



Youth Participation in Decision-Making at Local Authority **Reality and Ambition**

Aden, Taiz and Hadramout as Examples

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منظمة شباب بلا حدود للتنمية
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About Partnerships Project

This policy paper was published by Youth Peace and Security Pact-Yemen as part of Partnerships Project, funded by the Netherlands Embassy in Yemen, in partnership with Youth Without Borders and Civil Alliance for Peace in three governorates (Taiz, Aden and Hadramout). The project aims at maximizing youth participation in decision making at local and national levels to contribute to comprehensive peace in Yemen through empowering the civil society and bridge the gap between local actors (Track 3) and national actors (Track 2), to ensure better engagement of young men and women in local and national decision making.



About Youth Without Borders

Youth without Borders Organization for Development is a civic, non-governmental, non-profit organization that aims to develop young people's capacities and rehabilitate them so they can play an influential and effective role and ultimately transform society for the better. On April 15, 2014, it was formally established as a civil, non-governmental organization with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor under license No. 4/M/2013 in compliance with Law No. 1/2001 AD. It began operating as an informal youth group in 2011.



About Civil Alliance for Peace - Yemen

The Civil Alliance for Peace (CAP) is an independent community entity that holds legal status in accordance with the Yemeni law for NGOs and institutions No. (1) for the year 2001. CAP comprises a group of several Yemen civil society organizations active in peacebuilding and in advocating and promoting youth and women's roles in peacebuilding in Yemen. In terms of geographic presence, CAP operates throughout the Republic of Yemen as it seeks to have an active role in supporting peacebuilding and supporting peacebuilding actors in the country. Further, it seeks through its interventions to reduce both community and political conflicts through promoting the culture of peace, coexistence, and development. It believes that; by fostering a culture of peace, by promoting tolerance, and by ensuring equal opportunities for all to build their communities, the development gains and achievements would be numerous.



Youth Peace and Security Pact – Yemen

Founded by UNFPA and UN Women – Yemen, YPS is a diverse, voluntary youth gathering, including youth leaders and activists from various organizations, entities, and civil and political affiliations of the Yemeni society. YPS has an open membership for all young men and women who support its goals independently without bias to any party.



Executive Summary

Although the population under-30 years make about 75% of Yemen population, the official efforts to engage youth in decision-making are insufficient with many obstacles along the way. The ongoing war since 2015 has crippled human development and undermined the psychosocial and economic climate of the country where youth can thrive and become socially active. This was reflected in the Youth Development Index in 2016 in which Yemen ranked 152 out of 183 countries around the world.

To understand and tackle the problem of youth engagement in decision making, this policy paper was conducted in three governorates namely; Aden, Taiz and Hadramout. Desk study of previous studies and relevant laws, policies, etc. was one of the research data collection tools. 30 in-depth interviews (9 interviews with local authority departments and committees in the three governorates, 15 interviews with youth leaders and 6 interviews with thematic experts and representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs) working with youth) were conducted, too. A discussion session, attended by youth leaders from CSOs and youth entities and alliances, was also held at each targeted governorate.

The research findings revealed that there were multiple reasons that had adverse impact on the participation of youth in decision-making at the local level. The reasons included poor transparency in the appointments of the decision-making positions; the aging local authorities officials, the suspension of local councils; the poor communication channels between young men and women and the local authority; the blurry vision of local authorities on how to engage youth, the limitation of leadership and decision-making positions to social figures; and the deficiencies in the interpretation and application of relevant laws and policies.

The policy paper concluded with some recommendations as follows:

Local authorities and relevant ministries: should represent youth in local authority structures pursuant to the Local Authority Law and National Dialogue Conference Outcomes (NDC) through mainstreaming the experience of appointing governorate undersecretaries for youth affairs and creating direct communication channels for male and female youth – youth group/s from different geographical areas and social backgrounds - with decision makers. Local authority leaders should appoint youth in first and second level leadership positions. The Ministry of Civil Service should adopt youth recruitment strategies in public service. The local authorities should ensure youth representation in the membership of any committees formed by the local authorities.

