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## Over 17,000 displaced people in Sana'a in urgent need of humanitarian aid

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, JAN. 31 — Over 17,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) from the governorate of Sa'ada struggle to find shelter and income in Sana'a.

The displaced have fled ongoing fighting between Houthis insurgents and the Yemeni and Saudi governments in the northern governorate, where war resumed for the sixth time six months ago.

Yemen Times visited some displaced families in Sana'a.

Mohamed Al-Fareh was a teacher in Razih in Sa'ada, but fled to Sana'a after he lost his job because of the war, his house was destroyed by air raids, and his brother was killed.

He and the 19 members of his family with him in Sana'a now live in three rooms in a house belonging to a relative. In total, there are 113 people from 18 families living in the nine-room house.

"We were living a safe and normal life in our homes with our properties and sources of income, but air raids from both the Yemeni and Saudi air forces destroyed our homes, cars, and

killed thousands of civilians," he said.

"In Sana'a, landlords do not easily rent us apartments as they are afraid of us, although we have committed no sin except leaving our homes to flee the daily air strikes and destruction," he said.

The average number of people in each family living in the same building is around ten people and all the families have no sources of income, according to Al-Fareh.

The displaced people from Sa'ada started flowing into Sana'a city since the five-year-old conflict between the government and the Houthis escalated into open hostilities on 12 August 2009, according to Marie Marullaz, associate external relations officer of the IDPs at the UN Refugees' Agency (UNHCR).

"The continuous fighting in Sa'ada governorate has resulted in an increased number of civilians reaching the capital

Sana'a, whereas some 11,853 displaced have been registered so far, so, now we estimate that 17,000 displaced are now in the capital," said Marullaz.

"The IDPs officer at the UNHCR said that in Sana'a governorate, IDPs are scattered in urban settlements, living in host communities and most of them rent shelters and report facing difficulty to do so," she said.

The continuous war in Sa'ada forced over 157,832 of civilians to flee their homes seeking safety of their lives to Hajja, Amran and Sana'a, according to UNHCR.

### No income for rent

The Sa'ada IDPs in Sana'a not only risk losing their properties, but also face discrimination when looking for a room to live in, said Al-Fareh.

Dr. Essam Al-Dain Awadh from the Islah Charitable Welfare Society confirmed that the displaced people in Sana'a are confronted with society's indifference.

Another IDP in Sana'a who chose to remain anonymous said that, in the coming days, families who are living in rented apartments will be thrown out because they have no source of income.

"When those displaced people fled to Sana'a, they arrived here with some amounts of money as they were obliged to sell their livestock of sheep and cows for a low price, but now they are running out of money," said the displaced man.

"Now, they really will not be able to afford the rent of apartments or even to fill their empty stomachs," he added.

### Children in need of care

Al-Fareh estimated that, of the Sa'ada IDPs in Sana'a, over a half are children in need of medical care as well as food and basic items as their parents have no



Thousands of children from Sa'ada who have fled to the capital with their families risk being without shelter because their parents have no income.

source of income.

According to Al-Fareh, there are over 400 displaced families in Sana'a from Razih and they are centered in Al-Hasaba, Al-Matar area, and Al-Qadisiya neighborhood, according to Al-Fareh who is from Razih.

Al-Fareh said that he and other IDPs who previously worked for the Ministry of Education have a list of all the 400 displaced families from their district of Razih and will cooperate with any organization that wants to assist those poor people.

### Little humanitarian assistance

Many humanitarian organizations are

only focusing on the IDPs in Sa'ada and Hajja and have not yet paid any attention for the displaced people in Sana'a.

"The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) do not provide aids to the IDPs in Sana'a and there might be other organizations that work in this field," said Rabab Al-Rifai, communications officer at the ICRC.

The lack of shelter is a main concern in all governorates where the IDPs have sought refuge, said the UNHCR officer.

The officer said that a shelter task force has been deployed by the UNHCR in Sana'a as well as in Amran and Hajja to work on different solutions according to the population group. The

assessment will be completed at the end of January.

### Going into debt

"The most worrisome is that an increasing number families are going into debt," she added.

Some IDPs suggested to the humanitarian organizations to aid the displaced families in Sana'a with some cash aids in order be able to pay rent for their shelters.

"Until now, we have not received any aid from anybody and we hope they will hear about our suffering through your newspapers," said another displaced man.

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**MTN to surprise subscribers**

MTN Yemen, celebrated on January, 20th on the occasion of delivering the prizes to the winners of the 10th draw within the draws of the FIFA 2010.

The ceremony was attended by the MTN public relationship and advertisement manager, Malek Al-Kusa, media people, journalists and a number of MTN employees. The eleventh lucky winner of the World Cup 2010 Championship Abdu Ali Mohammad Al-Awadhi has received his prize to travel to South Africa and attend the sports event. Another seven 32 inch "Sony Bravia" TV flat screens were distributed to winners. Many other winners won in the seventh week in-kind prizes.

Kusa said that MTN is preparing a surprise for its subscribers as the 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa is approaching. He mentioned that the weekly draws are done according to specific standards in which a question is sent to all the subscribers with two options. They select the correct answer and send it to the number "2010". In the end he thanks everybody who attended the ceremony.

Worth mentioning is that the winners will get the travel expenses, accommodation and tickets to attend the matches, covered by MTN which is to host this important sports championship happening for the first time in Africa. In addition to this, tours in South Africa will be organized for the winners.

The 10th winner, Abdullah Mahdi, said that the trip will be of benefit for him for he is a referee. The other winners said that they did not expect to get the tickets to the 2010 World Cup

expressing their appreciation for MTN for being credible and fulfilling its promises for its subscribers.



MTN charitable program Within its charitable program that aims to the sponsoring of the social and charitable activities, MTN Yemen Charitable Corporation has announced its ensuring for 200 orphans from all the Yemeni governorates.

In this context, Mohammad Al-Wadhaf, the coordinator of MTN charitable Corporation and Tawfiq Al-Nadheef, the Information officer, have handled the allocated money, for ensuring 200 orphans, to the Charitable Society for Social Welfare. MTN, for its part, has received the yearly reports of the orphans whom were ensured by the corporation. It is pointed out that MTN initiates to ensure orphans to better their life conditions.

Ali Abdul Wareth, MTN Charitable Corporation Vice-president of the Executive Manager, called on all private sector organizations to contribute in the programs which aim at promoting the social solidarity in the country. He also expressed his sincere thanks to all establishments that have relations with the corporation.

Abdul Wareth draw the attention to the necessity of establishing programs that aim at uplifting the educational, vocational and cultural levels for the unemployed people, enabling them and raising their capacity.



**SANA'A**

**Workshop to discuss improving systems of quality fund**

Sana'a University launched on Tuesday a workshop to train leaders on improving systems of Quality Improving Fund which would continue for three days under the auspices of Dr. Saleh Ali Basurra Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

Deputy Minister of HESR Dr. Mohammad Mutahar said that the workshop's goal is to discuss the details of the projects presented by the universities for the guide of the Quality Improving Fund to exchange experiences to get the benefit from the meetings.

Mutahar added that the WB project for improving quality is considered the first one, indicating that there were talks with Arab countries to improve the studios programs through the permanent fund containing the donors and government side finance, in addition to the universities which contribute by 10-15%.

