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A Message from the Executive Director



Safiya Al-Jabry

Executive Director at SMEPS

2025 for SMEPS was a year that was filled with hurdles; nevertheless, it was the most challenging year. SMEPS in 2025 maintained the image of a striving agency. Change and sustainability were the agency's main battles, indulging in many economic and security struggles.

2025 marks the beginning of a new and an existing story for continuity and growth; a chapter that expands our reach to support more Yemenis across diverse sectors, while sustaining the agency's mission, growth, and lasting impact.

Since SMEPS reached the end of 2025, the agency declared the success of its 2021 – 2025 strategy, as marked by exceeding expectations when going through the results. The past five years have been a period of significant challenge, change, and growth for our institution.

Operating in an increasingly complex and fragile environment, we remained focused on our mission of empowering communities, strengthening resilience, and creating opportunities for women, youth, and vulnerable groups. Our 2021–2025 strategy provided a clear direction through this period. A central priority was to build a stronger, more capable, and more sustainable institution—one that could respond to changing circumstances while continuing to deliver quality programs and meaningful results.

Over the strategy period, we made important progress in institutional capacity, program growth, partnerships, governance, and quality. We expanded and diversified our funding base, strengthened relationships with international development partners, broadened our geographic reach, and invested in the capabilities of our teams across all three offices. These efforts strengthened our ability to manage increasingly complex programs and deliver at greater scale.

We also made deliberate investments in the systems and structures that underpin effective delivery. Internal processes were strengthened, quality assurance was embedded more firmly across our work, and new functions and mechanisms were introduced to improve efficiency, accountability, and organizational performance. At the same time, sustained investment in staff development helped build the skills and leadership capacity needed to respond to increasingly demanding objectives.

These institutional investments translated into tangible results. We expanded our portfolio of economic empowerment and livelihoods programs, reaching thousands of women and young people with financial, technical, and capacity-building support. We strengthened our partnerships with institutions including the World Bank and UN agencies, further establishing our organization as a trusted local implementing partner in Yemen.





Executive Summary



SMEPS in 2025 had undeniably one of the most challenging years, where the agency had to navigate through an unstable situation and overcome many difficult challenges. Yet, despite these adversities, SMEPS remained steady and devoted to achieving its mission, ensuring that our beneficiaries received the support they needed. We successfully handled the year's constraints by achieving notable results and impacts across several sectors. The most prominent achievement was SMEPS overcoming all circumstances and accomplishing its 2021-2025 strategy.

In 2025, SMEPS executed its $10.8 million allocated budget across 10 projects, targeting 137 districts in 19 governorates. The agency provided critical support to 9,555 direct beneficiaries. This support drove a 56% increase in beneficiary productivity, a 40% reduction in product waste, and a 25% increase in unit selling prices due to improved product quality. Consequently, beneficiaries experienced a 45% increase in their net profits, and the interventions created and sustained 24,250 jobs, maintaining a 20% female participation rate.

In 2025, SMEPS executed its $10.8 million allocated budget across 10 projects, targeting 137 districts in 19 governorates. The agency provided critical support to 9,555 direct beneficiaries. This support drove a 56% increase in beneficiary productivity, a 40% reduction in product waste, and a 25% increase in unit selling prices due to improved product quality. Consequently, beneficiaries experienced a 45% increase in their net profits, and the interventions created and sustained 24,250 jobs, maintaining a 20% female participation rate.

Concluding its ambitious five-year strategic plan (2021–2025), this report was written to tell a story of institutional growth and achievements that was witnessed by the agency. Over the past 5 years, the agency's programme portfolio has reached up to $91 million, driven by the successful scaling of existing projects, the launch of new initiatives, and the forging of vital new partnerships with new donors, including UNIDO, UNOPS, KSR, SDRPY, and FAO.

In addition, SMEPS supported 41,115 MSMEs, **far surpassing the initial target of 32,000,** while generating an exceptional 326,331 job opportunities. These long-term interventions came with an 85% increase in MSME income and a 52% rise in productivity. SMEPS guided 22% of these enterprises to introduce new products and published 27 specialized research studies to ensure continuous market development.

For SMEPS, the journey does not end; rather, it is a continuous path. We believe in creating lasting impacts and planting hope in people's hearts, and more milestones will be achieved, continuing its journey and creating hope and sustainable lives for Yemenis.



Vision

A leading enterprise development agency driving innovation and economic growth through creative approaches and technological solutions.