This paper urges decision-makers to open communication and dialogue channels with male and female youth through open sessions and conferences and to pay more attention to training and education programs for youth.

The decision-makers should also implement programs that create participation opportunities for youth in all aspects. Since the Ministry of Youth and Sports and its governorate offices are concerned with youth, this paper stresses the importance of active participation in planning and implementing the decision of local authorities to reinforce youth participation through forming youth committees/bodies in the local authority structures, establishing youth sub-units assigned with youth development at youth and sports governorate offices. This paper also recommends distributing the local authority revenues from Youth and Adolescents Fund to youth empowerment and training activities and youth initiatives as well as sports activities.

Political parties: should empower their young members to assume leadership positions through providing them with leadership opportunities and positions within their structures as well as the structures of local authorities. They should also re-activate youth programs and departments within their parties.

Civil society organizations: should implement empowerment programs for youth entities, including capacity building of local authority young staff and awareness raising on the importance of youth participation in civil and political life. CSOs should hold dialogue programs, create communication channels between youth and decision-makers, and continue conducting studies and developing guidance and policies to advocate for and communicate youth issues to decision makers at all levels.

Male/female youth: should search and participate actively in capacity building opportunities as well as local, national and international conferences and forums. They should support youth leaders in the local authority structures. They should communicate actively with their parties to get learning opportunities and experience, play leaderships roles and get electoral districts in any upcoming local elections. They should also launch initiatives and youth entities advocating for and addressing youth issues.

Youth and Hope for Participation in Decision-Making

Youth participation in the political and legislative process is a major issue facing communities across the world. Local authorities are among the areas where youth can be effectively engaged in decision-making and in determining the future of their communities, but they face difficulties in obtaining participation opportunities in local authorities. They are mostly excluded from leadership positions and their role as young people is ignored, although the 2011 uprising sparked controversy over the importance of engaging youth in the political process and decision-making. During the uprising, the youth worked hard to increase their political representation, demanded for their rights and expressed their ability to assume decision-making positions to change their reality that was seized by traditional powers and marginalization. The local powers, including political parties and traditional powers, then found themselves forced to respond to youth demands.¹

¹ Atiaf Zaid Alwazir, "Yemen's Independent Youth and Their Role in the National Dialogue Conference", SWP Comments, August 2013, https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/comments/2013C23_wzr.pdf





One of the fruits of this phase was clear in the national dialogue, which the youth described as their largest youth participation, as 145 young men and women participated in the comprehensive national dialogue.² The youth competed for the first-row seats in the negotiation room, ignoring the traditional and partisan forces that used to get the front seats, while the youth sat further back.³

The key guidelines of the national dialogue that ensured the political participation of youth included establishing a high national youth council, developing constitutional policies empowerment and participation in decision-making through this council. However, the implementation of these guidelines was suspended due to the suspension of NDC outcomes, the collapse of state institutions and the stalemate of the political process.

Who are youth?

They are defined as persons of the age of 18-29 years old according to UN Resolution 2250 of SC, 2015, and further noting the variations of definition of the term that may exist on the national and international levels as well as cultures and organizations. The draft law on Youth and Adolescents Protection defines a young person as any natural person, male or female, of the age of 17-29 years old. This policy paper adopted the age group of under 40 for young people based on the NDC outcomes.



There was also a great momentum by civil society to empower youth. Some interviewed youth believed that this momentum resulted from the UN Resolution 2250 issued by the Security Council in 2015 as it urges increasing inclusive representation of youth at all levels.⁵ This momentum resulted in the emergence of many youth entities and groups, which were active in community and youth work, as well as governments and youth parties such as Al-Watan Party, which was officially registered in January 2014 after the 2011 uprising.⁶

Recently, as part of the local efforts, the local authority sought to engage youth within its structures. The local authority in Aden, for example, made several appointments of youth to run a number of core units and committees, and some were appointed as district managers such as Sira district manager.⁷ Youth, however, felt that the lion's share of youth appointments was in routine and secretary works. Those youth who received job opportunities probably included relatives of state officials or had connections from social figures or political parts.