On the other hand, WB expert in projects programming field relating to quality improving Mr. Roojer Bersen said that Japanese grant it is primary component for these projects, indicating that there are some of the presented proposals from universities are distinctive but some of them need improving.

**FM deputy meets Libyan diplomat**

Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Muthana met here on Wednesday the acting of the Libyan Arab Brotherhood office in Sana'a Saleh al-Marghani.

The meeting was held on the occasion of ending al-Marghani's term as an ambassador of Libya to Yemen.

During the meeting, Muthana and al-Marghani have discussed the bilateral relations and how to enhance them.

**Yemen takes procedures to thwart African terrorists infiltration**

Yemen's security authorities have taken precautionary procedures to prevent African terrorists infiltration to the Yemeni lands among the Somali daily influx, a security source said Thursday.

The source told the weekly 26 September that the procedures include enhancing marine monitoring along the

Yemeni coastline and the immediate register for the arrival humanitarian refugees either in the especial outlets or reception locations.

Field searching campaigns will be intensified throughout the main cities in the country to hold the illegal resident refugees and deport them to their home, the source said.

Late in 2009, the Somali Young Mujahideen Movement (Harakat Al Shaabaab) announced its readiness to send militants to support Al-Qaeda members in Yemen amid crackdown on them by the government supported by regional and international allies.

Prior to the Somali movement announcement, the Yemeni counterterrorism troops raided several Al-Qaeda hideouts and training sites killing and arresting scores terrorist suspects.

**Conference on Yemeni employment to be held in February**

An international conference on promoting Yemeni employment in the labor markets in of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) will be held on 22 February.

A number of specialists, academics and experts from Yemen and the GCC will take part in the conference which aims at studying the requirements of Yemeni employment in the labor markets in GCC.

The Yemeni government seeks to implement a rehabilitation and training program for the Yemeni employment in accordance to the requirements of the GCC markets.

**Conference on Yemeni employment to be held in February**

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ing Yemeni employment in the labor markets in of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) will be held on 22 February. A number of specialists, academics and experts from Yemen and the GCC will take part in the conference which aims at studying the requirements of Yemeni employment in the labor markets in GCC.

**For the second consecutive year, The Yemen Commercial Bank fulfills its promises**



Sheikh Mohamed Ben Yahya Al-Rowaishan confirmed his happiness on the occasion of announcing the winner of the Dream House Draw for the second year.

"We are very happy that Fatima Saeed Abdu Mirisi won the Dream House Draw," he said, handing over the Draw.

"The Dream House Draw is one of the Yemen Commercial Bank's fruit and successful production," said Al-Rowaishan, congratulating the winner, her husband and her children."The Yemen Commercial Bank is well-known for its credibility, and we hope that this credibility and transparency in dealing with our customers will promote the trust in the bank's services, which are unique, trustworthy, and competitive in Yemeni banking."

The winner Fatima thanked in her return Sheikh Al-Rowaishan, the executive manger and all the staff in the Yemen Commercial Bank.

She also praised the distinguished services that the bank offers through his Jawahir Program.

"I came from Aden to Sana'a to receive my prize," she said. "I really appreciate the services of the bank, and I hope all the best for its competitive achievement in trade."



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JUST ANOTHER DAY IN THE CAPITAL (17)

# Sana'a night life



By: Judith Spiegel  
For the Yemen Times

It is midnight in Sana'a. The sounds of honking cars, screaming children, singing egg sellers, banging iron doors and rolling gas bottles have come to a grinding halt. The last little shop has closed its shutters and the city falls into a deep and dark sleep. The only sounds are those of plastic bags flying in the wind and angry cats. Life has come to a complete stand still. Or so you would think. Because maybe there is night life after all. For the traffic on the roads may have stopped at night, air traffic is at its busiest at this time of the day. This must mean that there is life somewhere, and it must be at the airport. Let's go and find out.

01.00 AM - The taxi ride is a quick one for all the roads are empty. Except for the rare illuminated shop signs, the city is pitch dark. Without the usual crowd at the market stalls and debab stands, the unpaved streets of Hasabah look like a war zone. Some stray dogs and stray men cross Airport road, for the rest there is nothing. Even the airport can hardly be called a sea of light. Nevertheless, before the entrance gate to the parking lot a long line of cars, taxi's and private cars, is waiting.

01.30 AM - Outside the arrival hall it is very busy. It is freezing cold so people beg the soldiers on guard to be let in. They are refused for "it

will be too crowded inside", as one of the soldiers says, while lazily leaning on his gun. Women on the other hand, are allowed in. They are greeted with a sign saying "have a nice flight". Someone must have mixed up the arrival and the departure hall. Inside, not only women are waiting for their families. Some men seem to have slipped in as well. "You need to know the right people", one of them explains.

The airport manager, for example, who is smoking a cigarette under a non-smoking sign. The man who just explained how to get in, is angry about this. "If people who make the laws are not even obeying them, this country can never improve", he sighs. Most offices are closed, only the buffet is open. There is no chewing gum with mint taste left at this time of the day, only banana gum is available. An old man shuffles with his walking stick to the barriers where his family members should appear soon. Turkish Airlines has just arrived from Istanbul. At the gates, a Russian man is waiting for a friend from Uzbekistan.

2.00 AM - Around 40 people are now inside the arrival hall. There is quiet talking and quiet waiting. The waiting crowd is treated to a little show. There is some consternation about the photo's taken by one of the waiting women. Not a good idea because soldiers appear on the photo's and they know. So does the woman. She is taken to the police

office where she has to open her camera. She explains that there is no film inside but that she can delete the photos, if necessary. It is necessary. She is released after a chat about Real Madrid and FC Barcelona. At the barriers, people are still waiting for their friends and families.

Like Amin, who is waiting for his son, who should arrive with Royal Air Jordanian soon. He went to Jordan for medical treatment since he fell of a scaffold during his work as a constructor. He hurt his neck badly, his father explains while rubbing his own neck. When asked whether the treatment was successful Amin sadly replies "No, it completely failed, he is dead now, I am waiting for his body". Amin does not know that the dead are being led away through a side door.

3.00 AM - A peak through the windows of the closed offices reveals a disturbing amount of maps in the office called "Baggage services". This, according to a waiting man is because "there are always problems with baggage, especially with Royal Air Jordanian". Meanwhile, outside the amount of people has increased substantially. Cigarette smoke fills the ice cold air. A man is brought in. He only wears a T-shirt and is shivering and shivering severely. A friend wraps him in a towel and he is allowed to sit inside. The man at the buffet sells him overpriced tea.

Meanwhile, the passengers of the Saudi Arabian Airlines flight walk thought the gates. Bright white dresses and enormous amounts of luggage move through the arrival hall. A lonely representative of a travel agency is sitting in one of the blue plastic chairs. Does he expect any clients? "No, just a friend from the United States. He is coming with Egypt Air, the last flight of the night." The sound of roaring jet engines can be heard. Maybe his friend has arrived. "No this is a military jet", the lonely travel agent expertly remarks.

4.00 AM - The arrival hall is deserted. Except for the lonely travel agent and some children, everybody has left. The digital displays with arrival times are switched off. Actually, they were never switched on. A handful of Egypt Air passengers comes out. The airport boss hurries them through the gates. It seems as if he - still smoking - has impatiently been waiting for them so that he can finally switch of the lights of his little airport.

