

Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



**NOKUT** 



**Yemen**

# Refugees Country Briefing

**ARENA aims to enable access to higher education for refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation.**



## Yemen

**Official name:** The Republic of Yemen (Al-Jumhuriyah al-Yamaniyah)

**Location:** Middle East, bordering the Arabian Sea, Gulf of Aden, and Red Sea, between Oman and Saudi Arabia

**Population:** 29,884,405 (July 2020 est.)

**Ethnic groups:** Predominantly Arab; but also Afro-Arab, South Asian, European

**Languages:** Arabic is the official language

**Photo coverage:**  
Panorama of Sanaa  
at night, Yemen  
**Photo:** Shutterstock

This country briefing – especially developed to help with the evaluation of credentials of refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation – should give orientation on the education system in Yemen in the light of recent political and economic developments in this country. It presents a systematised overview on its higher education system and links to the available information sources that are useful for the evaluation of qualifications of refugees coming from Yemen, even in cases where candidates present insufficient or lack of documentation.

*Source: CIA World Factbook*

# Current situation

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Yemen consists of the two formerly independent states of North Yemen (Kingdom of Yemen) and South Yemen (People's Democratic Republic of Yemen). North Yemen became independent from the Ottoman Empire in 1918 and the form of government was changed to a republic after a military coup in 1962. South Yemen became an independent republic in 1967 after the port city of Aden had been a British protectorate during the 19th century. The southern government adopted a Marxist orientation and changed the country's name from the People's Republic of Southern Yemen to the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.

In 1990, the two states were formally unified as the Republic of Yemen. Discoveries of oil in the border areas, as well as the collapse of the Soviet Union, expedited a solution of a unified country. A southern secessionist movement and brief civil war in 1994 was quickly repressed.

During the Arab Spring, there was a public uprising in Yemen in 2011-2012 which led to President Ali Abdullah Saleh's resignation. President Saleh transferred all presidential power to Vice President Abd al-Rab Mansur al-Hadi in February 2012. The uprising was in protest of the proposed constitutional changes and with demands for economic measures and democratic reforms. The political uprising during the Arab Spring led to a civil war, which in 2015 escalated into an international war.

## CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION

The Yemeni society is divided, not only between the historical north and south, but also between tribes and clans. Yemen is also the poorest and least developed country among the Arab states. The damaging civil war and several years of conflict has led to a humanitarian crisis.

The reasons for the political uprising in 2011-2012 were partly political and partly economic. Some of the political reasons were President Saleh's strong concentration of power with the proposal of re-election and prospect of his son to

take over. The concern and uncertainty about the country's further development were exacerbated by the many antagonisms between tribes and regions, as well as the presence and activity of militant Islamists, including Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. The economic reasons included the general dissatisfaction with living standards, the high unemployment rate, and corruption within the regime.

## The political uprising during the Arab Spring led to the development of a civil war in Yemen.

President Hadi resigned in January/February 2015 and fled to Oman and moved to Saudi Arabia when the Houthi rebels surrounded his palace and took over the capital Sana'a. The Houthis claim that the council headed by Mohammed Ali al-Houthi is the legitimate government, while the international community supports Abd al-Rab Mansur al-Hadi.

## IMPACT ON THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

The events and conflict in Yemen have had a great negative impact on the education. Throughout 2011 and 2012, around 1.2 million children were prevented access to basic education because of the crisis. Numerous schools have even been destroyed, occupied or looted. There are also lack of teachers and low awareness of the importance of education within different communities. The quality of education faces major challenges, in terms of low qualified teachers and lack of textbooks and learning materials. The literacy rate of the total population (over the age of 15) is 70.1 percent, where the literacy rate is 85.1 percent among men and 55 percent among women. School life expectancy from primary to tertiary education is 9 years for the total population: 10 years for men and 8 years for women.

# Education in Yemen

## RESPONSIBLE GOVERNING BODIES

There are different governing bodies responsible for education in Yemen. The Ministry of Education is responsible for primary and secondary education, while the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research is responsible for higher education.

## RECOGNISED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research provides information on recognised higher education institutions on their website: <http://www.yemen.gov.ye/portal/mohe>

## ACCREDITATION BODIES

The Council of Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education was established in 2009. The council is a division of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Yemen and has since it was established been responsible for the accreditation and quality assurance in higher education in Yemen.