After 2011 events, some governorates appointed governorate undersecretaries for youth affairs such as Aden and Hadramout governorates. Attempts initiated by undersecretaries to represent youth and plan increased youth movement encountered many challenges and obstacles. For example, the youth undersecretaries' powers were constrained.

An interviewed youth undersecretary said, "My role is supervisory, which is one of the obstacles that prevents me from making decisive interventions or basic planning to directly engage youth."⁸ And if wide powers and freedoms were granted to the undersecretary, they faced financial constraints to support youth initiatives and activities,⁹ which created a difficult environment for the undersecretary and heavily weighed on their role to invest this position to serve youth. Despite these attempts and experiences, there are challenges that hinder youth participation in decision-making. Key challenges revealed by this paper include:

Poor transparency in appointments in decision-making positions

Political parties affected the distribution of youth engagement opportunities in decision-making. Political parties only appointed their members in leadership positions, which affected other independent youth. Youth thought that conflicts between parties and political powers affected youth representatives and led to losing credibility and trust in the representation of youth issues. Youth also thought partisan youth had better opportunities to assume leadership positions, but they expressed their concerns over political affiliations due to community perception of politics and politicians. The communities considered politicians responsible for the ongoing war and crisis in the country and looked at them with suspicion.¹⁰ An interviewed youth confirmed that "Politics is dirty in the community."¹¹

Interviewed youth believed that the absence of clear youth selection standards within the local authority indicated that youth who had connections or relatives were able to assume positions at this authority.

This is attributed to the administrative legacy culture in the public sector; the lack of transparency of opportunity rotation; political affiliations and the politicization of positions which motivated nepotism and mediation; and the desire of every official to attract people they trusted. Youth also felt that young people who were lucky enough to join elected local councils often came from reputed families in the community. The youth also thought that such elections were based on "Select this person to please his/her father",¹² instead of electing young persons based on their skills and experience.

2 Atiaf Zaid Alwazir, "Yemen's Independent Youth and Their Role in the National Dialogue Conference", SWP Comments, August 2013, https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/comments/2013C23_wzr.pdf

3 Faisal Mahboub, "Political Empowerment of Youth in the Republic of Yemen: A Study on Legislation and Policies", December 2020, <http://www.theacss.org/pages/working-papers/1277/>

Atiaf Zaid Alwazir, *ibid*.

4 Constitutional Guidelines on Youth in Yemen - As per NDC Outcomes Document", Women and Youth Forum, 2014, https://osesy.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/constitutional_guidelines_on_youth_ar.pdf

5 UN News, "UN Security Council adopts historic resolution on youth, peace and security", UN, 11 December 2015, <https://news.un.org/ar/audio/2015/12/342662>

6 Atiaf Zaid Alwazir, "Yemen's enduring resistance: youth between politics and informal mobilization", Mediterranean Politics, 13 October 2015,

7 Personal interview, member of a local mediation committee with the local council, Sira, Aden, 20 March 2023.

8 Personal interview, Assistant Undersecretary for Youth and Sports Affairs, Local Authority Administration, Mukalla, 15 March 2022.

9 Personal interview, Governorate Undersecretary for Youth Affairs, Aden, 1 June 2023.

10 Focus group discussion with youth leaders, Taiz, 12 March 2023.

11 Interview, Director of the Democratic Youth Foundation, Seyeon, 20 March 2023.

12 Yazid al-Jeddawi, author of a policy paper entitled: (The impact of Yemen war on youth priorities and needs), phone interview.