4.30 AM - The taxi ride back from the airport is an equally dark affair as the ride to the airport. But, upon reaching the Old City slowly life comes back to town. The first mosques are opening their microphones for the morning prayers and hot tea, fresh bread and steaming beans can be bought at some food stalls around Tahrir square. Sana'a may not have much of a night life, it sure offers the perfect meal after a grand night out.

# Sana'a residents prepare to face rain

By: Saddam Al-Ashmori  
For the Yemen Times

To be prepared in the case of unseasonal rain, residents in Al-Ashash district, Sana'a, have started erecting wooden and stone walls in front of their houses to protect them from possible floods.

Although the rainy season in Sana'a is usually during the summer months, sudden rain last January caused floods and damage to private property in the capital.

The Al-Ashash district, in Hadda, Sana'a, is located in the natural trajectory of any large flow of rainwater from the mountains of 'Ayban to the west of Sana'a, and its residents are working to prevent any damage from floods due to rain outside the rainy season.

Ahmad Othman, one of the residents of the district, started taking precautions early this year.

"I erected barriers fearing the floods," he said, wondering why the state had not set up a drainage system in his district.

Shaher Al-Shaibani, a physician and a resident at Al-Ashash, said that a barrier was supposed to be built in the eighties as an answer to the floods. However, the project did not see the light.

A 35 meter-long fence around the garden, the septic tank in the garden, and the ground floor of Al-Shaibani's house were destroyed due to severity of floods last year during the same period.

The Al-Raimi family is also getting ready to face floods, but their preparations are different from those of Al-Shaibani. They have surrounded their house with heaps of clay and stones to prevent floods from getting into their house.

The Al-Raimi house was destroyed by unexpected floods this time last year, which swept away all the furni-



With no modern drainage system in the area, residents in Al-Ashash have piled stones outside their houses to protect them against possible floods.

ture inside. Other damage caused by the floods included damaged electric poles, houses, and telephone wires being swept away.

### Appeal to authorities

Residents of the district are now appealing to authorities to solve the problem of floods by paving the road and building a drainage system.

Engineer Mu'ayn Bashaq, a resident in the area, explained that a wide asphalted road, drains and a water barrier such as the one planned for in the eighties would help prevent damage in the case of flood in the future. But no official measures have been taken to start this.

Moneer Al-Maktari, the area's social leader, said that a 12 meter-wide paved road is the solution to the problem: "We pay taxes to the state," he said. "Why don't we get even our basic needs?"

President Saleh visited the area two years ago this area promising the people the services they needed, said Al-Maktari.

"We are simple people and unfortun-

nately we do not have anyone representing us in the parliament to put forth our issues," he complained, explaining that their representative in parliament, a man responsible for the whole of the Bani Matar area, has not put forward the residents' issues.

Mohammad Al-Hawani, a member of the local council for Al-Ashash, said that he was unable to do anything because the role of the local councils in Yemen has not been activated.

Part of the road inside the area is still not asphalted. When the rains come, the asphalted part is damaged and the non-paved part becomes muddy. The general authority for roads sends trucks to clear and even out the road, but not to pave it, say residents.

To find out whether plans were underway to pave the road in the area, the Yemen Times contacted the Ministry of Planning, and was successively transferred to the Ministry of Construction, the Fund for Roads and Bridges, and to the Ministry of Finance.

None so far have confirmed plans to do so.

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## China's Cyber-Warriors

By: Brahma Chellaney

The world now accepts that protecting our atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, and biosphere – the “global commons” – is the responsibility of all countries. The same norm must apply to cyberspace, which is critical to our everyday life, economic well-being, and security.

At a time when cyber attacks are increasing worldwide, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was right to declare that an attack on one nation's computer networks “can be an attack on all.” Indeed, the attacks are a reminder that, as a new part of the global commons, cyberspace already has come under threat.

Cyberspace must be treated, along with outer space, international waters, and international airspace, as property held in common for the good of all. And, like ocean piracy and airplane hijacking, cyber-crime cannot be allowed to go unpunished if we are to safeguard our common assets and collective interests.

Naming China among a handful of countries that have stepped up Internet censorship, Clinton warned that “a new information curtain is descending across much of the world.” Her statement, with its allusion to the Cold War-era Iron Curtain, amounted to an implicit admission that the central assumption guiding US policy on China since the 1990's – that assisting China's economic rise would usher in greater political openness there – has gone awry.

The strategy of using market forces and the Internet to open up a closed political system simply is not working. Indeed, the more economic power China has accumulated, the more adept it has become in extending censorship to cyberspace.

If anything, China has proven that a country can blend control, coercion, and patronage to stymie the Internet's politically liberalizing elements. Through discreet but tough controls, Beijing pursues a policy of wai song, nei jin – relaxed on the outside, vigilant internally.

Google is now crying foul over “a highly sophisticated and targeted attack on our corporate infrastructure originating from China.” But, despite its corporate motto – “Don't be evil” – Google itself was instrumental in aiding online censorship in China, having custom-built a search engine that purges all references and Web sites that the Chinese government considers inappropriate. Now Google itself has become a victim of China's growing cyber prowess, in the same way that appeasement of Hitler boomeranged onto France and Britain.

China deploys tens of thousands of “cyber police” to block Web sites, patrol cyber-cafes, monitor the use of cellular telephones, and track down Internet activists. But the threat to the new global commons comes not from what China does domestically. Rather, it comes from the way in which the know-how that China has gained in fashioning domestic cyber oversight is proving invaluable to it in its efforts to engage in cyber intrusion across its frontiers.

Canadian researchers have discovered a vast Chinese surveillance system called “GhostNet,” which can compromise computers in organizations abroad through booby-trapped e-mail messages that automatically scan and transfer documents to a digital storage facility in China. This is what happened when computers of the Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharamsala, India, were attacked last year.

India's national security adviser recently complained that his office was targeted yet again by hackers. “People seem to be fairly sure it was the Chinese,” he said. Officials in Germany, Britain, and the US have acknowledged that hackers believed to be from China also have broken into their government and military networks.

The state-sponsored transnational cyber threat is at two levels. The first is national, with the hackers largely interested in two objectives. One is to steal secrets and gain an asymmetrical advantage over another country. Cyber intrusion in peacetime allows the prowler to read the content and understand the relative importance of different computer

networks so that it knows what to disable in a conflict situation. The other objective is commercial: to pilfer intellectual property.

The second level of cyber threat is against chosen individuals. The most common type of intrusion is an attempt to hack into e-mail accounts. The targets also can face Trojan-horse attacks by e-mail intended to breach their computers and allow the infiltrators to corrupt or transfer files remotely.

To be sure, if a cyber attack is camouflaged, it is not easy to identify the country from which it originated. Through the use of so-called “false-flag espionage” and other methods, attacks can be routed through the computers of a third country. Just as some Chinese pharmaceutical firms exported to Africa spurious medicines with “Made in India” labels – a fact admitted by the Chinese government – some Chinese hackers are known to have routed their cyber intrusion through computers in Russia, Iran, Cuba, and other countries.

But, like their comrades in the pharmaceutical industry, such hackers tend to leave telltale signs. Then there are many cases in which the attacks have originated directly from China.