Mission

To drive diversification and development in the small and micro-enterprises sector by fostering innovation, supporting new subsectors, and opening sustainable production lines. We aim to create vibrant markets and unlock opportunities for businesses to thrive.



Values

- Transparency
- Accountability
- Integrity
- Respect
- Neutrality
- Community
- Participation
- Sustainable Approaches

Gratitude for our key partners and donors



















Towards Development & Enhancing Economies

2025 Achievements



9,555

Direct Beneficiaries Supported



19

Governorates Targeted (137 Districts)



10

projects implemented (3 closed projects)

25%

Increase in the selling price per unit of products/services due to improved product quality

56%

Increase in beneficiaries' productivity

45%

Increase in Beneficiaries' Profits

40%

Reduction in product losses or waste

24,250

Jobs Created & Sustained (20% Females)

Financial Snapshot

$10.8 million

Allocated Budget for 2025

$10.8 million

Used Funds in 2025

OUR FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Key Milestones 2021 – 2025



$91,072,142/100,000,000 secured funds



41,115/32,000 MSMEs (43.5% females) supported



326,331/200,000 jobs opportunities (26.7% Females, 27% permanent jobs)



85%/70% increase in MSMEs' income



52%/70% increase in MSMEs' productivity



22%/40% of MSMEs introduced new products



64%/40% community investment leveraged



27/9 research studies produced

Achievements Per Year 2021 – 2025



INDICATORS	UOM	ACHIEVED					Total Achieved 2021-2025	% Total Achieved 2021-2025	Total Target 2021-2025
		Actual 2021	Actual 2022	Actual 2023	Actual 2024	Actual 2025			
Number of MSMEs supported, disaggregated by type:	No.								
# Total Achieved		4,123	10,622	8,598	8,217	9,555	41,115	128%	32,000
% of Females		1,481	5,141	2,023	3,645	5,592	43.50%	109%	40%
# of Indirect Beneficiaries		24,738	63,732	51,588	49,302	57,330	246,690	128%	192,000
Smallholder producers & micro supply chain enablers		3,059	9,255	7,108	7,257	9,481			
SMEs and BAs		1,064	1,367	1,490	960	74			
Number of Jobs created	No.	25,254	55,501	10,160	24,088	24,250	139,253	70%	200,000
% of Jobs created for women	%	33%	16%	23%	16%	20%	22%	72%	30%
% of permanent Jobs created	%	31%	16%	21%	36%		26%	87%	30%
No. of graduates and business advisors provided with short-term job opportunities		427	255	545	422	521	2,170	107%	2,020

Programmes Results

Strengthening Key Value Chains

Fisheries Value Chain
Dairy Value Chain
Agricultural Value Chain



Fisheries Value Chain

With its coastlines along the Red and Arabian Seas, Yemen possesses immense marine wealth. The fisheries sector holds the secret to achieving national economic recovery, as it offers rich food security and the foundation for eco-friendly, highly profitable businesses.

Despite this potential, the fisheries value chain has been slowed down by many hurdles that disrupt operations at every level, from fishermen all the way up to lead processing and exporting firms. Many drawbacks have severely limited the sector's growth, leading to high losses.

Recognizing these challenges and opportunities, SMEPS has targeted the fisheries value chain. By addressing these critical issues, the agency aimed to make great moves in the fisheries sector, shifting it to be both sustainable and resilient.





AT A GLANCE

SMEPS has been supporting vital SMEs and micro-producers in the fisheries sector in collaboration with international partners, including the WFP, FAO, SDRPY, IsDB, UNDP, and the World Bank. SMEPS, with its expertise, has continued to provide development support, capacity-building, and productive assets to key players in the fisheries value chain.

Over the past five years, SMEPS has implemented strategic interventions; the agency directly supported 4,468 fishermen and SMEs across the fisheries value chain. This comprehensive approach delivered strong returns to local economies, creating 15,214 jobs across the sector.

SMEPS supported the sector by building fishermen's knowledge of key fishing concepts, then equipping them with what they needed to become active members of the community. Fishermen were trained in modern catch technologies, engine maintenance, and hygienic post-harvest handling and given essential productive assets. When done, SMEPS intended to direct the attention of these fishermen to how to sell their yield and access the market. This has given them the motive to work more and try to sell more as well. Linking them with the fish cooperatives existing in the areas of support was the enabling way used to help the fishermen penetrate the market.