## TYPES OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

There are public and private universities in Yemen, with Sana'a University as Yemen's oldest university established in 1970. Aden University was established in 1975 as the country's second university, and Al-Eman University opened in

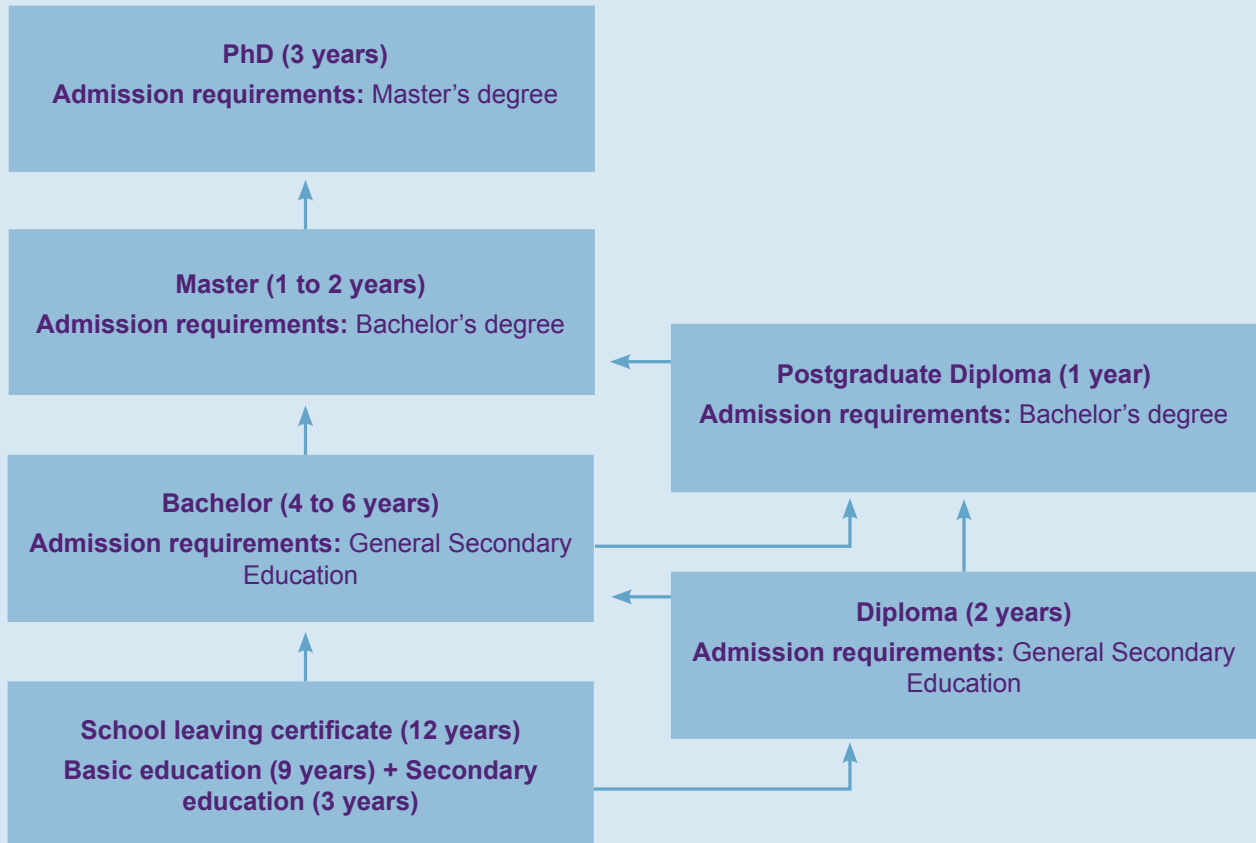
1991 as the first private university. The public universities are free, while the private universities charge tuition fees. The quality of education varies among the private universities, although some of the institutions provide high quality education programmes.

## NATIONAL EDUCATION REFORMS

Education in Yemen is obligatory and free for the first nine years, which is mentioned in The General Law of Education No. 45 of 1992. The law also stipulates that education is a human right. In 2013, The Medium-Term Results Framework (MTRF) 2013-2015 was prepared by the Ministry of Education in Yemen in order to provide pre-school, basic and secondary education as well as literacy and better adult education for all.