It seems unlikely that these hackers, especially those engaged in cyber espionage, pilferage, and intimidation, are private individuals with no links to the Chinese government. It is more likely that they are tied to the People's Liberation Army. In war, this irregular contingent of hackers would become the vanguard behind which the PLA takes on the enemy. Systematic cyber attacks constitute a new frontier of asymmetrical warfare at a time when the world already confronts other unconventional threats, including transnational terrorism.

With national security and prosperity now dependent on the safekeeping of cyberspace, cybercrime must be effectively countered as an international priority. If not, cyberspace will become the new global-commons battlefield.

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# Job Vacancies

## Yemen Community Livelihoods

CHF International's mission is to be a catalyst for long-lasting positive change in low- and moderate-income communities around the world, helping them to improve their social, economic and environmental conditions.

CHF International seeks experienced managers and technical specialists to implement a proposed USAID-funded Community Livelihoods Program in Yemen. This high-profile and large-scale program will implement a multi-sectoral, community-based initiative to mitigate the drivers of instability in some of Yemen's most difficult areas through job creation, community livelihoods, civic participation and improved local government service delivery.

### Chief of Party

#### Responsibilities

- Provide strategic direction and oversee management of the overall program.
- Coordinate with USAID to identify opportunities and constraints related to the achievement of program objectives and make appropriate adjustments.
- Ensure program activities and operations are consistent with and in compliance with USAID rules and regulations for cooperative agreements.
- Provide technical leadership and oversight to all program planning, implementation, and monitoring activities.
- Integrate capacity building of local organizations and individuals and enhance sustainability in all facets of program implementation.
- Coordinate program initiatives with other organizations implementing related activities in the program's target areas.
- Provide ongoing technical and programmatic leadership to a diverse group of stakeholders, including project staff, local NGOs, community-based groups, and representatives of local government.
- Achieve target indicators and remain cognizant of project goals and objectives.

#### Qualifications

- Masters Degree preferred.
- Minimum 10 years experience managing development programs in an international setting, preferably in similar conflict-affected environments.
- Experience managing large USAID-funded projects and familiarity with USAID reporting requirements and procedures.
- In-depth knowledge of and/or experience in Yemen a plus.
- Experience with community livelihoods and development projects, especially in conflicted-affected and difficult settings.
- Demonstrated knowledge of integrated, multi-sectoral approaches including health, education, youth-focused programming and economic opportunity.
- Excellent communication skills (including intercultural communication), as well as superior negotiation and administrative abilities.
- Strong commitment to team management approach.
- Fluency in English (written and oral). Arabic language skills preferred.

## Deputy Chief of Party – Programs

#### Responsibilities

- Provide daily management of the program activities in accordance with all donor rules and regulations and CHF policies and procedures.
  - Provide technical support to program assessments and implementation activities.
  - Recommend program design modifications to achieve target indicators and enhance sustainability.
  - Assist in compilation and production of program reports as required by HQ and donor.
- Coordinate activities of program partners to ensure achievement of deliverables.
- Liaise with government representatives, community leaders and other stakeholders.

#### Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree and at least 10 years total work experience.
- Minimum 7 years field management experience of donor funded programs.
- Experience providing technical assistance in community development projects in one or more areas: health, education, job creation, youth-focused programming, and economic opportunity.
- Knowledge of and/or experience in Yemen or similar conflict-affected environments.
- Proven program management skills in complex environments, with multiple offices and a large national and international staff.
- Excellent analytical, planning, management and organizational skills.
- Ability to work effectively with multiple stakeholders and staff at all levels.
- Fluency in English (written and oral). Arabic language skills preferred.

## Deputy Chief of Party – Field Operations

#### Responsibilities

- Oversee all field operations in geographically-dispersed target areas.
- Develop and implement operational policies and procedures for all offices ensuring compliance with CHF and donor standards and requirements.
- Provide overall supervision of Field Office Managers; ensure close collaboration with and support to program staff.
- Oversee recruitment and training of field office staff.
- Ensure that security policies and procedures are in effect at all times.

#### Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree and at least 10 years total work experience;
- Minimum 5 years field management experience in development programs.
  - Demonstrated management and leadership skills working with large, complex USAID funded programs with multiple offices and a large national and international staff.
  - Work experience in Yemen or similar conflict-affected environment.
  - Excellent analytical, planning, management, prioritization and organizational skills.
  - Excellent interpersonal skills.
  - Fluency in English (written and oral); Arabic language skills preferred.

## Technical Specialists

The Yemeni Technical Specialists will implement specific technical aspects of the program; ensure deliverables are met on time and within budget; represent the program to key stakeholders within the community and government; coordinate program activities with partners; supervise staff; and prepare monthly and quarterly reports.

#### Qualifications

- Bachelor's Degree required.
- Minimum 5 years experience in community-driven development in such technical areas as: community mobilization/facilitation, civil society, enterprise development, health, infrastructure, water & sanitation, education, youth, gender, conflict mitigation, training, or monitoring and evaluation.
- Prior experience on donor-funded development projects, USAID preferred.
- Demonstrated experience working cooperatively with a variety of local stakeholders, other projects, and international agencies.
- Fluency in English required (written and oral).

## Grants and Contracts Manager

#### Responsibilities

- Provide fiscal oversight, guidance, and mentoring to sub-recipients and ensure documentation, accountability, and compliance of the sub-award process.
- Work with local partners to improve internal controls, reporting, documentation standards, and compliance with donor and CHF policies and regulations.
- Monitor and document sub-award disbursements against reported expenditures and workplan progress.
- Develop training modules for building the capacity of local partners in financial management and grant application, award, and management processes.

#### Qualifications

- Bachelor degree in a relevant field required (economics, finance, or accounting).
- Minimum 5 years financial management or grant/contract management experience with international development programs, preferably USAID.
- Understanding and experience with USAID projects reporting rules and regulations.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills.
- Fluency in English (written and oral); Arabic highly preferred.

## To Apply for All Positions:

Yemeni candidates are encouraged to apply. Resumes must be submitted in English.

Submit resumes to [jobs.yemen@chfinternational.org](mailto:jobs.yemen@chfinternational.org) by February 15, 2010. Please do not submit certificates or other supporting documents at this time. Email and attachments should not exceed 1MB – anything above this limit will be automatically deleted and not reviewed.

# Herbs not drugs: alternative medicine in Yemen

By: Saddam Al-Ashmori  
For the Yemen Times

Many are those in Yemen who believe in herbs to treat illness. Traditional medicine using natural remedies is a popular method of treatment for diabetes, hemorrhoids, rheumatism, stress, paralysis and even psychological complexes.

Hizam Al-Arashani, said that he had a painful headache. After he tried modern medicine without success, he decided to try alternative medicine. It helped him.

Mohammad Al-Qarmani said that he also went to a clinic specialized in alternative medicine. After several sessions in which he was given electric shocks and after following his doctor's prescription for a herbal mixture, he recovered completely from partial paralysis.

Physicians also confirm that this kind of medicine is preferred to modern drugs because they cause no side effects when ingested – even in too large quantities.

According to Fuad Ali Abdullah, the owner of Al-Fuad for Herbal Treatment, herbal remedies are a very efficient way of treating a number of ailments. However, he warned people not to use it without the prescription of the physician.