Individual fishermen, when adopting the modern practices and asset support, recorded remarkable results. Fishermen achieved a 41% increase in their catch per trip, rising from 137 kg to 156 kg, driving a 46% increase in net profit per fishing trip, climbing from $835 to $1,223. The Supply Chain Enablers (SCEs), such as ice producers, input providers, transporters, fish stores, and exporters, also experienced substantial growth when they had an increase in average monthly profits increasing from $2,061.70 to $3,041.30. Consequently, fish cooperatives played a role in this transformation by introducing critical new services, including reliable fish storage, ice provision, technical support, and improved fish handling standards, achieving a 36% increase in average monthly profits (from $2,736 to $3,717.

In 2025, SMEPS, through the SFISH project, funded by the World Bank, excelled at reaching more and more fishermen, SMEs, and cooperatives, where the method of support continued to dominate, reviving and strengthening the value chains across Yemen.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE BY SMEPS IN 2025?

In 2025, SMEPS expanded its support, distributing grants to 1,285 in four major coastal governorates (Aden, Taiz, Hadramaut, and Al Mahrah) under one of the largest in Yemen's fisheries project, funded by the World Bank and UNDP.

What was notable in 2025 was when SMEPS launched a comprehensive "Institutional Building" program for 40 fisheries cooperatives, helping them establish standardized operational policies, financial accounting systems, and governance frameworks. This resulted in enhancing the cooperatives' services for their members, where some started to provide new services (e.g., storing fish, providing ice, technical support, etc), thus contributing to increasing the number of active members by 28.5% (from 246 to 316 members) and increasing their profits by 36% (from $2,736 to $3,717 average profit/month).

Impact in Fishery Value Chain

Enhancing Fishery Value Chain - Key Results & Impacts

1. Fishermen



22.4%

Increase in catch per trip
(From 132 KG to 161.5 KG)

28.3%

Average trip distance increased
(From 10.7 to 13.7 nautical miles)

52.1%

Increase in net profit per fishing trip
(From $112 to $170)

Diversification of fish catches

- Squid by 16%
- Sprangled emperor fish by 13%
- King fish by 9%

2. Supply Chain Enablers - SCE

(Ice producers, input providers/producers, transporters, fish stores, exporters, etc)



53% of SCEs

Expanded geographic operations

29% of SCEs

Adopted new technologies (Solar, machines)

74.7%

Increase in monthly sales (Values from 11.3 tons to 19.8 tons)

566 New jobs created

(Temporary/Permanent)

3. Fish Cooperatives



Providing new services

(e.g. Storing fish, providing ice, technical support, fish handling).

28.5% Increase of number of active members

(From 246 to 316 members)

36% Increase in profit

(From $2,736 to $3,717 average profit/month)

11 New jobs created

(Temporary)

Cases



Case 1: Doubling Sales, Creating Jobs: Abdullah's Business Transformation

Abdullah Khaled dreamed of expanding his small fish shop in Taiz, but years of operating with aging equipment and insufficient space left him stuck. The SFISH project provided the push he needed. Now, he has successfully expanded his business, hired new employees, and earned more revenue.

- Renovated the shop — modern freezers, branded storefronts, safety equipment, and hygienic standards replaced worn-out infrastructure
- Successfully expanded from one shop to two operational branches, with the new "Shaqrah for Fresh Fish" location in Wadi Al-Dahi
- Sales volume doubled with value-added business enhancement – from 50 kg daily to over 100 kg ($986 to $6,668)
- New jobs created – from 3 to 6 employees, all from the local community



Case 2: From Uncertainty to Opportunity: Naif’s Journey at Sea

For Yemeni fishermen like Naif Abdullah from Mukalla, a life at sea was becoming a gamble. Using a barely working boat engine that experienced frequent breakdowns at sea, resulting in more debts instead of earnings, with absolute uncertainty in a fragile economy.

After the project intervention, Naif and numerous fishermen's livelihoods shifted. They were provided with business and financial training, equipped with safe and responsible fishing practices and new boat engines or eco-friendly fishing nets.

Naif can now safely access richer fishing grounds up to 9 miles away (compared to the previous 3 miles). His income is increasing, debts are easing, waste is reducing, and most importantly, he feels a renewed sense of hope and dignity.



Case 3: Turning Investment into Impact: Transforming Fisheries in Mukalla.

Sahel Alabari is a key cooperative for 224 fishermen in Mukalla. It helps them with everything from fishing and landing their catch to auctioning and selling over 20 types of fresh fish to local people, traders, and factories.