The aging local authority officials and dysfunction of local councils

Youth thought that older local authority staff did not want to leave their positions and were afraid of losing their jobs. Although many older staff had already reached retirement age, the suspension of recruitment since the outbreak of war had resulted in older staff continuing their work and retaining positions even after reaching retirement age. Youth also believed that local authority staff were unconvinced of job rotation and were reluctant to recruit new young staff.¹³

Local councils were affected by war that paralyzed them, as the state focused on war and armed conflict, leading the role of local councils to be ignored.¹⁴ This adversely affected youth who did not have the opportunity to express their needs given the suspension of local elections. The Yemeni citizens witnessed the last election process for local councils in 2006, almost 18 years ago.¹⁵

Local authority-youth poor communication channels

Interviews revealed that youth did not feel trust towards local authorities, and they thought that they were exploited to conduct routine business or were used as an interface with donors and funders. Youth attributed that to the lack of real projects to engage youth by the local authority at the level of districts and governorates, and that the local authority looked at them with contempt, underestimated their abilities or considered them inexperienced. They also thought that the local authority picked the youth it wanted, instead of comprehensive targeting.¹⁶ On the other hand, local authority has concerns toward youth, and it was mentioned that youth still lack diplomacy and responsibility, and that they launch negative and smear attacks against the local authority through social media. When youth have disagreements with a certain official, they launch smear campaigns through media.¹⁷

This problem might be attributed to the poor communication between youth and local authorities due to the lack of clear and appropriate channels. Youth indicated that they found difficult to meet officials at the local authority to discuss their problems. Even the youth conferences convened by organizations or the local authority did not bridge the gap of communication because they host big number of attendees and speakers which minimized the opportunity for youth to express themselves and their needs. They also had less opportunities to directly speak with the local authority.

Despite the importance of youth groups and their positive role in serving youth and communities, youth mentioned that when they were invited for conferences and events, they were invited as representatives of such groups, not as representatives of youth. This might be due to the fact that the local authority does not currently have a dedicated entity that represents youth and speaks on behalf of youth in general. The youth indicated that they needed the local authority to develop its structures and mechanisms to fully represent youth and enable them to participate effectively in local decision-making.

Local authorities' blurry vision on how to engage youth

Although many interviewed young men and women expressed their resentment and dissatisfaction with their level of participation in local decision-making, the local authorities, on their side, face difficulties on how to engage youth due to powers limitation, centralized decision at the senior authorities, poor legal texts or misinterpretation and misapplication of some laws supporting youth engagement.¹⁸

An interviewed local authority representative said that the local authorities needed help to identify clear vision for youth engagement. Despite the diversity of projects and programs implemented by organizations to engage youth, the local authority still suffers from two problems. The first is the inability of local authorities to sustain activities after the end of youth engagement projects or initiatives furnished by organizations. The second relates to youth selection process, as the local authority believes that the local authority positions should be shared among political parties, and thus parties should pay attention to this matter.¹⁹

Limitation of leadership and decision-making positions to social figures

The community looked at the leadership and decision-making positions as positions that should be assumed by honorable and prestigious social figures. Many local authority officials and local council members are social figures. This community perception made youth feel disrespected as competent persons able to participate in the political life. Perceived as less able to make decisions that required influential and socially-renowned persons, youth face challenges to access empowerment opportunities, eclipsed by tribal rhetoric. An interviewed young person mentioned that the local authority leadership often had time to meet tribal figures "sheikhs" and prestigious persons but ignored youth, considering their issues as a waste of time.²⁰

Laws and policies

Decision-makers thought that youth engagement in decision-making was a legal issue, as the law has ignored youth engagement in decision-making, as the Yemeni constitution and law as amended in 2001 did not make it mandatory to engage youth in decision-making. The local authority law also excluded youth from running for the governor and presidency of local council positions by identifying the eligible candidacy age to be 40 years old,²¹ which is in contravention with Article (24) of Yemen constitution stipulating that "The state shall guarantee equal opportunities for all citizens in the fields of political, economic, social and cultural activities and shall enact the necessary laws for the realization thereof." Article (42) also guarantees political participation for all citizens, including youth.²² Attempts to enact laws for youth have failed so far despite the existence of the draft law on adolescent and youth protection (2008), which has not been approved by the parliament. There is no national independent national strategy for youth, and the National Children and Youth Strategy (2006-2015) failed to stimulate youth participation in decision-making, focusing mainly on training while neglecting the opportunities and positions that youth needed to access decision-making.

