and practical guidance, especially at the district level.

3. **The Role of MOLA**

The newly established Ministry of Local Authority oversees the bodies functioning under decentralization. These include the administrative units, the executive organs, and the local councils. However, controversy exists over the amount of authority endowed to MOLA. Some fear that MOLA could interfere with the development planning and programs of the various ministries and could become a check-point, creating bottle-necks and the “second-guessing” of line ministries’ agendas and programs. None of those interviewed, however, expressed this as a concern at this stage. MOLA itself indicated that it was undertaking an extensive program to build its own capacity to better respond to and support needs at the lower levels and coordinate with “line” ministries, as appropriate. It is too early in the process to adequately understand the ramification of MOLA’s role in the education sector.
B. Realities

Overall there is support and enthusiasm about decentralization at all levels, as well as for the certainty that the “re-engineered” state machinery will be better able to deliver services, particularly to the rural areas through participatory governance. The local authority given to the administrative units enables them to conduct their own development planning and programs, and control the distribution of their resources based on their own assessed needs rather than those imported from the central government. While recognizing the challenges in institutional capacity building and functioning with limited resources, the general attitude is optimistic.

The MOE is taking a thoughtful approach to decentralization by making it a focus of both the formulation process and content of BEDS and the Fast Track Initiative. In addition, its emphasis on coordinating activities of foreign donors to support BEDS reflects in part its understanding that the implementation of decentralization in the governorates and districts will depend to a great extent on the funding and activities of donors to build capacity. As donors establish their programs in the different governorates and districts, the MOE has noted the imperative to harmonize approaches and coordinate coverage, so that not all activities and resources are concentrated on a few favored technical and/or geographic areas. The years 2003-2006 have been earmarked for capacity building of MOE staff at the central, governorate, and district levels to undertake new roles and responsibilities both associated with decentralization and the education reform program. While the MOE has started these activities, it has not yet consistently or comprehensively reached governorate and district offices with training or assistance.

The GOY and the MOE recognize that decentralization is a long-term process, especially given the resource-poor base (limited technical capacity, staff, and infrastructure) from which they are starting. Mismanagement of financial resources has also been prevalent, and establishing a system of accountability and transparency is an early goal of decentralization implementation. The reshuffling of roles and responsibilities will undoubtedly cause confusion, but it is expected that these will clarify with ongoing implementation. In general, all the various players interviewed—regardless of ministry or whether at the central, governorate or district levels—reflected realistically that while it undoubtedly faces many challenges, decentralization will be a process of “trial and error.”

Despite popular concern about the United States’ political and military role in the region, the reopening of the USAID mission and its re-entry into the development arena (brought to a halt during the 1991 Gulf War) is viewed positively. Within the education sector, the MOE welcomes USAID’s assistance and its focus on the five governorates that are considered among the most disadvantaged. While it appreciates support for decentralization, its emphasis and expectations from this assistance are focused on provision of school-level services, such as those designated under Intermediate Result 1.14

14 Teacher training was frequently mentioned with respect to USAID support, but also accompanied by the comment that only one system or approach to teacher training would be tolerated.
VI. FUNDING AGENCY AND DONOR SUPPORT FOR DECENTRALIZATION IN EDUCATION

A. Guidelines and Context for External Assistance

In 2004, the GOY, its executive entities, and several international multi- and bi-lateral donors\textsuperscript{15} to the education sector signed a Partnership Declaration that is intended to “harmonize strategies and align and effectively use government and donor resources programmed for basic education.” Focused on BEDS, the agreement establishes joint GOY and donor objectives, roles and responsibilities, operational procedures, and coordination and implementation mechanisms. It is expected that the agreement will lay the foundation for and guide the transition from separate projects in the education sector to a jointly-supported common program once the GOY has developed acceptable procedures and is considered qualified to handle pooled budgetary assistance (i.e. a SWAP).

In the meantime, participating international funding agencies and donors determined that the GOY’s Fast Track Initiative proposal was acceptable to increase funding to the sector.

B. Overview of Funding Agency and Donor Support Activities

The World Bank and the Government of the Netherlands pool funds for the operation of the BEEP I, which primarily focuses on school construction but also “pilots” effort to build school-based management capacity.

An expanded follow-on program (BEEP II) is under development, with project appraisal scheduled for May 2004. BEEP II is considered the “engine of support” for BEDS, and will be implemented by MOE staff with some MOE-based expatriate advisors. BEEP II aims at providing adequate support to the GOY to implement its education reform agenda (BEDS) and to extend the approaches developed under BEEP I to the entire country. It will build the capacity of the MOE at all levels to advance decentralization, with a special focus on monitoring and evaluation. Under consideration as well is “whole school” development, which would provided grants to schools to introduce school-based management and improve quality.