Fishermen face catch waste because they don't have enough ice. This leads to lower-quality fish and lost income for the cooperative and its members.

The fisheries cooperative, with support, invested in adopting a high-capacity ice system (20-ton daily production), leveraging 2.3 times the project contribution ($20,000 – $47,000).

What has been achieved?

- Initially, average monthly sales were up to $8,000 from the ice system.
- 8 new jobs were created to operate and maintain the new ice plant.
- Generally, growth in the cooperative's stakeholder base, as follows:
  - Fishermen increased by 56% (from 224 to 350).
  - Insulated transport units increased by 20% (from 100 to 120).
  - 5 new mobile ice vehicles emerged – previously none.



AGRICULTURE VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT

Agriculture is the main engine of Yemen's rural economy, driven by a primary aim of community survival. It is also the pillar that works to increase local food security and economic resilience in the Yemeni countryside. Across the country's rural landscapes, agricultural activities sustain millions of households. As a matter of fact, when modern agricultural practices are introduced, the sector creates profound impacts. When concentrating on those vulnerable families, we can ensure that they move from humanitarian dependency toward sustainable self-reliance.

SMEPS, in this context, was one of the pioneers in recognizing these transformative dynamics and prioritized the agricultural sector within its strategy of 2021 to 2025.



AT A GLANCE

Over the past five years, SMEPS has driven structural improvements across Yemen's agricultural sector by being a substantial partner in projects like SIERY, ESPECRP, FSSRP, CEREAL, and Access to Markets funded by the World Bank, EU, KSR, and more. Through targeted interventions, the agency successfully supported 8,821 farmers and SMEs (977 women) across the agriculture value chain. These efforts resulted in the creation of 65,079 jobs, 11% of which were occupied by women.

SMEPS operated by empowering all the key players in the agricultural value chain. The support SMEPS has given to farmers has made them shift their focus to getting both quality and quantity when farming. The agency delivered intensive technical training and introduced modern, sustainable technologies to farmers. This comprehensive intervention included deploying advanced irrigation tools like Sprinkler irrigation and Spray irrigation systems, and building rainwater harvesting tanks to help with water scarcity. Ultimately, the agency actively bridged the gap between the farm and the market, creating robust commercial linkages that helped farmers access the market and sell their products. This support has extended to support new sectoral value chains in Yemen, like coffee, onions, honey, and many more.

This support generated transformative results across the entire agricultural economy. For micro-producers, productivity increased by 39%, raising yields from 15.5 to 21.6 tons per 0.25 hectare. Empowered by better harvests, annual farmer revenues increased by 70% (increasing from $700 to $1,188). Parallel to this, horticulture cooperatives decreased their production waste by 51% due to improved practices utilized and increased their profits by 158%. Agricultural supply chain enablers and SMEs experienced similar exponential growth, achieving a 39.4% increase in sales and a 47% rise in profits, driven by a 97.7% expansion in their client base.

Building on this powerful five-year foundation, the "Access to Markets" project funded by IsDB and SDRPY came to carry on the transformative journey. While the previous years focused on maximizing production and strengthening local supply chains, the project was strategically designed to elevate these high-quality Yemeni products onto the global stage, ensuring sustainable commercial access, international quality accreditation, and integration into modern digital economies.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE BY SMEPS IN 2025?

For SMEPS, 2025 was deservedly an agricultural year.

In 2025, to address critical issues across entire value chains, the agency delivered direct financial support and grants alongside targeted technical capacity-building for 2,663 beneficiaries. By bridging the gap between quality production, advanced processing, and high-value international markets, SMEPS helped to develop Yemen's agricultural sector from traditional farming into competitive commercial farming.

2025 saw the introduction of new practices that transformed traditional farming communities.

- Introducing local smallholders to formal international accreditation for the very first time, where 14 local onion farms achieved official GLOBALG.A.P. (GGN) certification, and 16 honey and coffee facilities secured critical ISO (22000, 17025, 9001) and GMP credentials.

- Cereal and vegetable smallholders in Hadhramaut were supported by 22 solar energy grids to eliminate costly fuel dependency.

- Crop protection also saw an eco-friendly shift, as SMEPS introduced pure Neem oil as a biological pest control agent for sesame farmers, replacing hazardous chemical sprays.

- The agency also led major ecosystem restoration efforts, planting 60,667 Sidr trees to expand natural bee pastures and 11,900 coffee trees to restore agricultural terraces.