13 Focus group discussion with youth leaders, Aden, 14 March 2023.

14 Wadah Al-Awlaqi and Majed Al-Madhaji, "Local Governance in Yemen Amid Conflict and Instability", 29 July 2018, <https://sanaacenter.org/ar/publications-all/main-publications-ar/6320>

15 Majed Al-Madhaji et al., "The Essential Role of Local Governance in Yemen", October 2016, <https://sanaacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/>

16 [files_the_essential_role_of_local_ar.pdf](#)

17 Personal interview, Director of Alakhar Center for Peace and Development, Taiz, 12 March 2023.

18 Personal interview, Project Coordinator, Taiz, 18 March 2023.

19 Personal interview, ibid.

20 Article 38, Law No. 4 of 2000 Concerning the Local Authority, as amended in 2008, <https://www.almotamar.net/pda/56524.htm>

21 Articles (24,42), "Constitution of the Republic of Yemen", National Information Center, <https://yemen-nic.info/yemen/dostor.php>

22 National Children and Youth Strategy of the Republic of Yemen, 2006-2015, Yemen, <http://www.yemen.gov.ye/portal/Portals/15/upload/%>



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Many youth and legal experts believed that the real problem is the poor interpretation of law in a fashion that serves youth participation or misinterpretation of law to evade the obligations of state and decision-makers towards youth, as the Yemeni Constitution as amended in 2001 has guaranteed youth participation in decision-making clearly, as explained by Articles 24 and 42. Article (6) also stated that the Republic of Yemen confirms its adherence to the UN Charter, the International Declaration of Human Rights, the Charter of the Arab League, and Principles of international Law which are generally recognized, which all guaranteed youth access to decision-making positions.²⁴ The international resolutions (2250) and (2419) and all ratified international charters and conventions, equal to constitutions, confirm the same.

There are also some laws that support the rights of youth participation in decision-making, including the Political Parties and Organizations Law No. 66 of 1991, and the General Elections and Referendum Law No. 13 of 2001, which enabled young people to vote, run and establish political parties, cooperative societies and civil organizations. Law No. (10) of 1996 on the Establishment of Adolescents and Youth Fund (AYF) as amended and its executive regulations, despite largely focusing on sports activities, has identified (supporting youth activities and training programs) among the fund's main purposes, contributing to preparing youth for decision-making positions. The Local Authority Law No. (4) of 2000 and its executive regulations allocated local authorities 30% of the AYF resources for supporting and capacitating youth and granted them the right to run for local council membership. The Constitutional Guidelines on Youth per NDC outcomes document are also a key reference for the current phase.

However, there is a lack of opportunities for youth participation in decision-making, coupled with poor efforts of local authority towards engaging and helping youth access leadership positions. Youth thought that the local authority did not effectively use the AYF resources to support and capacitate youth, making it difficult for youth to get training opportunities, especially graduates of political science and law, to practice political work and polish their administrative skills in decision-making. Despite the role of CSOs in capacity building and engaging youth in multiple development areas and social initiatives, CSOs face difficulty to help youth access leadership positions in local authority structures.²⁵

Another challenge is the limited powers of local authorities to introduce changes in the local administration system, such as structural changes, and their commitment to the hierarchical system. This hinders young employees from reaching a leadership position easily, which requires long years of service and a series of job promotions according to the Civil Service Law.²⁶ This has crippled the local authorities' ability to promote new youth to leadership positions. Youth need their role to be strengthened, which may require executive decisions at the local and national levels as well as amendments to current laws and regulations and their alignment with international conventions and treaties and constitution. It is also important to develop national and local strategies to increase opportunities and positions for youth to participate in decision-making as well as encouraging youth to effectively participate in the democratic process at all levels.