At present, the World Bank and the Dutch plan to jointly finance BEEP II, with $60 million and $12 million per year, respectively. The Government of the U.K., through the Department for International Development (DFID), having scrapped its earlier stand-alone project that largely replicated other donor activities, is considering joining them. In preparation, the World Bank—through the MOE—is completing an assessment of capacity in every district in 12 governorates, with a report due in mid-March 2004.

\textsuperscript{15} Signatories include the Governments of Germany, United Kingdom, and the Netherlands, as well as the World Bank, UNICEF, WFP, and ILO. The Government of France, UNESCO, and the European Union are expected to sign. USAID has decided not to sign.
The Netherlands is a major donor to the GOY, providing cash injections through the Social Fund and Public Works, as well as BEEP I, to support education, governance, and decentralization. It has also provided extensive support to the health and education sector to build governorate and district capacity, as well as support school-based management, in Shabwa.

GTZ, with financing from the KfW and the World Bank, has provided the impetus and assistance for the BEDS, and with strategically-placed technical assistance, it supports the entire MOE reform and decentralization effort. GTZ assists the MOE in developing planning and budgeting systems and associated training programs and materials. It is providing support through technical assistance and funding at the central level for the development and launch of an EMIS as well. GTZ is also working and has established a small office in four governorates (Ibb, Abyan, Mareb, and Hadja). It is supporting the development of school councils, district capacity, and will roll-out the EMIS at the governorate level.

Also working to build school and district management capacity is USAID’s Basic Health and Education Program, implemented through ADRA. Working in five districts in two governorates, the project has developed approaches to establishing school councils and building the ability of district local councils to work with education offices to support education development.

Although not focused on education, the UNDP and the World Bank are supporting a coordinated district-level capacity building pilot project to improve planning, budgeting, financial management, and implementation.

The following table summarizes various funding agency and donor activities to support the implementation of decentralization in the education sector.
### CHART 3: Donor Activities to Support Implementation of Decentralization in Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donor</th>
<th>Policy/Planning</th>
<th>Budget and Finance</th>
<th>EMIS</th>
<th>M&amp;E</th>
<th>Governorate and District Capacity</th>
<th>School Councils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GTZ</td>
<td>-Provide advisor</td>
<td>-Provide TA</td>
<td>-Provide advisor</td>
<td>-Governorate and district local capacity building in four governorates</td>
<td>-Support creation in four governorates</td>
<td>(planned)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-support systems</td>
<td>-Float tender for</td>
<td>-Support system development, training, tools and manuals</td>
<td>-extend EMIS to four governorates</td>
<td>-Developing general model and manual for school social workers (with World Bank funding)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>development, training, tools, and manuals</td>
<td>TA</td>
<td>training, tools and manuals</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-support expansion to 4 governorates with training &amp; equipment</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFID (U.K.)</td>
<td>(funds to BEEP II)</td>
<td>-Build governorate capacity in Shabwa</td>
<td>(funds to BEEP II)</td>
<td>(funds to BEEP II)</td>
<td>-Governorate and district local capacity building in Shabwa</td>
<td>(funds to BEEP I and II)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Netherlands Embassy</td>
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<tr>
<td>World Bank</td>
<td>-District local capacity building under DLDSP*</td>
<td>-District local capacity building under DLDSP*</td>
<td>-District local capacity building under DLDSP*</td>
<td>-District local capacity building pilot under DLDSP* (planned)</td>
<td>-Support creation under BEEP II (planned)</td>
<td>-Provide “whole school” development grants under BEEP II (proposed)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Support creation of MOE policy and resource mobilization “think tank” (proposed)</td>
<td>-Provide funds to GTZ</td>
<td>-Develop system under BEEP II (planned)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Capacity assessment of districts in 12 governorates</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>-Build district capacity in five districts via ADRA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-Build capacity of local councils and districts to collaborate</td>
<td>-Support creation of 48 school councils in five districts in two governorates via ADRA</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>-District local capacity building under DLDSP*</td>
<td>-District local capacity building under DLDSP*</td>
<td>-District local capacity building under DLDSP*</td>
<td>-District local capacity building under DLDSP* (underway)</td>
<td>-Support creation of school councils in 400 schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Fund</td>
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</table>

*not focused on education sector, but has potential to benefit sector
VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Suggested Approach

The preceding analysis of constraints, needs, and how or whether they are being addressed suggests an approach to supporting decentralization of basic education that is:

- holistic
- bottom-up
- builds on existing activities
- multi-sectoral
- phased

First, USAID support should be holistic, by targeting its assistance to both the MOE executive offices and the local councils at the district and governorate levels in the selected governorates. Each group requires assistance in understanding its role and mastering its responsibilities so that they can work productively together without conflict or redundancy of effort. The system of decision-making and execution under decentralization requires seamless coordination between the two bodies, as well as appreciation of their respective areas of expertise. For example, while the district local council will ultimately determine investment priorities (such as where schools are constructed), their deliberations should be guided by the empirical methods and data developed (or competently interpreted) by the district education officers. To focus solely on one group would introduce or reinforce imbalances that work against effective decentralized management of the education system. Therefore, the needs of both groups and their interactions should be considered.