- For international market access, SMEPS supported six Yemeni enterprises to participate in an exhibition in Oman, enabling them to sell 515 kg (84% out of stock) of locally produced honey. More notably, those enterprises created a total of 16 preliminary partnerships with importers from 6 countries during the exhibition, which gave the SMEs a chance to introduce a variety of honey types and sell their products on a global level.

Finally, to strengthen enterprises' access to international markets, SMEPS established "YAM Market," the country's first national digital agricultural B2B e-commerce marketplace. Having achieved 60% completion of its technical platform this year, YAM Market is designed to directly connect rural farmers, cooperatives, and commercial firms without intermediaries.

Impact on 68 Farmers Supported in Dhamar

Improved Productivity



52.0%

Increase in production per farm (from 5,189 kg to 7,889 kg)

Financial Outcomes



233%

Increase in average net profit per season (from 174,795 YER / $326.70 to 582,839 YER / $1,089)

91%

Increase in average revenue (from 781,769 YER / $1,461 to 1,491,772 YER / $2,788)

Eco-friendly Outcomes



75%

Decrease in average waste quantity (from 6.4% [334 kg] to 1.6% [126 kg])

34.4%

Reduction in pesticide use and a 7% decrease in fertilizer use

Success Story:
From Qat to Specialty Coffee: Al-Sahi Coffee Association



Al-Sahi Coffee Association is a local cooperative located in the agricultural terraces of Al-Sahi. It supports 90 member farmers who made a collective decision to uproot Qat trees and reclaim their agricultural heritage through coffee cultivation.

The farmers initially faced minimal production (barely 1 ton annually) and a crippling 60% post-harvest waste rate because they relied on primitive drying methods. This led to selling low-grade commercial coffee at depressed prices.

The association, with the project's support, invested in 70 modern elevated drying beds, a community water storage tank, and a solar power system. Furthermore, association leaders were sponsored for an intensive practical training trip to Kenya to master advanced harvesting and cupping techniques, which they then passed on to all 90 members.

What has been achieved?

- 3,100 new coffee seedlings planted (2,600 project-funded and 500 self-funded).
- 50% increase in annual coffee production (rising from 1 ton to 1.5 tons).
- Drastic reduction in post-harvest waste, dropping from 60% to 25%.
- Coffee quality score jumped to Specialty Grade (+85 points), enabling direct market negotiations and securing high-value contracts.

Dairy Value Chain

Millions of rural communities in Yemen rely on livestock as a source of food and income, but the ongoing conflict in Yemen has severely deteriorated this sector. The spread of animal diseases, increased feed and other input prices, decreasing access to vet services, and rising livestock fatality rates are some of the major difficulties faced by female livestock breeders. This results in reduced milk production, weakened households' livelihoods, and loss of their key assets.

Despite these challenges, rural women breeders nonetheless still depend on livestock breeding as a vital source of food and income for their households. For years, SMEPS supported the livestock sector through strengthening household economic resilience and sustaining market operations.



AT A GLANCE

Women breeders are the key engine for the sector's growth and transformation, reviving the whole market. SMEPS has continued to model and expand its intervention to new areas after successfully transforming and sustainably enhancing the dairy industry in Yemen.

From 2021 to date, SMEPS has supported over 9,551 women breeders and SMES in 12 governorates, boosting their production by 33% and incomes by 55% and linking them with the markets to sustain their livelihoods. This support resulted in creating 35,349 jobs, of which 41% are women. To create a stronger ecosystem and sustain markets, SMEPS supported SMEs and key market players in the livestock sector to enhance their services and develop their work.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE BY SMEPS IN 2025?

In 2025, with the World Bank and FAO-funded projects, SMEPS empowered and directly supported 5,245 women dairy producers to strengthen their resilience against shocks and contributed to creating over 6,800 jobs. The transformative results of the support include:

83%

Breeders' milk productivity increase (From 1.1 to 2.1 liter /day).

28%

expand in activities, including purchasing new livestock and producing additional dairy products.

33%

drop in fatality rates by 33% (from 20 to 13 heads annually), and diseases rate declined by 55% (from 70 to 23 cases).

55%

Women breeders' average annual income rise (from $203 to $315), while net profit grew by 26% (from $62 to $78).

76%

Decrease in average milk wastage (from 6.6 to 1.6 Liters per day) through improved practices.