Aden, Taiz and Hadramout: Similar Contexts

This paper considered the different contexts of the three targeted governorates and reached similar conclusions despite the variety of collected data. This helped formulate the problem dimensions in these governorates. The following summarizes the youth participation context in decision-making in each governorate and provides recommendations as suggested by respondents and the researcher based on the context of each governorate.

Youth situation in **Aden** is better off than in Taiz and Hadramout in terms of activity and interaction. This is attributed to the governorate undersecretary for youth affairs who was assigned in 2016 and officially appointed by a republication decree in 2017. He exerted efforts and implemented notable activities recently such as the Youth Development Conference which included several conferences and workshops to mobilize support and funds for youth and to coordinate with ministries such as the Ministries of Education, Youth and Sports and Technical Education and Vocational Training. He also encouraged youth through a national youth program which included youth initiatives and projects as well as governor grants targeting 1,000 creative male and female youth, governor grants for professionals and governor award for creativity and arts.²⁷

Some youth project experts attributed this success to the vital role played by youth movement and civil society in Aden in supporting the efforts of the governorate undersecretary. There, however, is still weakness in the organization process and delivery of wider opportunities for youth engagement due to the poor institutional organization of the work of the undersecretary for youth affairs. Some youth ascribed this success to the personality of the current governorate undersecretary for youth affairs and his ability to create effective relations with local and international organizations as well as ministries and governorate officials. They noted that the lack of organizational process and not institutionalizing this role might undermine the current situation in future. Several young people were appointed in leadership positions in Aden, including the district managers of Craiter and Sheikh Othman. Their role, however, in highlighting and representing youth issues seemed poor, and their decision-making powers were limited and lacked clear professional mechanisms and plans. These youth leaders needed technical capacities, financial resources and wider space for local decision-making, as stated by several respondents.

²³ National Children and Youth Strategy of the Republic of Yemen, 2006-2015, Yemen, <http://www.yemen.gov.ye/portal/Portals/15/upload/%>

²⁴ "Constitution of the Republic of Yemen", 2001, <https://yemen-nic.info/yemen/dostor.php>

²⁵ Focus group discussion with youth leaders, Hadramout/Mukalla, 18 March 2023.

²⁶ Focus group discussion with youth leaders, Hadramout/Mukalla, 18 March 2023.

²⁷ Personal interview, *ibid*.



In Taiz, the local authority cooperated with youth groups and various community initiatives, including the Political Parties Youth Alliance and the Sanad Youth Network, which worked in coordination with the local authority on files related to the provision of public services in the governorate such as water, hygiene, electricity, and others. Taiz, however, fell behind Aden and Hadramout regarding appointing a governorate-level youth official, and it did not have a governorate undersecretary for youth affairs although this matter was one of the concerns of higher levels in the state. Appointing a governorate undersecretary for youth falls under the powers of the President of the Republic, as happened in Hadramout and Aden, according to Article (30), para. (a) of the Civil Service Law No. (19) of 1991. The President appointed governorate undersecretaries for other affairs, such as the undersecretary for financial and administrative affairs, who was appointed by the President of the Presidential Council in 2022.

Therefore, the attention of local authority in Taiz is limited to youth at the Ministry of Youth office. Although this office actively organizes sport activities, it did not actively adopt and advocate for public youth issues and development, as mentioned by several respondents. There is also a wide gap between youth and decision makers at the governorate due to the lack of dialogue events, which adversely affected communicating youth issues and needs to decision makers and thus shaking trust between these parties. The local authority recently appointed a very small number of young men and women at leadership positions at the governor office, including media secretary, cultural office manager and tourism office manager. But these positions have no powers to participate in decision-making and are pure executive positions.