Second, the findings of this report indicate that the districts have been least likely to have benefited from support interventions provided by the GOY, MOE, or donors. This is not due to oversight or lack of understanding of district needs, but rather to the sheer enormity of the scope and resources needed for adequately training, equipping, and housing local councils and executive office of 332 districts. (In the five governorates targeted by USAID, there are a total of 85 districts.) Moreover, the GOY’s (and its ministries’) efforts to jump-start decentralization following the 2001 local council elections logically focused attention on progressively devolving responsibility downward from the central level to the governorate level and then to the district level. Not only were the governorates the closest link in the decentralization chain to the center, but they were more likely than districts to have the technical capacity and expertise necessary to carry out planning, management, and service delivery tasks, as well as support new approaches, such as community participation in school construction and management. As a result, at present, the districts have not yet developed the capacity to fully or competently assume their functions in education (or in other sectors as well), although they may be the most critical level given that they are the closest administrative unit to the schools and thus are best-positioned to assure quality and effectiveness.
Consequently, a bottom-up approach for USAID support under IR 2.3, that focuses on defining and addressing district needs first, is suggested. Given that the bulk of USAID resources for education are anticipated for school-based activities under IR 2.1, it is important that districts—which are responsible for immediate school supervision and service delivery—develop the capacity to deal with and support these interventions to improve access to quality education. However, this does not mean that the governorate or central levels should be ignored. Rather, the needs and support provided to these levels should be primarily defined in relation to the district needs. In short, the question to be asked is “what must be done to enable the governorate education offices and local councils and the central MOE offices to respond to the needs of the districts?”

Third, the USAID approach should build on activities, programs and projects that are already underway, are about to be launched, or are in advanced planning stages under the BEDS umbrella, in order to extend their coverage, expand their scope, or elaborate (improve) their approach. At this stage in the decentralization process, the team found that the major areas of education management were being addressed to varying extents by the MOE and its partners. High-level MOE representatives have stated that the MOE does not want to contend with multiple (and uncoordinated) systems, procedures, and approaches to education management developed by various donors.16 Ideally, “one master tool” should be developed centrally and then, with donor assistance, extended to local levels. Indeed, this concern about consistent and uniform systems was one of the motivating factors for the development of the “Partnership Declaration” between the GOY and donors for the implementation of BEDS, which provides for the creation of a Technical Team. In part, the Technical Team’s duties focus on ensuring that all MOE offices develop and adopt uniform national standards and education management systems, including preparing manuals and guidance for planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation for governorates and districts, and developing a comprehensive Education Management System. Although the bureaucratic and legal reasons for USAID’s inability to sign the Partnership Declaration appear to be understood by the various government and education sector players, it is expedient for USAID to demonstrate that it recognizes the intent and spirit of this document and is a “team player” in the sector.

As noted in earlier sections, the MOE on its own and with donor support has initiated several centrally-based activities which could benefit from USAID assistance in introducing and institutionalizing them at the governorate and district levels. For example, the planning, financial management, and EMIS instruments and procedures already developed or underway need to be extended to the lower levels in the education system, requiring both training personnel and equipping offices. USAID has targeted five of the most disadvantaged governorates, and potentially could reach about 25 percent of Yemen’s districts (85 of 332). However, this recommendation should not be viewed merely as USAID replication of what already exists. Because decentralization of education sector management is in its early stages, the MOE and donor partners working on developing management systems have not yet advanced to conceptualizing or

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16 Although outside the scope of this report, teacher training was a frequently-mentioned area of MOE concern.
planning how these systems should be operationalized at lower levels, nor have they yet considered the particular needs of lower levels. USAID could play a pivotal role in not only tailoring and testing these new systems at the governorate and district levels, but would feed back into the education system the methods, modules, and procedures it has developed so the MOE and its other partners could extend them to governorates and districts beyond the targeted five. In fact, a good example of USAID-supported innovations that could be replicated throughout the education system is the work with and training of district local councils and education offices that ADRA has developed (itself building on GTZ work) as part of its efforts to increase community participation in education (and health).