20%

Increase in animal reproduction (from 4.6 to 5.6 heads).

49%

of supported women breeders empowered, enhancing their decision-making roles within households and communities and contributing to meeting SDG indicator 5.1.1.

Impact Story:
Women Breeders Driving Dairy Market Growth in Taiz

In Taiz's Al-Shamayateen District, women Breeders worked hard for years to take care of their livestock, but most of the milk they produce never made it to the market. A very small percentage of breeders sell their dairy products to make money, while most families consume what they produce at home or share it with their neighbours. Even though women work hard to take care of their livestock, many struggle to make a living or sustain their income-generating opportunities.



With support from the World Bank and FAO, women breeders received assets, vet services, technical training, and consultancy assistance, which enhanced their knowledge and skills to better care for their animals' health and improve their milk production. 25 producer groups and two dairy cooperatives were established to organize the work and make it easier for breeders to get their products to the market. These groups allowed breeders to coordinate the milk collection and delivery to the market across villages.



The outcomes were remarkable. The daily milk produced by female breeders rose from 2.5 to 3.5 liters, a 36% increase, and their weekly income from fresh milk, ghee, and cheese increased from 13,000 to 32,000 YER, a 140% increase.



A milk processing and marketing center was established, connecting women to the market and sustaining their activities. The center provides a working space for those breeders to produce and sell dairy products to the market through grocery stores and women sellers. These days, local grocery stores and community women sellers sell over 17,000 liters of milk per month, creating over 60 jobs and generating 24.4 million YER in sales and net profit of 2.4 million YER. Developing an organized dairy market supports female breeders to sustain their livelihood, expand their businesses, and be formally integrated into the dairy value chain.

Programmes Results

Entrepreneurship & Business Development Youth Entrepreneurs

Youth Entrepreneurs
Transforming Micro to Small Enterprises
CSOs in Creative Industries



Entrepreneurship

We at SMEPS believe that entrepreneurs are the seeds of long-term economic revival and the engines of innovation. They develop innovative solutions, create opportunities, and add value to local markets and communities through their creativity, tenacity, and diligence. Entrepreneurship is crucial for maintaining economic activity and creating livelihoods in fragile environments like Yemen, where employment opportunities are hard to get.

Years of conflict and economic instability have left many entrepreneurs without the support systems needed to transform their ideas into viable enterprises. Existing businesses also struggle to survive, with very limited access to finance, advisory support, and weak infrastructure, and in many cases, they are forced to close their doors.

AT A GLANCE

With this, SMEPS recognizes the great role of entrepreneurs in bringing hope and contributing to Yemen's recovery. Therefore, SMEPS continues to empower entrepreneurs by developing their skills, providing advisory and grant support needed to launch, sustain, and grow their businesses.

From 2021 to 2025, SMEPS supported Yemen's entrepreneurship sector, with 86% of targeted entrepreneurs successfully establishing or strengthening their businesses. A major focus was placed on sustainability and institutional capacity, resulting in 71% of entrepreneurs officially formalizing their operations and 55% successfully improving their direct access to finance. This vital business stabilization translated directly into community economic impact, sustaining existing employment and creating 668 new jobs.

The financial and market outcomes of these interventions have been transformative for local MSMEs. Supported enterprises experienced a 212% average increase in business profits, directly driven by a 144% increase in average sales and revenues. This growth was backed up by a rapidly expanding consumer base, with the average number of clients increasing by 121%. Furthermore, the supported entrepreneurs demonstrated strong innovation and market agility, with 89% introducing or enhancing new products and services, and 38% successfully expanding their operations into new geographic markets and areas.

"Entrepreneurship is more than having an income. It is about dignity, purpose, and showing the world what Yemeni women can achieve".

Maha Alyazeedi – Entrepreneur

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE BY SMEPS IN 2025?

In 2025, SMEPS strengthened the capacities of 982 entrepreneurs. Among them, 292 entrepreneurs received assets to sustain their businesses and deliver higher-quality products and services to the market. The support focused on equipping entrepreneurs with technical expertise, entrepreneurial skills, and essential assets, enabling them to survive, grow, and flourish. Targeted groups this year included young startups, refugees, micro health clinics, and rural entrepreneurs in the food and vocational sectors.

Significant results showed that:

- Entrepreneurs' average monthly revenues rose by 171% (from $ 23 to $62), while net profit grew by 97% (From $17 to $33).

- 39% of the entrepreneurs expanded their business activities through adding new production lines, targeting new areas, and offering new/improved services or products.