The situation in Hadramout is no better than Aden and Taiz although there is a governorate undersecretary for youth affairs who was appointed by the Republic president in 2016. This undersecretary faced multiple challenges to serve youth due to his limited powers, which are limited to supervision, nomination and participation in meetings. He also did not have financial and human resources. This undersecretary performed his tasks under poor technical and financial support from the local authority. There is no job description or regulations for the role of the undersecretary which largely crippled the achievement of his objectives. As in Taiz, there is a wide gap between youth and decision makers in Hadramout due to the lack of dialogue events, which adversely affected communicating youth issues and needs to decision makers and thus shaking trust between these parties.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis of this policy paper and suggestions of respondents, these recommendations may contribute to improving youth engagement within the local authority in the current time and near future. The recommendations were listed by the concerned parties.

Local authorities

1. Represent youth in local authority structures

1.1. Appoint/strengthen the role of governorate undersecretaries for youth affairs

2. Empowerment and increasing opportunities

Implement training and education programs for youth to bolster youth participation, improve their skills, and enhance understanding of how to take part in the political process. The local authority can achieve this through: Based on local authority experience in Hadramout and Aden, it is important to appoint an undersecretary for youth in Taiz, with proper coordination with decision-makers and in light of the lessons learned from previous experiences in Hadramout and Aden which confirmed the importance of this appointment in strengthening youth role in the local community. When appointing the undersecretary, standards of age and competence should be considered, and a clear and transparent work mechanism that allows wider youth opportunities for this position should be in place.

- To ensure the effectiveness of this position, institutional building should be in place in the three governorates through institutionalization and organizational capacity building (job description and regulations). It is also important to ensure task separation, to avoid overlapping and conflict, and to ensure integration between this position and the tasks of governorate youth and sports offices. This will ensure effectiveness of the undersecretary role and ability to make a difference in the work of the local authority with male and female youth. In this framework, a three-year strategic plan for the undersecretary role should be developed to integrate this role in the different department and committees within the local authority and to ensure dealing with this position as a real representation of male and female youth.
- The role of the undersecretary should be strengthened through creating communication channels between youth and local authority through implementing activities and initiatives to discuss youth issues in the three governorates; providing the necessary financial and human resources for the undersecretary's work; and furnishing capacity building opportunities for the undersecretary of youth affairs.

2.1. Establish, appoint and empower a governorate-level advisory youth body: the existence of youth in the local decision-making center will contribute to bridging the gap between youth and their aspirations and decision-makers and taken decisions. One of the proposed mechanisms to bridge this gap in the three governorates was establishing an advisory youth entity/body/committee by the governor in coordination with the competent bodies and in consultation with experts. This body should represent youth and identify youth visions for the decision-making process. It is important to build this body institutionally and to define its framework and plans in light of the previous experiences, including the experiences of civil society as well as youth and sports offices. This body's tasks should be properly segregated from the tasks of governorate youth and sports offices.

2.2. Appoint youth in first and second level leadership positions: Activate the NDC outcomes that granted young men and women 20% of leadership positions in the local authority to enable them to make decisions. Adopt policies and giving powers that enable young men and women to reach these positions and ensure their ability to make decisions. This appointment should not be a mere formality.

2.3. Engage male and female youth in local authority committees: Engage male and female youth in the membership of specialized committees of the local authority. The local council can achieve this through:



- Representing youth in the membership of any specialized committee formed by the local authority such as mediation, security and other committees.
- Forming interim youth committees for youth issues and engagement in local decision-making.
- In the long term, the local authorities should apply quota by allocating 20% of the three specialized committees' membership for youth. Political parties should also allocate 20% of their candidates for the local council from youth per the NDC outcomes, which urged empowering youth withing parties and organizations through allocating at least 20% of seats for youth.