Fourth, because decentralization is an issue that cuts across sectors, opportunities exist for multi-sectoral collaboration within USAID and internally—“pooled” USAID sector support for executive organs and local councils. Effective decentralization requires a general, as well as sector-specific, approach. While executive offices and local councils need to master the technical aspects particular to the education, health, or agriculture sectors, there are general principles and practices that apply to good management for all sectors. Sectoral planning is not (nor should be) done in isolation, but general priority setting and local resource allocation at least must look at all the various and competing needs (within the parameters of the national policy and investment framework, of course). Certain systems—for planning, budgeting, accounting, data collection, and reporting—may also share components and similar procedures. Consequently, it is possible that some training, equipping, and (in some instances) housing of executive offices and local councils—particularly at the district level—could be accomplished most efficiently if done for the entire local institution. For example, communication and data networks could serve multiple sectors. In another instance, USAID could combine some of its sectoral resources to support and extend the UNDP/World Bank-supported pilot activities for district-level decentralization support that would benefit all sectors (discussed more fully below).

Fifth and finally, USAID should consider a phased approach to supporting decentralization in education. Because its immediate, short-term priority is to engender goodwill and support for U.S. anti-terrorism efforts, USAID should consider initial emphasis on the provision of tangible goods and services with high visibility and impact. This could include infrastructure and equipment, especially at the district level where they would be most evident to a large number of constituents and beneficiaries. (While not without needs or impact at the governorate level, communities and citizens are less likely to directly observe and feel their direct effect.)

In the medium-term, education system strengthening and support contributing to sustainability would assume priority, although as indicated in the USAID strategy, the incremental but potentially positive effect on poverty reduction and improved economic performance could ultimately contribute to Yemen’s capacity to fulfill its role as an ally in the war on terrorism. However, unlike some of the interventions and services that are likely to be supported under IRs 2.1. and 2.2—such as school construction, school grants, textbook provision, community development, and teacher training and support—it should
be recognized that support for decentralization is necessarily weighted more toward the less “appealing” goal of system strengthening and the “behind the scenes” support for management systems that is more likely to be appreciated by a relatively small group of MOE personnel, GOY officials, and local council members than by the citizenry at large, understandably unaware of the “machinery” behind the provision of quality education.

The challenge, then, is to reconcile the primacy of a well-functioning education system, achieved through support of decentralization, with the need for visible improvement in school services. In part, this can be achieved through simultaneously initiating interventions with short-term and medium-term impact, by (1) planning on supporting system strengthening efforts over a longer period of time, and (2) providing for different measures of impact for evolving goals at different periods in the mission performance monitoring plan. For example, positive attitudes engendered by providing a communications system may be an immediate measure of impact in terms of a short-term goal, while the improved reporting and data analysis that result from both a communications system and technical training is likely to be longer term indicator of an effectively-operating decentralized education system.

B. Specific Support Activities

The following lists and briefly describes specific activities or interventions that USAID could support to improve the public sector environment for education and enhance the education sector’s move toward decentralization. The reader is cautioned that these activities are not proposed necessarily as stand alone projects, but rather as types of support that appear viable and USAID should consider as options at this preliminary stage. Later design efforts may combine some of these options into a more comprehensive and multi-dimensional project.

The proposed activities are divided into two categories. First, institutional and technical capacity-building activities address enhancing the operational definition of roles and responsibilities of the executive organs and local councils at and among the various levels of governance, developing systems and procedures that frame and provide guidance on how to undertake specified duties at the district and governorate levels, and creating training modules and conducting actual training of personnel in the skills needed to perform their assigned tasks and institutional operations.

Second, the provision of equipment and infrastructure deals with one of the essential—but not sufficient—building blocks for the creation of functional decentralized institutions. Not only are these “goods” sorely needed for effective operations, but they are likely to have more “éclat” in the short-term in terms of visible U.S. support. Nonetheless, the critical lessons of more than 40 years of development assistance should neither be forgotten nor ignored: equipment and/or buildings, unless coupled with adequate training and set within the context of viable systems and defined applications, will ultimately have little developmental impact and will simply become emblematic of a donor’s poor planning, ignorance, or insensitivity to real needs. Consequently, before supplying equipment, the Mission should determine whether the other essential
elements—e.g. manpower, training, procedures, etc.—are in place, or plan to support the provision of these ingredients as part of a package. Moreover, the Mission should keep in mind that in several instances—reported, but not verified by the team—buildings and offices, particularly at the district levels, may not be available to house either the equipment or the staff. A baseline survey of the districts and governorates should detail the actual situation and needs (see “Next Steps”).