46

Entrepreneurs successfully launched their new businesses.

62%

of the businesses had access to finance, and 25% of them obtained loans to sustain and expand their operations.

241%

Increase in average monthly clients served (From 12 to 41 clients).

171%

Rise in entrepreneurs' average monthly revenues (from $ 23 to $62).

97%

Grow in net profit (From $17 to $33).



"Before the training, I never did a proper feasibility study or documented my expenses. Now, I know how to plan for long-term growth."

Jawa Alwazeer – Entrepreneur

Case 1: A Turning Point: From Mobile Midwife to Thriving Clinic

With only basic equipment and barely enough supplies, Elaa'n started her journey as a mobile midwife in Lahj. Nonetheless, she was unable to offer consistent care to the communities due to limited resources and an inadequate facility, despite her best efforts. Her monthly earnings of about 100,000 YER were just enough to sustain her services.

Due to tailored guidance and support, Elaa'n's path took an extraordinary turn. The grants she received has enabled her to upgrade a room in her house into a clinic and the trainings she got in advanced midwifery practices and business administration boosted her skills to grow.

The transformation was outstanding. Elaa'n's monthly salary increased to 1,300,000 YER, and the clinic is now observing about 30 patients every day, with monthly births rising from 10 to 20. Additionally, her growing clinic has produced seven employment opportunities for healthcare workers and support personnel.

Through partnerships with specialists, Elaa'n's clinic now offers extended healthcare services, such as laboratory and dental services, bringing necessary treatment closer to families who previously had few options. What started out as a single midwifery bag has developed into a flourishing clinic that enhances healthcare access and generates income for the local community.





Case 2: From Determination to Enterprise: Wafa’a’s Entrepreneurial Journey

"At first, I faced criticism from fellow trainees: 'Why take risks when they haven't given us money or real support"

Says Wafa'a during the entrepreneurship and how to start their businesses training. With no income, no savings, and no safety net, Wafa'a, with determination, launched a dried fish processing business from scratch.

Right after her first sales, she developed her own product brand even before receiving the grants from SMEPS. After receiving the grants, her production increased and her network expanded:

- She established a distribution network to a landing site, rural areas and other city districts.
- Scaled to processing 95-130 bags of fish weekly across five types, selling in multiple districts (e.g., Lahj, Kriter, Bir Ahmed)
- Sells quantities of 15-40 bags per fish type per week
- Opened a small grocery store at her home to retail products directly during fish shortages.



From Micro to Small Enterprises – Construction Sector

Years of relentless war have pushed Yemen into a humanitarian crisis of unparalleled poverty and famine outbreak; as reported by the United Nations, Yemen has become "the World's Worst Humanitarian Crisis". Since 2015, densely populated areas have endured escalating violence, resulting in mass displacement, the decimation of vital infrastructure, and the near-collapse of essential services, leaving millions struggling to access necessities like livelihoods, food, healthcare, education, and markets.

As a response, the World Bank Group and UNOPS developed a project to provide climate-resilient road access and employment and entrepreneurship opportunities to the food-insecure rural population of Yemen. Generally, the project aimed to improve the delivery of humanitarian aid, restore access to basic supplies, and enhance income opportunities for rural regions.

In Yemen's construction sector, it is difficult for micro-enterprises, especially those in rural regions, thus limiting competition and opportunities for capable. SMEPS effectively equipped 44 Micro-Enterprises (7 female) with the skills and resources needed to not only sustain their businesses but also expand and grow, which in turn creates thousands of new job opportunities and contributes to the rebuilding of vital transportation roads in rural areas. SMEPS succeeded in transforming targeted micro-enterprises into institutionalized and eligible small enterprises that can participate and compete in tenders with international organizations such as the UNGM.

Key Results:

Institutionalized and Qualifying Enterprises



Fully formalized 44 enterprises, making them eligible for UNGM and UNOPS tenders.



They adopted formal accounting, digital archiving, and procurement management.



They developed business plans, a financial manual, procurement/contracting manuals, an environment and safety policy, and more.



Clear organizational growth; micro-enterprises evolved into structured small businesses.

Access to International Markets & Business Growth:

33 enterprises won 63 tenders worth over $8M; profit margins rose to 21%.

Project size doubled to $142,000.

Employment rose to 313 (142 new jobs), including 54 women.

Monthly salaries increased by 69%.

