



# CASE STUDY

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**PARTNER NAME:**

Yemen Aid

**PROJECT NAME:**

Leadership Mentor Project

**DATE:**

June 1, 2021 - September 30, 2021

**WEBSITE**

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[www.riseforyemen.org](http://www.riseforyemen.org)

**INSTAGRAM**

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[@RISEFORYEMEN](https://www.instagram.com/RISEFORYEMEN)

**E-MAIL**

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[info@riseforyemen.org](mailto:info@riseforyemen.org)

# ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

## Yemen Aid

Yemen Aid has been advocating for Yemen and providing humanitarian relief since 2016. Yemen Aid understands the needs of Yemen are complex and vary from province to province. They are experts on the situation on the ground.

Yemen Aid's mission is to enable every Yemeni to be self-sufficient and to have access to clean water, healthcare, education, and economic opportunities.



# PROJECT OVERVIEW

## OVERVIEW

Yemen Aid (YA) recognizes that the youth of today are tomorrow's leaders. YA is strategically focused on capacity building in the community. Yemen Aid would like to establish a Leadership Mentor Program to focus on university students with backgrounds in Engineering/IT, Health, Public Policy, and Education. The pilot sought out 10 students, 5 male and 5 female. Students would be matched with professionals from various geographic locations. Students would have the opportunity to work with the mentor to create a proposal for an idea that would benefit Yemen. The proposal was optional.

The goal of the pilot is to figure out what it takes to make a virtual mentorship program work with the constraints faced in Aden, Yemen. The hope is to create an ongoing program that provides leadership skills.

## THE CHALLENGE

Yemen Aid was seeking to create a program from scratch for students. This posed several challenges:

- Students for the program need to be screened and selected.
- The language will be a barrier.
- Inconsistent internet connection and electricity.
- Time difference between students and mentors abroad.
- Recruiting mentors with leadership experience shrinks the pool of candidates.
- Creating a curriculum for a leadership program when base skills are unknown.

# SOLUTION OVERVIEW

## THE APPROACH

RFY and Yemen Aid would work closely to help recruit students with Yemen Aid leading the effort. A survey was sent out on Yemen Aid's platforms in Yemen to gauge interest of the students. Interviews of students were conducted in English to attempt to screen for language. Students will virtually meet their mentors at the Yemen Aid office where the internet and electricity are more stable due to a generator. RFY would recruit mentors from within both RFY and Yemen Aid networks. RFY would also create a loose guide for mentors and mentees to follow for their 6 sessions. Since all mentors are leaders, they should be able to easily cater to the student's needs. Multiple speaker sessions were arranged to supplement the program.

## Program Goals

- The primary goal of the program was to test the feasibility of this idea.
- Uncover potential barriers to the program.
- Achieve positive feedback on surveys.

## Outcomes

This pilot proved that this idea is completely feasible. The project was able to identify key issues that would need to be resolved for a successful program to be set up. See Recommendations for more details.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are based on lessons learned to create a future, ongoing program.

- An initial training program will provide a way to screen students to ensure they all have basic skill levels in computer literacy, self-conducted research/learning, English, and any other required skill. This should address multiple issues we ran into during the program:
  - Some students could not read English very well which meant they could not do a thorough job researching or fully understand emails.
  - The training program will also help in addressing cultural nuances that played a role in some confusion. We could introduce the concept of mentoring, working virtually, and basic communication and networking skills.
- Students required a lot of support as this is new to them. Having dedicated staff (maybe two for a training program, both male and female) that also speak English to work with people in the US to communicate issues and wins is critical.
  - Once we established a “spokesperson” for the students, most issues were addressed right away.
  - Having a female “coach” would help when making phone calls (to sidestep cultural norms of women not receiving phone calls from men) and make it easier for women to seek the help they need.
- Students that excel during the training program can come back as trainers for the next group.
- Students that excel during training can move on to the mentorship program or other programs Yemen Aid has.