He added that nobody is allowed to practice alternative medicine unless he has prior experience, and has some knowledge of medicine and how to diagnose cases.

With its climatic and geographical diversity in Yemen, it has a diversity of aromatic and medical herbs. The island of Soqatra, for example, is a place where rare plants such as the dragon blood and aloe trees can be found.

Abdullah Husain, the owner of a medical center specialized in alterna-



Native to Soqatra, the dragon blood tree is one of Yemen's many plants used for their medicinal properties.

Alternative medical treatment using bee stings and herbs, said that this form of treatment is considered to be the best nowadays as it is an extension of century-old medicine.

He added that herbs are beneficial to the degree that all parts of medical herbs are used in treatment.

#### Specialized centers

A two-day conference on alternative medicine was attended by more than 100 people, including foreign guests, in Sana'a last Wednesday.

Due to the importance of plants used for medical purposes, herb doc-

tors demanded to establish specialized centers as in many countries in the world.

During the conference, participants recommended that the Yemeni government issue an order to ban those who have no medical license from practicing alternative medicine. They said that this order would be for the benefit of the country as those who pretend to practice this kind of medicine will be stopped.

Ahmad Abdullah Al-Khathab, the coordinator of the conference, said that the most difficult barrier is the absence of the law as charlatans

#### Did you know?

There are more than 116 kinds of medical herbs in Yemen. They cure blood pressure, heart diseases, diabetes, renal and hepatic diseases, some types of cancer and rheumatism. Some of the more common include mint, the cypress tree, bindweed, the carob tree, chamomile, and basil.

exploit people who seek medical attention.

There are some people who accuse alternative medicine practitioners of cheating people out of their money. They say that they do not have a medical license from the Ministry of Public Health and Population.

Abdulaziz Najmaddin, consultant at the Ministry of Public Health and Population, said that alternative medicine is a crucial element in treating diseases, but that there must be strict rules to stop charlatans and people pretending to be doctors.

#### Alternative medicine institutes

Due to its importance, Najmaddin called on the government to establish institutes to teach alternative medicine following a scientific methodology. He also demanded a syndicate for doctors practicing alternative medicine be established.

Mohammad Abdulsalam Al-Dhameen, the organizer of the conference, said that natural herbal mixtures are preferred to the pharmaceutical drugs because they induce no side effects.

He added that society should be aware of the importance of this kind of medicine that could improve the economy in the country.

Mohab Al-Kailany, a Syrian member of the conference's preparatory committee, confirmed what has been said about the alternative medicine as being a safe way of curing diseases.

Yemen's flora consists of various types of aromatic and medical herbs which are used in medicine, he said.

He said that such conferences stressed the importance of alternative medicine when modern medicine fails to cure a disease, and added that they encourage botanists and specialists to conduct research on plants to discover more herbal medicines.

Participants expressed their optimism about the future of alternative medicine in Yemen. They said that they would spare no effort in developing this medicine and explaining what it is to the public.

They also promised to update it so that it becomes a common culture that has credibility among all segments of Yemeni and Arab society.

## HEALTH WATCH

By: Dr. Siva



This weekly column is to disseminate health information to the readers in Yemen and outside. Dr. Siva is currently working at Aden Refinery Company Hospital. Life style diseases and cancer prevention are his special interests. Complementary medicine and Naturopathy are his passions.

### Toxoplasmosis, an imperceptible evil of a healthy pregnancy

Toxoplasmosis (Gk: toxo=curved; plasm=body) is an infection caused by a parasite called *Toxoplasma gondii*. Studies have indicated that about 1 out of 4000 babies is born with defects as a result of prenatal infection. The parasite is commonly present in cattle, poultry, and many domestic animals without any harmful effects. However, it continues to live in raw meat after slaughter until the meat is cooked, dried, or frozen for a prolonged period. The two major causes of human toxoplasmosis infection are the consumption of raw or undercooked meat and contact with the feces of the domestic cat. A single infection normally ensures immunity.



Although it causes an illness which is generally mild and symptomless, it's risky during pregnancy because the parasite may infect the placenta and the unborn baby.

This infection can be mild or severe, causing stillbirth, long-term structural and neurological damage, and other devastating effects.

#### Chances of getting toxoplasmosis and infecting the baby

Only about 15 percent of women of childbearing age are immune to toxoplasmosis. Fortunately, the number of women who contract the infection during pregnancy is still relatively small. The baby's risk of becoming infected rises as pregnancy progresses. If you get infected with toxoplasmosis in the first trimester, the risk that your baby will also be infected is about 15 percent. If you get infected in the second trimester, your baby's risk is about 30 percent, and it's 60 percent in the third trimester.

There's also a very small risk of infecting your baby if you contract the infection within a few months before becoming pregnant. If you know that you've been infected recently, some experts suggest waiting for six months before trying to conceive.

#### Spread of toxoplasmosis

Experts estimate that about half of toxoplasmosis infections are caused by eating raw or undercooked infected meat, but you can also get the parasite by eating unwashed contaminated produce, drinking contaminated water, or handling contaminated soil, cat litter or meat and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes. Cat's feces is a major source of toxoplasmosis. Infection can also happen by eating unwashed vegetables, or drinking contaminated water soiled with the infected cat's feces. Meat also can be infested with these parasites. Toxoplasmosis can't be transmitted from person to person.

#### Symptoms

Majority of infected people may not have any symptoms at all. Sometimes painless swollen lymph glands and other symptoms, like muscle aches, fatigue, headache, fever, and possibly a sore throat or a rash may occur. Very rarely do more serious symptoms arise in otherwise healthy people. Sometimes toxoplasmosis is suspected in repeated abortions or when certain fetal abnormalities are picked up during a prenatal ultrasound. However, most infected babies appear normal.

#### Screening tests for toxoplasmosis

Blood tests can detect toxoplasma antibodies that indicate immunity or recent infection. The best test to diagnose the disease whether acute or chronic is to perform IgM, & IgG antibody test. (IgM positive indicates current infection; IgG positive indicates the status of immunity.) Prenatal testing for all women for toxoplasmosis should be mandatory. Whenever facilities are there, universal newborn testing can be included. When the newborn child has conditions like congenital anomalies, prolonged jaundice or septicemia, toxoplasmosis has to be ruled out.

#### What happens if a woman is diagnosed with toxoplasmosis?

She should undergo treatment with antibiotics. In order to determine whether the baby also has the infection, the amniotic fluid of the mother should be examined. Regular (ultrasound) monitoring of the fetus throughout pregnancy should be done to rule out abnormalities.

#### Toxoplasmosis in the baby

Toxoplasmosis infection in the child may result in miscarriage, stillbirth, or death shortly after birth. Once you have been shown to be recently infected, there are several ways to check if your fetus has been infected. The fluid around the fetus or fetal blood can be examined to determine the presence of infection. However, if the fetus is infected, these tests cannot tell you how severe the infection is. If the amniotic fluid or ultrasound shows evidence of toxoplasmosis in the baby the option is to end the pregnancy depending on the baby's gestational age. About one-third of the babies born with congenital toxoplasmosis will have a problem that could have been seen on ultrasound.

If the pregnancy is continued, antibiotics will be given sometime in the second trimester to reduce the baby's risk of problems. After birth, a blood test can be performed on the baby to confirm toxoplasmosis.