3. Communication and dialogue

3.1.Reinforce transparency and open dialog with youth: through providing equal engagement opportunities for all male and female youth without discrimination or bias; organizing the process to increase trust between youth and the local authority, and strengthen transparency in decisions related to the political process. This should be done through:

- Holding open monthly/quarterly meetings/dialogue forums/conferences between youth and local authority and concerned executive offices, including youth and sports offices, political parties, youth initiatives and entities and CSOs within governorates.
- Instructing office and committee managers to give priority to youth to have participation opportunities in the trainings received by the local authority.
- Training new youth staff in the local authority to gain knowledge about the work policy, regulation and systems of local governance as well as relevant local and international laws. Implementing political and social development programs, which could be implemented through coordination with CSOs and relevant training centers.
- Adopting and supporting regular youth programs to mobilize support and funding from donors for youth programs and projects. Coordinating with ministries such as the Ministries of Education, Youth and Sports and Technical Education and Vocational Training to provide technical, logistical and financial support for youth empowerment and training programs and implement youth initiatives and projects. Providing government awards and grants to support youth and benefiting from the experience of National Youth Program in Aden and the governor's role in sponsoring the Creative Entrepreneurship Grants, the Inventors' Grant, the Governor's Award for Creativity and Arts.

Government/ministries

Ministry of Civil Service

Increase the participation of young men and women in public service through introducing/developing recruitment strategies, applying competence standards, while ensuring youth's engagement in public service in all the sectors.

Ministry of Youth and Sports and its governorate offices

- Actively participate in planning and implementing decisions taken by the local authorities to strengthen youth participation, including forming a youth committee/body within the local authority structures that acts as an advisory youth group for the undersecretary and a focal point between youth and decision makers.
- Establish sub-units for youth sector to work on youth development at governorate youth and sports offices, and design programs and activities according to the ministry's youth sector strategic plan.
- Distribute the local authority revenues from youth fund to youth empowerment and training activities and youth initiatives as well as sports activities. The Ministry of Youth and Sports should instruct its governorate offices to submit plans and reports on training and education programs for youth.

Political parties

- Nominate young leaders for any leadership positions within local authority structures in accordance with the criteria set for these positions.
- Appoint young men and women in leadership positions within the internal structures of parties and provide opportunities for youth for learning and gaining experience from parties' leaderships.
- Activate youth internal departments and support their activities to create space for participation and to build the capacities of youth party members.

Civil society organizations

- Design and implement programs that empower youth entities, either within local authority structures or civil society initiatives and organizations, through training, experience exchange, networking, institutional building, consultancy and technical experience provision and financial support to empower youth entities to play a more effective role.
- Raise the awareness of youth and local communities on the importance of youth's participation in civil and political life.
- Implement dialog and social participation programs to create communication channels between youth and decision makers.
- Conduct studies and develop guides and policies to identify and advocate for youth issues, and to suggest solutions and mechanisms that strengthen youth participation in decision making.

Young men and women

- Seek and actively participate in capacity building opportunities as well as local, national and international conferences and forums in different areas to gain knowledge, experience and relations.
- Support youth leaders who assume positions within local authority structures.
- Effectively communicate with parties to access learning opportunities, gain experience and play leadership positions in their parties. Lobby for allocating quotas from the party's candidate seats in any upcoming local elections, form youth initiatives, entities and networks that advocate for and address youth issues.



Roza Al- Hakimi

An expert researcher in public policies who is the research officer at Resonate! Yemen organization. Roza is a community activist who has prepared and participated in several researches, and she is a member of Youth Peace and Security Pact – Yemen. She is a Political Sciences graduate and is currently a Master's student in International Development and Gender Studies.

Jamal Al-Sabri

Jamal Al-Sabri is a Law graduate who is a research assistant and legal advisor for several CSOs. He has also served as the Head of the Coordination and Communication Committee at the Youth Peace and Security Pact – Yemen. Jamal has an intensive knowledge of political and legal work, and he is passionate about promoting dialogue and cooperation between youth and civil society to achieve peace and security.