Institutional and Technical Capacity Building Activities:

The following activities are not presented in any particular order of priority. In all cases, the activity should be understood to include to the extent appropriate (1) the articulation, development and/or codification of appropriate systems, procedures, and guidance (2) the development of training modules and materials, and (3) support of training program delivery. Many of these activities are likely to require equipment, infrastructure, or both, which is noted accordingly.

1. **Provide orientation training to the education sector for district local councils.**

Local council members do not necessarily have expertise in education, and some are reported to have had little personal experience with or exposure to schooling. To develop a better and shared understanding of how the education system is organized and how it works, providing basic information and orientation for district-level local councils to the sector would help them better master their new oversight responsibilities. Such training might include modules (as well as reference materials) on system organization and the management chain of command, the annual planning/budgeting/reporting cycle, the BEDS and its application to and implications for the district, priority issues (e.g. girls’ education), interpretation of education statistics, priority setting, etc. Working with the governorate- and district-level education offices to develop and deliver the training would reinforce shared understanding of the system and contribute to building a working relationship between levels and among education offices and local councils.

2. **Support joint training of district education executive offices and local councils on respective roles and responsibilities under decentralization of the education sector.**

The MOE (and GOY, see #3) has not yet fully devolved sector management responsibilities to the districts. USAID support could include the development of operations manuals and training modules outlining in practical and actionable terms the tasks that each entity is expected to undertake, how it relates to lateral and vertical entities, the annual education management cycle and monthly “planner” (to-do schedule), and “what-if” scenarios. Training modules could be developed in association with a working group of governorate-level education and local council staff. All governorate-level education offices and local council members would receive training, and would be responsible for delivering similar training to the district education offices and local councils (also with USAID support; ADRA has developed some training modules and materials, under the USAID-funded Basic Health and Education Program).
3. **Assist EMIS development, adaptation, and training at governorate and district levels.**

The MOE has identified the Education Management Information System “as one of the most important elements to improving capacity of the MOE”\(^{17}\) for strategic and implementation planning, day-to-day management, progress monitoring, and reporting. The BEDS specifies that a “comprehensive and inter-linked education database capable of self-renewal” be established by the end of 2006 and progressively rolled out to all its governorate and district offices. GTZ (with World Bank funding) has taken the lead in providing technical assistance for the development of an EMIS at the central level, and has prepared with the MOE an overall conceptual plan.\(^{18}\) Data collection will become the responsibility of the districts and data entry will done by the governorate education offices (and, where possible, by the districts). Assistance and resources will be needed to extend the EMIS (training, supervision, and equipment) to the governorate- and district-levels. USAID could provide assistance in developing the operational guidance and procedures for these levels, translate them into operations manuals and other materials, and train personnel at the governorate and district levels on data collection, data entry/processing, and reporting. The GTZ-prepared *Concept Development for EMIS* report outlines a plan for the type of training that should take place at the MOE, the governorate and district education offices and, at the schools. (This activity is associated with equipment requirements, which are discussed below).

4. **Support proposed mobile EMIS teams.**

As a short-term, but multi-year measure—until the full EMIS can be established—the MOE is considering creating at the governorate level three- to four-person teams for data collection and entry that would support the district and governorate education offices in their attempt to obtain reliable data and make them readily available. Equipped with laptops, the teams would travel to districts to enter data and spot-check at the school level, enter the data into the governorate database, and perform simple analysis with the district education offices using standard reporting formats. The GTZ-prepared *Concept Development for EMIS* report estimates the personnel, training, and equipment needs of these teams, and proposes a pilot activity in two governorates. USAID could support these pilots in one or more of its target governorates.

5. **Support data use and analysis at the governorate and district levels.**

Under decentralization, the expanded responsibilities of the local education offices not only require that they collect/collate education data (see above), but that they use it for planning, management, decision-making, and assessment. Education administrators must also know how to employ data as a communications tools to facilitate their work with local councils and communities. USAID could support the development of training

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\(^{18}\) Herbert Bergman, *Concept Development for EMIS: First Working Draft, Basic Education Implementation Plan* (no date).
modules and materials aimed at the district level, and underwrite training of both district and governorate education staff in data use and analysis, including how to develop easily understood, graphic “policy briefs” and deliver presentations on local educational issues to their constituents (local councils, community members, teachers, parents, and governorate-level superiors). USAID’s LEAP Project in Nigeria has developed an approach and techniques that could be adapted.

6. Support needs assessment training for districts.

Although an initial step in the planning process (see below), under decentralization district-level needs assessment in education has become one area in particular where professional, community, and political interests converge and divergent needs must be reconciled to maximize the positive results for education. Several projects (including the USAID-funded Basic Health and Education Program implemented by ADRA) have developed or adapted modules for working with communities and bridging the gaps between the various players at the local level. Building on this experience and other “best practices,” USAID could support development of a district-level needs assessment approach and the accompanying training modules for use by the district-level local councils and MOE in all its district offices. In the target governorates, USAID could test the approach, and later underwrite training of district education personnel, school administrators, school council representatives, and local council members.