Congenital toxoplasmosis can affect the baby's brain, causing problems such as mental or motor developmental delays, cerebral palsy, and epilepsy. It can affect other organs too, most commonly the eyes, leading to visual impairment and sometimes blindness.

#### Can a baby show signs of toxoplasmosis as soon as he's born?

Some babies will have signs of toxoplasmosis at birth, which may include an enlarged liver and jaundice, an enlarged spleen, a low platelet count, a rash, a heart or lung infection, and enlarged lymph nodes. However, the vast majority of babies with congenital toxoplasmosis, particularly those infected later in pregnancy, seem normal at birth but may develop serious problems months or even years later.

#### Prevention is better than cure

Serious infection by toxoplasmosis can be effectively prevented by the avoidance of raw meat and by ensuring that all rare-cooked meats are heated throughout to at least 60° C (140° F). Avoid salt-cured or smoked meats. Contact with infected or unfamiliar cats and cat feces should be avoided. If you are a cat lover, ask your hubby to empty the cat litter box every day because the parasite eggs in cat feces do not become infective until two to four days after excretion. The best solution is not to have a cat or kitten in the house when you are pregnant and if you come across one, not to play with it.

Here are some more guidelines to keep in mind:

- ❖ Don't drink unpasteurized milk or products made from unpasteurized milk (like some cheese and yogurt), and avoid raw eggs. Don't take unboiled camel milk.
- ❖ Wash or peel fruits and vegetables before eating.
- ❖ Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and your hands with hot, soapy water after touching uncooked meat, poultry, or seafood.
- ❖ Don't touch your mouth, nose, or eyes while preparing food, and always wash your hands before eating. Don't work in the kitchen if you have cuts and open sores on your hands.
- ❖ Keep flies and cockroaches away from your food.
- ❖ Use bottled water when traveling.

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## VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** invites **Yemeni Nationals** to apply for the following position at the UNDP Office

**Post Title: Information Communication Technology (ICT) Associate/Webmaster**  
**Pre-classified Grade: GS6**  
**Duration: one year renewable**  
**Duty Station: Sana'a**

**Responsibilities:**

- Develop and Manage workflow automation through web-based application with database management interfaces;
- Develop web pages to act as interfaces to a comprehensive database system that links all workflow information;
- Develop and maintain a dynamic and fast database to be used as a data store for all information of the country office automation;
- Develop a control panel for administration of the workflow system and add the ability to add/edit/delete any or all parts of the system;
- Post/update/format/organize content developed by all content managers for the intranet/extranet/UNDP website/ UNDP projects/UN website(s);
- Constantly review site to ensure all parts are functioning properly and that links are current;
- Execute structural changes at direction of content managers and suggest ways to speed viewers' access to information;
- Communicate through the ICT Manager with the Communications Officer, Knowledge Manager, UN Coordination Officer, Regional Information Officer, other Country Offices and UNDP Head Quarter on the best practices and design/content recommendations for the web sites and ensure adherence to the corporate design guidelines;
- Intranet structure should be under constant update in response to user needs and usage trends as shown by the statistics database;
- Maintain all electronic versions of photos and other images for use on the website and build and maintain an electronic photo library;
- Monitor visitors to site and provide routine summaries of which pages are seen most/least and by which people. Suggest ways to ensure that users are getting the information they need;
- Keep abreast of new technologies and design trends to ensure that the UNDP website is current and that all the website's capabilities can be exploited;
- Register the site with major search engines to ensure increased access to information seekers from around the world;
- Maintain Local Area Network functionality and ensures smooth operation of client access;
- Maintain local servers and client machines;
- Review checklists, logs and backup routines and recovery procedures;
- Go through backup and disaster recovery checklists and implement backup and disaster recovery plan;
- Implement and suggest ways to improve local centralized systems and user access machines;
- Provide timely user support to ensure business continuity at all times;
- Implement security policies pertaining to computer users and network access;
- Provide timely maintenance of communications equipment in the office;
- Provide training on policies and procedures on uses of ICT in the office;
- Perform non-technical training as required to staff on web, graphics, programming, database functionality and management, ftp and web server maintenance;

**Qualification:**

- Secondary Education with specialized certification in Computer Science. University Degree in Computer Science is desirable.
- 7 years of relevant experience in Web Development, hardware/software maintenance as well as experience in telecommunications facilities;
- High proficiency in English and Arabic Languages with excellent drafting and communication skills.

**Only Online Applications will be accepted.**

- Interested candidates are requested to apply online via our website at <http://jobs.undp.org/>
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- The deadline for receiving applications is Wednesday, 10 February 2010.
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### Accountant/Sales Administrator

**Job profile**

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**Candidate profile**

Holding a University Degree (Business Administration), with 3-4 yrs of experience in accounting and/or Sales Administration. Proficient in MS Office & MS Access. Good communication skills, fluent in both English & Arabic. Well organized with strong analytical skills and an ability to perform as a team member.

Candidates meeting the above requirements are advised to send their CVs to the following address [yemen.careers@ye.nestle.com](mailto:yemen.careers@ye.nestle.com)

Applications will be treated in strict Confidence; only short listed candidates will be contacted

## Can a Muslim woman become a muftiyya?

For centuries deciding on the rules of conduct in Islam – what is halal (allowed) and what is haram (forbidden) – has been the speciality of men, despite the fact that one of the greatest religious references in Islamic history was Aisha bint Abu Bakr, a woman. Today, an international campaign is in place to empower Muslim women to take part in Islamic legislation through the Shura Council Project created by active Muslim women from all around the world.

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

“I once heard a ridiculous fatwa that if you see breasts in your dream, it is an erotic dream and you should reconsider your conduct, repent and pray for forgiveness. I have five children and believe me, I have had many dreams including breasts and for me, this explanation could not have been any more wrong,” explained renowned international Islamic scholar, Amina Wadud.

She explains that religion has been viewed mostly from a man's perspective, especially because it is men who are the ones behind legislations and rules. Negligence towards women's perspectives and the imposition of a man's rule over the general walks of life have led to many of the narrow interpretations of Islam.

Wadud is one of many women who have come together to set the record straight when it comes to Muslim women in today's world. Under the umbrella of Women Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality (WISE), a Shura Council has been brought to life.

The vision of this council is to generate a space in which Muslim women can actively take part in debate, and collaborate on pressing issues of social justice, in order to articulate an ethical and egalitarian Islam. One of the tools through which the WISE women intend to make this hap-

pen is through the “Muftiyya-Training Program” which was launched during the 2009 WISE Conference in Kuala Lumpur. “Nowhere does it say in Islam that the act of issuing a fatwa should be monopolized by men. It has been taken for granted because women were usually subdued and not included in this discipline. With this initiative, we can empower women who are willing to be muftiyyas through adequate scholarly training,” said Tayyibah Taylor, Founding Editor-in-Chief and Publisher of the Azizah Magazine, and WISE Shura Council Member.

According to its mission, a long-term goal of the Shura Council is to create Muslim women jurists educated in Islamic law and secular disciplines of relevance. These women, who will enjoy full legitimacy from the perspective of Islamic legal traditions, in addition to their proficiency in other critical fields such as international affairs and national and international law, will be capable of issuing fatwas that can guide Muslims in their own societies.