# OTHER TAKEAWAYS

- Based on feedback from the students, it appears most of the job market in Yemen is in the NGO field. Understanding what NGO needs are and creating a training program specifically to prepare students to work in that sector is an opportunity.
- A leadership program may best be suited to individuals that already have jobs. Career prep may be a better option for students that are still looking for jobs.
- Students commented that they enjoyed connecting with Yemenis abroad.
- Since Europe and Asia has less time zone difference between Yemen (compared to the USA), scheduling was easier for those professionals.
- Some mentors offered to help Yemen Aid better develop the program for future iterations.
- While students preferred in-person talks, the virtual workshop was a success. Ideally, there would be a conference room speaker to make it easier for the facilitator to hear the students.
- Creating a cohort of students with the same background or same specific goal would make the program more effective and allow us to create a more detailed curriculum.



# RESULTS

There was a lot of interest in the program. The initial survey was shut down after a week and 72 applications were received. Getting responses to surveys throughout the program proved difficult. One on one conversations with each of the mentors was conducted and reflected in the recommendations above.

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## Students Mentored

- Out of 72 applicants, 10 students were selected for the pilot.

90%

## Submit the optional proposal

- Students worked with their mentors to use their new-found skills to propose a project idea that would bring benefit to the people of Yemen.

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## Speaker sessions

- Virtual workshops were tested and speakers covered topics such as collaborative brainstorming.

# Proposal Ideas

Below is a highlight of four project ideas students came up with. They submitted an initial proposal of their ideas.



## Start Up Incubator

Create a space that serves mainly as a place where ideas can be turned into sustainable businesses. It should also offer facilities and services where people can come together to meet, learn and grow their digital skills and businesses.

- *Mohamed Al-As*



## Helper 1

Create a platform to make it easier to locate and hire craftsmen. This is especially critical since the war has created many single mom households.

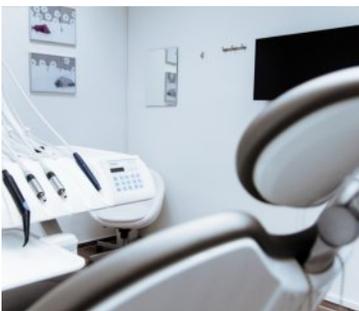
- *Dania Saeed*



## Projects Bank

Establish a platform through which people can share creative solutions to problems facing the country. Connect those with ideas with businessmen and investors to implement sustainable profitable projects.

- *Mohamed Baobaid*



## Mobile Dental Unit

Provide preliminary oral tests and provide community-based awareness about dental issues. Being mobile allows services to be more accessible to everyone.

- *Lamia Salem*

# TESTIMONIALS



**Simmi Goomer**

## **Mentor - Leadership Mentorship Program 2021**

“It was my pleasure to support and mentor a young adult professional in Yemen this summer. Together we focused on her interviewing skills and crafting a resume that truly celebrated all that she has done for her community so far. Opportunities like this remind me of just how much I have to gain from connecting with young adults, no matter where they live. Thank you to Yemen Aid and Rise for Yemen for making this a reality.”



**Dania Saeed**

## **Mentee - Leadership Mentorship Program 2021**

“I have hopes for Yemen to be better in the near future, because I believe that if we - the citizens - really wish to do something we will do it, and Yemen will rise up again by collective support.”



**Ebrahim Nasher**

## **Mentor - Leadership Mentorship Program 2021**

“Mentorship is one of the best-kept secrets that could truly transform your life. And it doesn't cost anything. Next time you see someone who inspires you, simply ask them, “Will you be my mentor?”

# ABOUT US



## Rise for Yemen

Rise for Yemen was established in 2020. It is an organization that seeks to connect skilled volunteers with projects in Yemen. It provides an avenue for people to help Yemen beyond a donation.

RFY also does research to learn more about the organizations and people that are working in Yemen and the challenges they face.