The quality of education varies among the private universities, although some of the institutions provide high quality education programmes.

## Education chart



**Source:** *International Association of Universities (WHED)*

# Education system

Education is compulsory from age 6 to 14. It is state-controlled and free of charge. Arabic is the language of instruction, and English may be used within some streams in higher education.

## Pre-Higher Education

School education in Yemen consists of nine years of primary education (locally known as basic education) and three years of secondary education (9+3 pattern). After first year of secondary education with common curriculum, students choose either literary or scientific streams. School education start at age 6 to age 18. The Ministry of Education is the responsible governing body of the pre-higher education.

### Primary Education

- Length of program: 9 years
- Certificate/diploma awarded: Preparatory School Certificate
- Purpose of diploma: Access to secondary education
- Age of entry and age of exit: Ages 6 to 15

### Secondary Education

- Length of program: 3 years
- Certificate/diploma awarded: Al Thanawiya (General Secondary Education Certificate)
- Purpose of diploma: Access to higher education
- Age of entry and age of exit: Ages 15 to 18

## Higher Education

Higher education is provided by several public and private universities. Admission requirements are based on the students' secondary education certificate (Al Thanawiya). It is required to have a score of 50-60% for admission to the Faculties of Law, Education and Arts. A score of 65-70% for the Faculties of Science, Agriculture and Commerce and at least 80% for the Faculties of Medicine and Engineering. Arabic is the language of instruction, with English as the medium of instruction in some streams.

### FIRST CYCLE

#### Diplomas

- Length of program: 2 years
- Access requirements: Al Thanawiya + entrance examination for some fields
- Fields of study: Dentistry, Electronics, Information Technology, Pharmacy
- Requirements for completion of studies: A minimum of two years in duration
- Access to further studies: Bachelor's degree
- Age of entry and age of exit: Ages 18 to 20

#### Bachelor's degrees

- Length of program: 4 to 6 years
- Access requirements: Al Thanawiya + entrance examination for some fields
- Requirements for completion of studies: A minimum of four years in duration + at least 132 credits
- Access to further studies: Postgraduate Diploma and Master's degree
- Age of entry and age of exit: Ages 18 to 22



## SECOND CYCLE

### Postgraduate Diplomas

- Length of program: 1 year
- Access requirements: Bachelor's degree
- Access to further studies: Master's degree

### Master's degrees

- Length of program: 2 years (Master of Engineering is 1 year)
- Access requirements: Bachelor's degree with a score of at least "Good"
- Requirements for completion of studies: A minimum of two years in duration
- Access to further studies: Doctorates

## THIRD CYCLE

### Doctorates

- Length of program: 3 years
- Access requirements: Master's degree with a score of at least "Good"

## TEACHER EDUCATION

### Primary school teachers

- Length of program: 2 years
- Access requirements: Al Thanawiya
- Institutions: At teacher training institutes or universities

### Secondary school teachers

- Length of program: 4 years
- Access requirements: Al Thanawiya
- Certificate/diploma awarded: Bachelor of Education
- Institutions: Universities (faculties of education)
- Graduates with the General Secondary Education Certificate (Al Thanawiya) has recently been allowed to teach in schools

## MEDICINE AND HEALTH SCIENCES

- Length of program: 4 to 6 years. Bachelor of Medicine is 6 years of study
- Access requirements: Al Thanawiya
- Access to further studies: Master's degree

## ENGINEERING EDUCATION

- Length of program: 5 years
- Access requirements: Al Thanawiya
- Access to further studies: Master's degree (one-year programme)

Admission requirements are based on the students' secondary education certificate (Al Thanawiya).

## The Toolkit projects

ARENA is the third cycle Refugees and Recognition - Toolkit project. The two previous are:

### TOOLKIT

The first project took place between 2016–2018. The overall goal was to enhance the mobility, employability and access to further studies for refugees. The main outcome of the project was the Toolkit for Recognition of Refugees' Qualifications, representing a first-aid kit for staff working with the assessment of inadequately documented qualifications.