Once this initial group of muftiyyas is trained, an «Ifta' Council» may be established with the requisite legitimacy to issue fatwas. As a council comprised exclusively of women, it would represent the first-ever global, institutionalized body of Muslim female scholars, an authority for Muslims around the globe.

“Obviously not anyone could and should become a muftiyya. We have decided on

a number of requirements and necessary credentials for potential applicants who wish to join this training,” explained Daisy Khan, Executive Director of the American Society for Muslim Advancement, and a Member of the WISE Shura Council.

Women who are going to be part of this project, according to Khan, must be very eager and willing to work hard in order to be able to answer to critics and appeasers. “We can't afford to go wrong,” she explained.

These requirements include English language proficiency in order to be able to communicate internationally, outstanding academic credentials, a commitment to Islamic scholarship as a profession, whether in their home countries or in an international setting, and the ability to demonstrate a commitment to Islam and its fundamental values of peace, justice, respect and human dignity. It is hoped that the outcome of this project will result in correcting the image about Islam and actively involve Muslim women in their own lives.

“We must lift up the truth of Islam, a truth that has inspired positive social change for fourteen hundred years. It is time for Muslim women to come together and generate a collective genius, passion, and energy,” said Khan.

A muftiyya's educational program According to the educational programs' structure, it is not going to be limited to Islamic education, but also include secular education. The program's curriculum will remain both faithful to the rigorous requirements of a classical education in fiqh or Islamic jurisprudence, and sensitive to the demands of the globalized world. It will impart the requisite tools and experience to enable the muftiyyas to apply Islamic legal tenets within the contemporary

contexts in which they live.

The academic year will be spent at the site or sites of the training program. Here, students will join a 3-5 year training program in the Islamic sciences at a center of fiqh study in order to receive ijazas or licences to become legitimate muftiyyas. A necessarily rigorous process, this will comprise the bulk of their education. Combined with their secular education (see below), this training will provide them with a holistic, realistic and actionable perspective on Islam, Islamic law and the contemporary world.

Students will use their summers, or 1-2 contiguous years during or at the end of the Islamic education, to gain knowledge and training in interfaith seminars and international settings. These intensive semesters will provide the women with the experience necessary to affect change within a globalized world. The women will participate in a variety of general interdisciplinary seminars and forums, which could include comparative religion, faith-based feminism and activism, national and international law, philosophy and sociology, international affairs, and economics.

Female Islamic scholars in Yemen The issue of Yemeni female Islamic scholars has not received much media coverage, but not because of the lack of female scholars. Rather, dozens of women Islamic scholars graduate every year whether from mainstream public and private universities or from the Iman University.

The Iman University has so far produced over 200 graduates with the title of “sheikha” equivalent to a PhD in fiqh or Islamic jurisprudence. Scholars have studied continuously for ten years and have to conduct much research in fiqh before they are giving the ijaza which is a license to give judgments and rulings on Islamic



More than 55 women met last year in Kuala Lumpur to discuss how Muslim women can participate in defining and promoting Islam. As a result, the Shura Council project which includes training for future women muftiyyas was launched.

matters, the practice generally known as ifta.

Established around four years ago, the Women Fiqh Forum is a center where Yemeni muftiyyas assemble professionally. The forum produces a quarterly magazine called Al-Muntada Al-Fiqhi on religious issues totally written by women.

The women's section at the Iman University has its own periodical, Al-Shaqeq, a monthly magazine that includes sections for fatwas managed by a different female scholar every month. Al-Shaqeq prints over 20,000 copies a month, which at least doubles the circulation of many general newspapers in Yemen.

“A potential reason why Yemeni women scholars have not received much attention especially by the media is that most people

who create media policies are leftist men,” suggested Fathiya Hazza'a who is soon to establish the Women Fiqh Forum's marketing and public relations department.

She hopes that through this newly established department professional Yemeni women religious scholars will receive the attention they deserve.

### 4U

If you want to be part of this training or are interested in knowing more about the Shura Council go to:  
<http://www.wisemuslimwomen.org/about/shuracouncil/>

## Qat: The cursed plant in Yemen

By: Yusuf Al-Shiraf

### The qat's sessions

In the monthly magazine “Reader's Digest” which had an Arabic version entitled “Al-Mukhtar” (The Favorite) and had been published during World War II, I read an article for the archaeologist and adventurer Wandal Phillips who discovered a lot of Yemeni civilization's ruins and antiques in Marib. Phillips recounted how chewing the qat helped him in communicating with and understanding Yemenis. Maybe I just traced him and got what he has got without being aware and without realizing the secret for admiring the Yemenis to the plant of the qat.

You may go to Yemen for work or tourism and spend there days and years traveling all over it. However, you will not be able to get the required visa for penetrating Yemeni personality or be certified in delving into paths of the Yemeni mentality and knowing its humane and sentimental relief without wading into the experiment of chewing the qat in your left side of the mouth.

This way of chewing the qat is an involuntary movement and looks difficult to be substituted with chewing the qat in the right side (without finding a reason for that). You have also to chew the

qat's leaves slowly and carefully then you must press them consecutively and milk their nectar little by little until you get relaxed, clear your temperament, wake up your sentiments, and concentrate your senses wakefully and brilliantly. Accordingly, you may be an interviewer or a creative or even a listener or a contemplator or a wanderer in Allah's Kingdom or maybe whispering to the spectrum of the known or unknown lover. Our God has really His own affairs on His creators.

Because of that the sessions of the qat start in the siestas just after the launch time, the session of the qat was described as “Al-Maqial or Maqial”.

There is also Maqial for women called “Al-Tafritah” in Sana'a, “Al-Nashra” in Al-Hodiedah, and “Al-Qaila” in Ta'izz and Aden. Apparently, the Sana'anian Maqial with its civilized rituals still the most famous and interesting one among others and especially if we know that Sana'a is the city of history and civilization and one of the most ancient cities in the world. In addition, the name of Sana'a in Arabic refers to the business and craft. The book entitled “Countries Encyclopaedia” mentions that the name of Sana'a refers to the goodness of the craft itself.

### The qat for all

The qat is delivered fresh to Sana'a at 10 A.M. to the markets of “Ga'a Al-Yahood” (Ghetto's Souk), “Souk Al-Milh” (The Souk of Salt), and “Bab Al-Sabah” (The Gate of Sabah) where it is sold and bought. The interesting thing is that the employees sneak away of their works to buy good the qat before it is being sold. At the same time, they left in their desks signs to prove that they still work like a turban's shawl or a cigarette case or a rosary. The plant of the qat has many kinds and forms like the luxurious one with yellow color before its verdancy and the unsprayed with insecticide which rich people buy whatever it costs them. Other kinds of the qat include the long and short stem and others differ in

forms and touches similar to the leaves of jew's mallow or leaves of rocket or the plant of ficus which grows on the walls of villas and palaces in Egypt. Some of the qat's names and kinds include Al-Dhla' ai, Al-Matari, Al-Sabri, Al-Hamdani, Al-Harazi, Al-Shami, Al-Maghribi, Al-Bukhari, Al-Wadi, and Al-Asri.

