

DELIVERABLE D1.3 YHELD: INTERNATIONALISATION STRATEGIES

As part of the Yemen Higher Education Leading to Development of Relint Offices (YHELD) project, Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg (MLU), in collaboration with a consortium of Yemeni and European partners, has released a pivotal strategy report aimed at guiding Yemeni Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in their journey toward comprehensive internationalization. This deliverable serves as a cornerstone in advancing Yemen's integration into the global academic community.

The report presents a holistic internationalisation model, built around three core pillars:

- **Leadership and Governance:**

Recommendations emphasize the creation of dedicated internationalisation committees within institutions, the integration of international performance indicators (KPIs) into monitoring systems, and the embedding of global engagement objectives into university-wide strategic plans. Leadership development is recognized as a critical driver of sustainable internationalisation efforts.

- **University Missions:**

Yemeni HEIs are encouraged to strengthen their international visibility by developing strategic global partnerships, aligning research priorities with international scientific agendas, promoting multilingual education across programs, and expanding both inbound and outbound student and faculty exchange opportunities. This pillar redefines universities' roles as proactive global actors.

- **Enablers and Support Mechanisms:**

The strategy underscores the importance of robust digital infrastructures, the implementation of inclusive and equitable policies, sustainable financial models for international initiatives, and continuous capacity-building programs to empower staff and students. Special emphasis is placed on leveraging digitalization and technology as accelerators of global engagement.

PARTICIPATION OF YEMENI UNIVERSITIES

Eight Yemeni partner universities Abyan, Aden, Al-Adel, Hadhramout, Lahij, Seiyun, Shabwah, and Taiz played an active and pivotal role in shaping the development of the internationalisation strategies. Drawing directly from the knowledge, insights, and best practices shared during the YHELD training sessions, each university developed its own tailored institutional internationalisation strategy, reflecting both their unique local contexts and their aspirations for global engagement.

These institutional strategies collectively emphasize key priorities for transformative change:

Strengthening Institutional Policies and Governance Structures:

Universities are embedding internationalisation objectives into their core policies and governance frameworks, ensuring strategic alignment and accountability across all levels of leadership.

Expanding International Partnerships and Mobility Programs:

Emphasis is placed on cultivating diverse and mutually beneficial international collaborations, as well as establishing robust mobility programs to facilitate student and faculty exchanges with global partner institutions.

Integrating Global Perspectives into Teaching and Research:

Curricula are being internationalized to include global competencies, while research initiatives are being aligned with international scientific challenges and opportunities.

Leveraging Digital Tools and AI-driven Platforms for Collaboration:

Institutions are harnessing digital innovations including artificial intelligence to foster virtual mobility, remote collaboration, joint research, and cross-border learning experiences.

Promoting Equitable, Sustainable, and Socially Inclusive Internationalisation:

A strong commitment is made to ensure that internationalisation efforts are accessible, inclusive, and contribute positively to societal development, reflecting the principles of equity, diversity, and sustainability.

Through their active participation, Yemeni universities have demonstrated a strong commitment to international engagement and have positioned themselves as proactive contributors to the global higher education landscape.

IMPACT AND AMBITION

This deliverable provides Yemeni HEIs with concrete, actionable guidance and a suite of practical tools to successfully navigate an increasingly dynamic and competitive global education landscape. By offering a clear roadmap for international engagement, it empowers institutions to build the internal capacity needed to pursue strategic internationalisation initiatives with confidence and coherence.

Central to this deliverable is the support for the establishment of dedicated Relint Offices specialized units focusing on Research, Internationalisation, and Innovation. These offices are envisioned as institutional anchors that will ensure sustainability, scalability, and long-term institutionalization of the project's outcomes. They will play a crucial role in fostering international collaborations, managing global partnerships, promoting research excellence, and driving innovation across Yemeni universities.

By promoting long-term capacity building, strengthening institutional resilience, and cultivating robust global academic networks, the YHELD project significantly advances the vision of a connected, resilient, and future-oriented higher education ecosystem in Yemen. It lays the groundwork for a transformative shift: positioning Yemeni universities not only as recipients of global knowledge but as active, engaged contributors to the international academic community.

DELIVERABLE D3.1 YHELD: REPORT OF THE TRAINING SESSIONS

Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg (MLU), as part of the European Union-funded YHELD project (Yemeni Higher Education Leading to Development of Relint Offices), in collaboration with leading international partners, has successfully delivered a comprehensive series of high-impact training sessions. These sessions were specifically designed to empower Yemeni higher education institutions, strengthen their institutional capacities, and support transformative reforms aligned with global academic standards.