For further information, visit: <https://www.nokut.no/en/Refugees-and-Recognition/toolkit>

### REACT

The follow-up project REACT took place between 2018–2020. Here the Toolkit methodology was successfully tested as a supplement to ordinary admission procedures in cooperation with several European higher education institutions. The main outcome was the REACT Q-Card for Admission Officers, providing recommendations for action at higher education institutions working towards enabling access to further studies for refugees.

For further information, visit: <https://www.nokut.no/en/react/refugees-and-recognition>



As part of the previous projects, refugees country briefings were developed for Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Iran, Ethiopia, Venezuela, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

## Grading system

Most universities use a percentage grading system as shown below. Aden University uses a grade point average system from 0 to 4, and Sana'a Community College uses a percentage + grade point average system from 60-100.

Percentage	Description
88-100%	Excellent
78-87%	Very good
63-77%	Good
48-62%	Pass



# Information Resources, Recommendations and Best Practices

## Databases and National Bodies

### ENIC-NARIC NETWORK:

Information regarding national authorities in charge of higher education issues in Yemen: <https://www.enic-naric.net/arab-states.aspx?country=Yemen&c=216>

### EXISTING COUNTRY DATABASES:

- UK NARIC. (2020). Yemen
- International Association of Universities. (2020). Yemen

### NATIONAL EDUCATION BODIES:

- Ministry of Education: [www.yemen.gov.ye/portal/education](http://www.yemen.gov.ye/portal/education)
- Ministry of Higher Education and Research: [www.yemen.gov.ye/portal/mohe](http://www.yemen.gov.ye/portal/mohe)
- Accreditation Council and Quality Assurance in Higher Education: (+967)712517561
- Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE): <http://www.anqahe.org/>

## Evaluation Recommendations

### DOCUMENTATION

The situation in Yemen has made it difficult to contact the Yemeni authorities and educational institutions for verification of documentation.

### FRAUDULENT DOCUMENTS AND DIPLOMA MILLS

If you have any questions concerning the authenticity of a document or the accreditation of an institution, we recommend that you contact your national ENIC-NARIC centre.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In cases of incomplete files or unverifiable documentation, a good example of best practice could be NOKUTs interview-based evaluation method: <https://www.nokut.no/en/foreign-education/Recognition-Procedure-for-Persons-without-Verifiable-Documentation/>

The situation in Yemen has made it difficult to contact the Yemeni authorities and educational institutions for verification of documentation

## Existing Best Practices

### EUROPEAN AREA OF RECOGNITION MANUAL:

[http://www.eurorecognition.eu/manual/ear\\_manual\\_v\\_1.0.pdf](http://www.eurorecognition.eu/manual/ear_manual_v_1.0.pdf)

### RECOMMENDATION ON THE RECOGNITION OF REFUGEES' QUALIFICATIONS UNDER THE LISBON RECOGNITION CONVENTION AND EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM:

<https://rm.coe.int/recommendation-on-recognition-of-qualifications-held-by-refugees-displ/16807688a8>

### EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS PASSPORT FOR REFUGEES (EQPR):

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/recognition-of-refugees-qualifications>

### TOOLKIT FOR RECOGNITION OF REFUGEES' QUALIFICATIONS:

[https://www.nokut.no/globalassets/nokut/artikkelbibliotek/utenlandsk\\_utdanning/veiledere/toolkit\\_for\\_recognition\\_of\\_refugees\\_qualifications.pdf](https://www.nokut.no/globalassets/nokut/artikkelbibliotek/utenlandsk_utdanning/veiledere/toolkit_for_recognition_of_refugees_qualifications.pdf)

## References

BBC. (2019). Yemen country profile: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14704852>

CIA World Factbook. (2020). Middle East: Yemen: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ym.html>

International Association of Universities. (2020). Yemen: [https://www.whed.net/results\\_systems.php](https://www.whed.net/results_systems.php)

Store norske leksikon. (2020). Jemen: <https://snl.no/Jemen>

UK NARIC. (2020). Yemen: <https://www.naric.org.uk/product/International%20Comparisons/SectionInformation.aspx?CountryID=183>

UNESCO. (2012). World Data on Education, 7th Edition: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/sites/default/files/Yemen.pdf>