7. Strengthen district-level capacity in planning, programming, budgeting, accounting, and reporting.

District-level education offices have neither the systems nor staff with the skills to master them in the key areas of educational management, including planning, programming, budgeting, accounting, and reporting. Either in a single focus area (e.g. planning) or in a combination of areas (it is difficult to divorce sound planning from budgeting, for example), USAID could support: the articulation of the roles and tasks that the districts must assume in these areas; the adaptation to the local level of the relevant systems and practices established by the MOE or GOY; the development of guidance and operations manuals; the preparation of training modules and materials; and the delivery of training to district personnel.

8. Strengthen district-level capacity in office administration.

Not only have districts assumed new technical responsibilities, they have also assumed new administrative roles. Office administration—personnel management, file organization, scheduling, etc.—is an area of training requested at the district level. USAID could support the development of operations manuals and materials, and provide training in association with the provision of basic office equipment (see below).
9. **Extend the number of pilot districts in the proposed World Bank-supported Decentralization and Local Development Project and UNDP-financed Decentralization and Local Development Support Project.**

The UNDP and World Bank-supported pilot efforts are designed to improve local authority delivery of public services at the district level. Under the two coordinated projects, as well as the World Bank-supported Third Social Fund for Development and Third Public Works Credit, the Ministry of Local Administration will develop, introduce to pilot districts, and test the effectiveness of state-of-the-art planning/programming/budgeting techniques, Geographic Information System application, economic development strategies, revenue generation, and performance-based fiscal transfers. More than 40 districts in six governorates\(^{19}\) will participate in the pilot, which will result in a comprehensive, but unified, package of systems and procedures to support local operations throughout the country. Since the current program is not aimed at specific sectors, GOY and donor representatives indicated that they would welcome the development of modules and support of training tailored to specific sectors that USAID may be interested in (such as education, health, or agriculture). The opportunity for USAID is two-fold. First, it could use a combination of its sector funds to support the district facilitation teams in implementing the already-developed general planning and management modules in districts in the targeted governorates, which would potentially benefit all sectors’ operations, including education. Second, it could undertake development and/or adaptation of planning, programming, and budgeting modules for district use in sectors of particular interest (e.g. education). These would then be included in all pilot districts, even those not funded by USAID, thus expanding the impact of USAID resources.

10. **Expand ADRA-type grant program, emphasizing district education office and local council interaction with communities.**

As noted in the introduction, we have limited our definition of “decentralization in education” to generally exclude school-based management efforts to improve educational access and quality, based on discussion with the Mission that its efforts in these areas would largely be programmed under IR 2.1. Nonetheless, access and quality improvement, on the one hand, and improved public sector environment, on the other, do converge at the school community level, which is the ultimate focus of a true decentralization effort. It is at this level that decentralization can fulfill its potential to “match resources with solutions,” drawing on both public and private funds, manpower, knowledge, and other assets. The Basic Health and Education Program, funded by USAID and implemented by ADRA, works to develop and strengthen the capacity of school-based mothers’ and fathers’ councils to address both demand and supply-side issues (e.g. girls’ education), using small grants to catalyze action. It has also attempted joint planning exercises with the district education offices and local councils, has

\(^{19}\) The World Bank will support four districts in six governorates, UNDP will support six districts, and the Social Fund for Development will support 10 districts.
underwritten training in computer use\textsuperscript{20} for some local council members, and has organized study tours of district delegations to visit GTZ-supported model schools in Ibb.

USAID should consider extending the present program beyond the five districts and governorates where it currently operates, while at the same time introducing elements that more directly deal with improved management capacity of the district education offices and local councils. A small grants program for districts to undertake special “research” or investigation into district-wide priority issues and develop district-wide action plans—with the requirement that the research team would combine district, local council, school, and parent representatives and the action plan process would be highly participatory—could be used to forge working relationships, promote better understanding of roles and responsibilities, improve technical and analytic skills, demonstrate how educational issues can be addressed from a district perspective (as opposed to school or governorate), and increase district agency in dealing with particular issues. Matching grants for districts that prepare viable action plans could then be implemented.\textsuperscript{21}

**Infrastructure and Equipment:**

1. **Construct or rehabilitate district education offices (or multi-sector district offices).**