We are now in a deep-rooted house of the Old City of Sana'a and Al-Maqial's divan is the most beautiful and important place in the house. It was furnished with rugs or colored mats and cozy mattresses are scattered around its rectangular sides with a 30-centimeter height. Soft rugs also cover them with backrests in their sides and poufs for resting the arms. Usually, Al-Maqial's divan holds 10 persons in average and maybe for hundreds as the one in the tribal sheikhs' palaces. The Yemeni hookah and maybe several other hookahs are always put in the middle of Al-Maqial's divan. The hookah is made of handcrafted copper with many pipes coming out of it and connected to the chewers' lips for smoking burning tobacco. The owner of Al-Maqial's divan also makes sure to provide bottles of waters and soft drinks! Generally, Al-Maqial's divan occupies the most scenic and highest place in the Sana'anian house and consequently is called “Al-Mafraj” (A Luxurious Penthouse) which ensures the panoramic scenery of the capital city and its civilized buildings!

Each divan of Al-Maqial has its own social or cultural or political identity. Parties, syndicates, and associations have their private divans of Al-Maqial. Not long ago, each ministry and government authority have its private divan until the decree of the republic's president was issued and contained the forbidding of chewing the qat by employees, police men, and army men during the official hours either in government offices or military camps. In the early 1970s Sana'a was the scene of secret divans of Al-Maqial phenomenon which held members of national and left-wing movements during major Muhammad Khamais was occupying the post of public security's general manager. After the emerging of the Yemeni unity and applying the democracy of political pluralism this phenomenon disappeared gradually!

Guests enters the divan of Al-Maqial holding his or her qat's bundle enveloped with a thin plastic cover and in the past the qat's bundles were enveloped with bananas' leaves in order to stay fresh. The guest greets the ones who preceded him or her by hand or by nodding and sometimes the guest sits down in his place quietly in order to not interrupt other guests' speech. Then one of those guests says: “May Allah will wel-

come who have just come!” The guest starts culling the qat's leaves of bad ones and selects good ones for chewing in succession until his or her left cheek becomes swelling. Then the process of chewing and milking starts and during this process attendees exchange the qat's stalks as a matter of diversifying

flavour and getting cordiality. The situation continues and passes in side or bilateral conversations until all chewers reach to the acme of rapture and vitality. Then owner of the divan or the most notable chewer notifies all and declares the selecting of a suitable subject to be dialogued about. I do certify that all at-

tendees obtain their chances of democratic dialogue which is full of justice and balance whatever are their social or functional ranks!

Source: Weghat Nazar Magazine, February 2004, Volume No.: 38  
Translated by: Eyad N. Al-Samman



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## The many uses of cow dung in Shabwa



An old 200-year earthen house with cow dung remains applied around the windows.

By: Nasser Abdulla Nasser Salah  
For the Yemen Times

People who lead the simplest lives can often be outstanding examples of how to best utilize natural materials to their advantage. Historically, Yemenis have led a simple life, mainly trusting in God, and always satisfied with their destiny, be it good or bad, as they saw it as God's will.

It is interesting to note that Yemenis took up residence everywhere: in the mountains, in villages, along coastal plains, and even in the desert. They dwelt in caves, huts made of dried branches from trees, small single

rooms built of stone and earth, tents made of animal hair and many other materials.

Over time, they settled down in villages and cities in earthen buildings, some of which were covered with lime and cement as, for example, in Shibam and Hadramout, and others built of stone or red bricks, as seen in other places in Yemen.

As modern building materials such as cement and paint were not available in the past, even as recently as the 1970s, old earthen buildings in Shabwa, and especially in the village of As-Said, used to be covered and protected with cow dung, known in the village as dhafi'.



An old house with remains of cow dung seen on its top.

"We collected the wet substance, which we soaked together with soil in water, or sometimes also with a kind of soft red stone that is called hammor for at least two days," said Haleema, a housewife. "This mixture was then spread over stairways and on the roofs and walls of buildings in order to form a thick, absorbent layer against rainwater, which could leak into the room."

"It was also spread around the win-

dows and main doors for decoration," she added.

"People here refer to this process with the words muhdh (noun) or yemhadh (verb). It colors the building either light green if there is no red stone added, or light red if there is red stone added," said Slameh, an old woman.

We use this substance if the house requires a touch-up, however we prefer

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to reserve it for the occasions of Eid Al-Fitr and Al-Adha to show our happiness and what is new to offer for celebrating such a joyous and special event," added Hasna.

Saleh, a farmer, commented that cow dung was used in manure in agriculture in the past, as there was no fertilizer. He confirmed that dung from livestock is very valuable for fertilizing soil, as it helps crops to grow richly.

### Cow dung firecrackers

Nasser and Awadh, two old men, as well as retired officers said, "Fireworks were not available when we were children, so we used to express our joy and celebrate the occasions of the two eids by collecting cow dung three days prior to Eid, and leaving it out to dry."

They continued, "On the morning of Eid day, we would wear traditional new clothes, and go to the valley to attend the Eid rites and celebrations. In

the meantime, we would burn the cow dung until it was hot, and then take small pieces to be placed on a stone and hit with another stone, which would result in an explosion."

This process was called nadhabeh: "We make an explosion with dung by hitting it between two stones, which is considered to be an expression of celebration at Eid."

This is another example of how the older generation was innovative, and used natural substances as an alternative to today's fancier and more expensive Eid fireworks.

Our ancestors and grandparents utilized everything available in their environment to survive. They took full advantage of raw materials to meet their needs, enduring the cruelty of nature, which could often be merciless. Not only were they able to survive, but very often they thrived.

There are many lessons yet to be learned from them.

## The Ubiquitous Bus: Getting around in Sana'a

In any Yemeni city, town, village or remote stretch of road you are likely to find a dubab (minivan bus), not to be mistaken for thubab (fly).

In Sana'a you can get almost everywhere on a dubab or two, or sometimes three. There are no actual bus stops, all you need to do is stand on the side of the road and wave one down. They'll stop if they have space for you, and sometimes stop even if there is no space – so hold on tight!

Generally you would never have to wait more than a few minutes for one of these dubabs to come along, except if you are a woman. If a bus is full of men, you will have to wait until one comes along that already has a woman in it, or has a whole row seat vacant. If you travelling on the dubab alone and no other women get on the bus during your ride, you will have to pay for two seats because the driver feels he is missing out on making money on the seat beside you because non-mahram men and women do not sit beside each



other in the dubab. Sometimes the men don't mind re-arranging their seating by squashing five men into a seat made for three in order to accommodate a sister in Islam.

I haven't had any bad experiences on the dubab buses, but there have been reports of men sitting behind women and sliding their hand under

the seat in front – which would be very disturbing for the sister sitting there! There are also regular occurrences of people falling off, especially children.

Prices for rides on the dubab are very reasonable. Most trips cost 20 riyal (approx 15c at the time of writing). A trip in a taxi of the same distance would cost around 300-400 riyal, so you can see that the dubab is good value and readily available with minimal fuss (when travelling by taxi you need to negotiate the price before getting in).

If you aren't sure which bus to get on, it is not a problem to ask. The bus is full of people who know where they are going and will let you know if it is the right bus. At main bus gathering areas there are 'conductors' who have a face full of qat (mild narcotic plant) and take commission off the bus drivers for finding passengers. They will put you on the right bus – but of course, you will have to know where you are going and know it in Arabic!

Source: Al-Ghariba  
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