In December 2024, the intensive training program brought together a dynamic cohort of faculty members, university administrators, and researchers from eight prominent Yemeni universities Hadhramout, Shabwah, Taiz, Lahij, Abyan, Seiyun, Al-Adel, and Aden. Over the course of the program, participants engaged in an interactive and forward-thinking learning environment that fostered collaboration, innovation, and strategic development.

The training sessions were meticulously structured around three critical and interrelated strategic themes, identified through previous evaluations and a comprehensive assessment of the universities' needs:

- **Internationalization:** Building global engagement and cross-border cooperation.
- **Leadership and Governance:** Enhancing institutional leadership, ethical governance practices, and policy development.
- **Teaching, Learning, and Research:** Promoting modern pedagogical approaches, research-driven education, and digital innovation in learning environments.

Through this targeted approach, the YHELD project is not only addressing immediate institutional challenges but also laying a sustainable foundation for future growth, resilience, and international integration of Yemen's higher education sector.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE TRAINING SESSIONS:

- **Internationalization (Dec 9):**

This session centered on equipping universities with the tools and strategies needed to thrive in an increasingly interconnected academic world. Participants delved into best practices for promoting global mobility for students and staff, forging sustainable international partnerships, and implementing robust quality assurance mechanisms aligned with international benchmarks. Discussions also highlighted the importance of fostering inclusive and welcoming campus environments that support diversity and multicultural engagement. Practical frameworks for initiating and managing international projects were explored, providing attendees with actionable plans to broaden their institutions' global footprint.

- **Leadership & Governance (Dec 10):**

Focusing on the vital role of effective leadership in driving institutional excellence, this session provided an in-depth examination of governance structures, strategic decision-making processes, and the principles of ethical leadership. Through a combination of real-world case studies, group workshops, and scenario-based activities, participants developed competencies in leadership styles, stakeholder engagement, and the formulation of transparent research policies. The interactive format encouraged critical reflection and peer-to-peer learning, empowering participants to apply innovative governance models within their home institutions.

- **Teaching, Learning & Research (Dec 23):**

Dedicated to advancing the academic mission of universities, this session showcased cutting-edge pedagogical techniques, strategies for embedding research into undergraduate and graduate learning, and methods for integrating technology into education. Participants engaged in dynamic, hands-on discussions aimed at enhancing student-centered teaching, improving learning outcomes, and cultivating a research-driven academic ethos. The session also emphasized the role of digital tools and online platforms in creating flexible, accessible, and high-impact educational experiences, preparing Yemeni universities for the evolving demands of the global knowledge economy.

RESULTS ACHIEVED AND ACTIVITIES

The YHELD training sessions successfully engaged over 70 dedicated participants from eight Yemeni universities, creating a vibrant learning community committed to driving institutional transformation. Through a series of highly interactive modules focusing on internationalization, leadership, and research-led teaching, participants were immersed in a rich educational experience that blended theory with hands-on practice.

Activities included expert-led presentations from international specialists, case-based workshops that tackled real-world institutional challenges, and peer-to-peer exchanges that encouraged knowledge sharing across universities. Participants were provided with a suite of practical tools, strategic frameworks, and actionable methodologies designed to foster institutional development, promote innovation in academic leadership, and build sustainable networks for cross-border collaboration.

By combining critical reflection, skill-building exercises, and collaborative problem-solving, the training sessions not only enhanced individual capacities but also laid the groundwork for systemic improvement across Yemen's higher education sector.

IMPACT AND AMBITION

The YHELD training sessions have had a transformative impact on participating institutions, significantly strengthening their operational capacities and strategic vision. By fostering new academic networks and cross-institutional partnerships, the program catalyzed a vibrant ecosystem of collaboration among Yemeni universities and their international counterparts. Participants left equipped not only with enhanced skills and knowledge but also with a renewed sense of agency to drive institutional reform and innovation.

A major outcome of the sessions was the advancement of internationalization efforts across Yemeni higher education, positioning universities to better align with global academic standards and practices. By building local expertise and promoting sustainable innovation, the training has laid a strong foundation for the long-term establishment of Relint (Relations and Internationalization) offices. These offices will serve as critical hubs for managing international collaborations, mobility programs, and global engagement strategies.

Looking ahead, the YHELD project aspires to deepen Yemen's integration into the global academic community, empower universities to become engines of social and economic development, and nurture a culture of continuous learning, leadership, and international partnership that endures beyond the life of the project.

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