Created new partnerships and linkages with local entities, private sector and international organizations such as UNOPS, ICRC, Care Organization, UNDP, and more!



Creative Industries

Yemen's rich cultural heritage, from its historic cities and architecture to traditional crafts, arts, and cultural practices, represents not only a keystone of national identity, but also an important asset for economic recovery, resilience, and future growth. Years of conflict have placed significant pressure on this heritage while limiting employment and livelihood opportunities, particularly for young people.



Despite these challenges, Yemeni youth continue to demonstrate creativity and resilience, increasingly turning to cultural and creative industries as a source of livelihoods and entrepreneurship. From traditional handicrafts and heritage-based products to arts and other creative businesses, these industries offer opportunities to preserve Yemen's cultural identity while generating income, creating jobs, and diversifying urban livelihoods.

Recognizing this potential, SMEPS, in partnership with UNESCO and with funding from the European Union, has worked to strengthen Yemen's cultural and creative ecosystem by investing in both young entrepreneurs and civil society organizations (CSOs). Through capacity building, institutional development, entrepreneurship and business support, technical assistance, networking and market-linkage opportunities, and grant support, the intervention has empowered youth and strengthened CSOs as key actors in preserving cultural heritage and developing a more sustainable creative economy.





From 2021 to 2025, SMEPS supported 48 CSOs across Sana'a, Aden, Al-Hodeidah, and Shibam through institutional capacity building and grants to the CSOs. As a result, 697 young artists and cultural professionals (45.7% females) benefited from CSO-led activities across arts, storytelling, poetry, filmmaking, handicrafts, and architecture, contributing to the production of 792 cultural products, services, and documented content. Furthermore, 78% of supported CSOs strengthened their institutional systems and procedures, and 67% developed strategic plans for sustainability and growth. Economically, supported youth achieved a 27% increase in average monthly income, and 47% reported an increase in their client base, demonstrating the potential of cultural and creative industries in generating sustainable livelihood opportunities.



In 2025, as an extension of the successful implementation of phases one and two, SMEPS built the capacities of 33 CSOs in business continuity management, institutional capacity building, proposal writing, and Digital Transformation. This capacity-building support increases CSOs' knowledge and skills and contributes to enhancing their organizational resilience, operational efficiency, resource mobilization, and sustainability. As a result, the CSOs strengthened their capacities, improved their business management and sustainability, and enhanced the quality of the services and products they provide to youth in the creative industries.





"We used to run the center randomly, following our passion. After the training, we learned about the administrative and management structure. What is coming next for our CSO will be nothing like it used to be. We rephrased our vision, and with the supervision of our consultant, we prepared our work plan for 2025, including proposals for several cultural projects."

- Mr. Majed Al Kerbi – Owner of the Hadhramaut Heritage Cultural Center

Cumulative Years of Experience

Key Milestones & Achievements 2021 - 2025

- Expanded institutional capacity through updating or developing units' manuals/policies and the establishment of core functions, including Compliance, Donor Relations & Reporting, Partnerships, Research & Development, and Environmental & Social Safeguards.
- Provided several specialized and generic trainings to 114 employees and over 2,000 consultants.
- Empowered SMEPS branches through decentralization and capacity development, improving their operational efficiency and project delivery.
- Strengthened strategic partnerships with international donors and expanded integrated value chain programming across agriculture, livestock, and fisheries.
- Diversified donor portfolio and secured larger programs for more geographical coverage, particularly in the fisheries sector.
- Expanded sectoral portfolio by introducing Creative Industries and Entrepreneurship in Construction programs, and adopted innovative approaches such as digitalization, innovation, and green technology.





- Increased international engagement through participation in global conferences, exposure visits, and knowledge exchange initiatives, such as:
    - Japan Annual Women Conference
    - Stockholm Environmental Conference
    - UNESCO annual meeting
    - Exposure visits to Kenya for the potato and dairy sectors
    - Knowledge exchange of BRAVE program with MEBF in Burkina Faso & Bank of Industry Nigeria
    - Coffee reception and other advocacy initiatives
- Conducted comprehensive value chain analyses, market & need assessments, and feasibility studies across multiple economic sectors.
- Developed robust systems including remote monitoring, MIS, ERP platforms, and an e-learning platform serving staff, consultants, and the public to enhance transparency, accountability, operational efficiency, adaptive management, and organizational learning.
- Obtained ISO 9001:2015 certification, strengthening institutional quality management and operational excellence.





Thank you