While construction of infrastructure alone will not guarantee better educational management and service delivery, the lack of physical housing for education offices in some districts does appear to seriously impede their operations and limit their potential to assume expanded responsibilities. Building offices or “rehabbing” the most seriously inadequate structures would not only answer the obvious need of providing a work place for staff (and facilitate the coordination and monitoring of their activities) and housing equipment, but would provide a central contact location and visible “presence” in the community. Moreover, without viable office space, many other interventions that deal more directly with strengthening the administrative and management capacity of the district education units could be stymied. (For example, physical space is needed to support EMIS operations which require document storage and computer equipment.) The provision of infrastructure would also be a visible and immediately appreciated sign of USAID support. Because this could be a costly endeavor, construction should be considered for only the most dire situations, where lack of infrastructure creates a binding constraint on moving forward with critical institutional capacity building efforts. A matching grant program could also be proposed to the governorates and districts. In addition, as the general model appears to group the various sectors’ executive offices together, USAID could consider combining some of its sector funds to construct multiple offices that would house education, health, agriculture, etc.

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\textsuperscript{20} One month in Sana’a.

\textsuperscript{21} It should be noted that the grant development process has been slow, and ADRA’s Sadah office had not yet issued any grants or signed grant agreements at the time of the meeting.
2. **Provide furniture for district offices.**

Reportedly, many district education offices do not have any or sufficient furniture—such as desks, chairs, tables, file cabinets, and shelves—to meet the basic needs of their staff or provide document storage. In situations where adequate office space exists (including new and rehabilitated—see above), USAID could underwrite the costs of furnishing these offices.

3. **Provide basic office equipment to district education offices and local councils.**

Many district offices and local councils lack the essentials needed for efficient operation, such as phones, computers, printers, fax machines, copiers, etc. USAID should consider supplying a basic package of office equipment to the district education offices that allows them to at least function, even if this possibly may not be sufficient for all education tasks (see #4 below). The GOY and the district could be required to sign an agreement in which they promise to allocate a specific amount in their yearly budget for operations and maintenance. A training package should accompany the equipment, addressing basic use and application, inventory management, care, and maintenance. (Currently, ADRA sends local council members to Sana’a for a month-long training on computers.)

4. **Provide EMIS-related equipment to district and governorate education offices.**

A functioning EMIS is essential to sound management, and computers are necessary for its efficient operation at all levels, including in the districts. Although current plans call for data entry to be performed by governorate offices, the MOE indicated that it quickly wanted to move this function down to the districts which are responsible for data collection. Equipping districts with computers and other peripheral equipment (such as computer workstations with modems, high volume printers, UPS, stabilizers, digital cameras, etc.) would also permit them to review, analyze, and report data for district-level purposes, rather than depend on the governorate to feed the information back to them. Governorate education offices also require dedicated EMIS equipment, similar to that noted above. GTZ will provide computer packages to the governorate education office in its four target governorates, following specifications that will be used nationally. USAID could provide identical packages in its target governorates, and fund the participation of designated governorate-level personnel in the training program GTZ has developed.

5. **Equip Mobile EMIS teams.**

As noted, the current MOE EMIS plan proposes that governorate-based “mobile EMIS teams” undertake data collection and entry on a temporary basis, until the systems can be fully equipped and expanded. Equipment requirements include two laptops per team. USAID could underwrite these modest equipment needs for its target governorates, or even for all governorates.
6. **Install a communications (internet) and data (LAN, WAN) network.**

Good management in a decentralized system requires communication and data exchange between the various levels. USAID could provide support for setting up and equipping these systems, underwriting both hardware and software needs at the central and governorate levels. (In general, it appears that many districts do not have the basic phone service required, although their needs could also be considered, as is feasible.) Other donors could support system set-up in other, non-targeted governorates. A consultancy concerning this has been planned under BEEP I for the latter half of 2004, but USAID may wish to propose that it undertake this task, given its resources and experience in this area (e.g. the Leland Initiative).

7. **Experiment with new methods and technologies for data entry.**

There are many technical innovations in the area of data entry, including the use of handheld devices that can immediately record and up-load school-based data into a central database. USAID could assist the MOE in experimenting with these technologies, as part of its Mobile EMIS team pilot exercise, by providing the equipment (and associated training).

8. **Extend GIS/GPS to governorate level.**

Geographic positioning and information systems have been used successfully for many years for school mapping, inventory, and planning purposes. In Yemen, the Social Fund has used GIS/GPS in its school construction program. The MOE is procuring the equipment (hardware and software) for its use centrally, but is unable to provide its governorate offices with the equipment. USAID could provide GIS/GPS hardware and software to either all governorates or its target governorates, and underwrite associated training on its use. USAID’s Partners for Health Reformplus Project, implemented by Abt Associates, is working with the Ministry of Health to introduce the use of GIS/GPS for health surveys. Thus far, it has held a multi-sectoral workshop on GIS and plans to train health personnel in the five target governorates. In these governorates, there may be scope for multi-sectoral collaboration, equipment sharing, and training.