Yemen Ministry of Education. (2013). Yemen Education Sector Plan. Mid Term Results Framework 2013-2015: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2013-02-Yemen-Education-Sector->

# What is ARENA?

**ARENA (Refugees and Recognition – Toolkit 3) is an Erasmus+ supported project, which aims to contribute towards more transparent and professional procedures for the recognition of refugees' qualifications in Europe. The project builds on the completed Refugees and Recognition – Toolkit project, where a common methodological approach to the recognition of refugees' qualifications was developed with the Toolkit for Recognition of Refugees' Qualifications.**

## Goal

The overall goal of the ARENA project is to enhance the mobility, employability and access to further studies for refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation, including those without official documentation of their educational background.

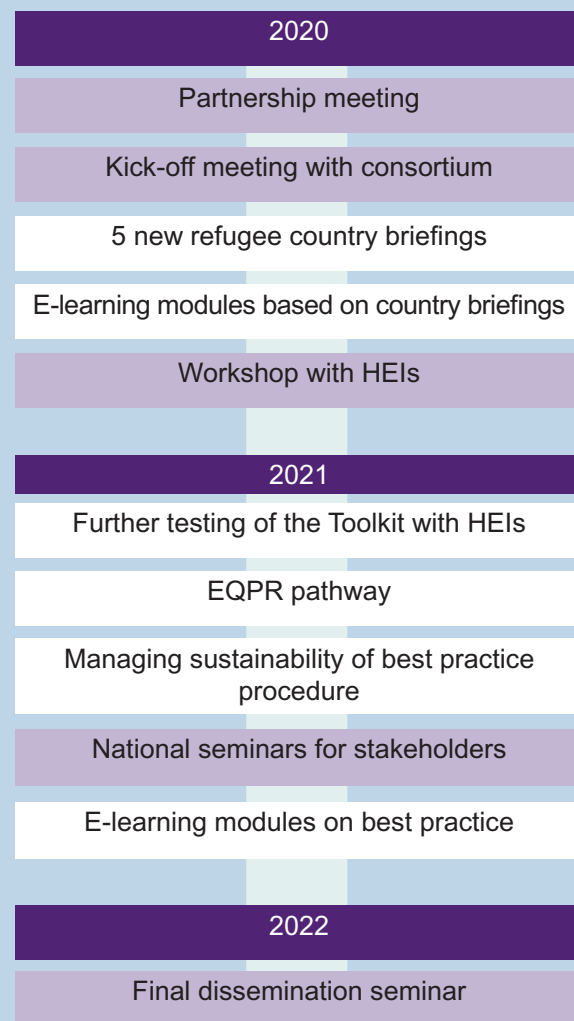
## Activities

The activities are structured around three main focus areas concerning the further testing of the Toolkit in major refugee receiving countries, managing sustainability of identified best practice procedures and assessment schemes, and addressing the need for updated and relevant information resources.

### MAIN PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- Further testing of the Toolkit in cooperation with NARICs and HEIs from Greece and Malta
- Mapping of how HEIs in Italy view the EQPR as a supplementary document for admission to further studies
- Managing sustainability of best practice procedure identified in the REACT project
- Development of five new refugee country briefings on the educational systems of Yemen, Burundi, Rwanda, Sudan and Palestine
- Development of e-learning modules

### TIMELINE



## WANT TO KNOW MORE?

To enable the accessibility and transparency of the project's work, the results will be made available on the project's website on a continuous basis.

### Websites:

<https://www.nokut.no/en/arena-toolkit-3>

### Email:

[project-arena@nokut.no](mailto:project-arena@nokut.no)

# NOKUT

Drammensveien 288  
Postboks 578, 1327 Lysaker  
Telefon: 21 02 18 00

[www.nokut.no](http://www.nokut.no)

This document was developed in the framework of the EU-funded project Refugees and Recognition – Toolkit 3 (ARENA) by the ENIC-NARIC centres of Norway, Italy, Belgium (Flanders), the Netherlands, Malta and Greece.



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



Malta  
Qualifications  
Recognition  
Information  
Centre



Centru  
Malti  
għal Rikonoxximent  
ta' Kwalifiki u  
ta' Informazzjoni

nuffic



NARIC-Vlaanderen



The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use, which may be made of the information contained therein.