C. **Next Steps**

The suggested activities noted above identify opportunities for USAID support and intervention. However, additional information and discussion with the MOE and other partners is required in order to proceed to detailed activity design. Because the situation of the governorates (and particularly their districts) can vary considerably, any intervention or activities will most likely have to be adjusted to reflect—at the very least—the different resource attributes. For example, not all district education offices lack basic infrastructure. In addition, the skill levels and competencies of staff may vary. Furthermore, the uneven coverage among and within governorates by donors, creating a patchwork of training and assistance programs, means that USAID can not necessarily “straight-line” its activities and support across all five target governorates. For example,
GTZ is active in planning and budgeting in one of the five targeted governorates (Marib), so efforts in these areas would have to be adjusted to fit the situation.

Consequently, recommendations for immediate USAID action to develop it support package to improve the public sector environment and further decentralization of education include:

- Develop a database on the education staffing, skills, infrastructure and equipment attributes of the five target governorates, at both the district and governorate levels. Whereas this report has identified general needs, future activity or project design requires that these needs be further defined, especially in the areas of infrastructure and equipment, which can pose a binding constraint to productive investment in human resources or system development. While many dire reports were heard about the state of district resourcing, capacity, and personnel competencies, the prevalence of these situations is unknown. The World Bank is undertaking a district education capacity assessment in 12 governorates (with a report expected in mid-March), and other data may be available through the MOE, the governorate offices, and USAID’s project offices. For example, ADRA indicates that it has completed a needs assessment, district government capacity, and school inventory survey in the five districts in Sadah and Al Jawf governorates where it is working.

- Once this information has been consolidated, USAID may need to conduct its own survey geared to activity areas of particular interest, in order to have complete information. This could be done rapidly by working through the governorate offices, and also present an initial opportunity to begin joint project planning (see next bullet), as governorate-level education staff review existing data, help develop supplemental survey instruments, and later analyze the data they collect.

- Conduct a participatory planning workshop that brings together the MOE, target governorates, and other appropriate groups in order to review the “needs inventory” (see previous bullet) and prioritize USAID support and interventions. Holding a joint workshop, rather than planning individually with each governorate, will facilitate planning a relatively consistent program across governorates. The “needs inventory” and the options presented in this report can lay the foundation for focused discussion. Once interventions and actions have been identified, working groups from each governorate—with leadership from USAID—could be charged with obtaining additional information and developing design specifications.

- Alternatively, in order to provide immediate, but highly limited assistance, USAID may wish to act on one of the “one-off” recommendation, such as providing computers. In this case, it could convene a highly-targeted planning session with MOE, governorate, and other appropriate representatives to determine viability and plan for developing the specifications, methods, scope of the procurement, and training needs. A more comprehensive plan would then be developed for capacity building, training, and usage.
ANNEX 1
Institutions and Persons Interviewed

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Government of Yemen

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Dr. Sami Shamsan, General Director of Curricula Tel: 71123066
Dr. Ibrahim Al-Houthy, Assistant Director, Education Research & Development Center

Ministry of Local Authority (MOLA):
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Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOP):
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Hashem Awon Allah, Advisor Tel: 250112

Governorate of Amran:
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Ahmed Al-Shahari, Director General of Education Representatives, Governorate Local Council

Governorate of Sadah:
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Ahmed Al-Washali, Director General of Education Tel: 0712535Mob.17149205
Representatives, Governorate Local Council

Governorate of Shabwa:
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Ahmed Mohsin, Director General of Education
Ahmed Alwaiss, Deputy Director General of Education
Dr. Salim Alhomis, Vice Chairman, Governorate Local Council
District Education Office Staff, Nisab District
District Local Council Members, Nisab District
Support of Decentralization of Basic Education in Yemen: Situation Analysis and Recommendations

District Education Office Head, Attaq District
District Local Council Members, Attaq District

Funding Agencies (Donors)

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German Technical Cooperation (GTZ)
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Social Fund for Development
Hafeth Al-Dharhany, Education Office Tel: 76018888
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The World Bank
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Projects

CARE-USAID Adult Life Skills and Literacy Program (Amran)
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Abt Associates-The Partners for Health Reformplus Project
Cheri Rassas, Chief of Party Tel:73699685
ANNEX 2
References

Republic of Yemen

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Ministry of Education


Support of Decentralization of Basic Education in Yemen: Situation Analysis and Recommendations

USAID/American Embassy


The Local Authority in Yemen, August 12, 2003.


World Bank


Other


