



الكلية اليمنية لدراسات الشرق الأوسط  
YEMEN COLLEGE OF MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

### **Seasons Greetings from YCMES!**

*It has been a busy year at the YCMES, and 2011 promises to bring more excitement.*

*Recent months have seen our Business English program start and finish its first term, the beginning of a multi-year exchange program with Bochum University, and significant expansion of the Arabic and PCMES (Program in Contemporary Arabic Studies) programs.*

*With a plethora of courses and our dedicated, experienced staff, we are excited to continue our tradition of world-class language education in Sana'a, the oldest city in the world.*

*With the close of Eid al-Adha, our holiday season has just ended (Eid Mubarak!) We wish you and those close to you a happy holiday season, and hope to see you in Yemen soon!*

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## ***Center for Business English Begins First Term***

On September 25<sup>th</sup> 2010 the YCMES' newest faculty, the Center for Business English (CBE) officially opened its doors. Currently enrolling over 50 students, the CBE is an institution for Yemeni businessmen and women to hone their professional language skills. "We are responding to a demonstrated need in Sana'a for specialized English language instruction," explains college President Sabri Saleem. "The YCMES has an international reputation for outstanding instruction, and we are excited to offer our expertise to the local Yemeni community".

Evening classes are intensive and range from elementary through advanced levels. Taking place from 4-8pm, these give professionals the opportunity to study after work hours. Several organizations are taking advantage of this unique opportunity, including the Ministry of Agriculture, Yemen Petroleum, Yemen Mobile, and Yemenia Airways.

The CBE faculty employs seasoned teachers and staff from Britain, Canada, Australia and the US. CBE director Jeraldine Neel is a career ESL teacher and has lived extensively in the Middle East. She came to the YCMES after tenure as director of an ESL program in Colorado that prepared students in academic, business, and general English skills.

For more information about the CBE program, please contact Hannah Poppy [hannah.poppy@ycmes.org](mailto:hannah.poppy@ycmes.org)

## ***International Academic Opportunities***

***Spring Semester Course: Anthropology of Yemen*** - Dr. Tom Stevenson, from Ohio State University.

The YCMES is excited to offer this cultural anthropology course that will address such questions as "What is Yemen? What makes one Yemeni?" Other issues addressed will be the interplay between Islam, the tribe, and secular identity, as well as gender and identity formation.

### ***PAL (Program in Arabic Language)***

The PAL continues to be the leading Arabic as a Foreign Language program in Yemen. Full-time instruction of 4 hours/group or 2hours/private as well as housing, trips, cultural activities, and meals are included in tuition fees. There are still enrollment opportunities available for our spring and summer terms, but they are filling up quickly!

### ***Student Exchange***

If you are interested in increasing the opportunities for Arabic language and cultural studies at your institution, consider working with the YCMES to coordinate a student exchange! We have facilitated both short and long-term exchange programs with many Western universities, and consider this to be an important pillar of cross-cultural understanding.

For information on international study, please contact Mac Skelton [mac.skelton@ycmes.org](mailto:mac.skelton@ycmes.org)

## *Bochum University Exchange Program Celebrates First Semester*

Fall Term 2010 saw the first round of a three-year exchange agreement between Sana'a University and Ruhr-Universität Bochum in Germany. Each spring and fall semester, five Bochum students will come to Sana'a to study Arabic while their counterparts will travel to Germany.

The YCMES was instrumental in coordinating this exchange agreement. Students live in YCMES housing and take daily intensive Arabic classes in addition to two classes at Sana'a University. In addition to academic rigor, the program allows students to travel with other language students on YCMES-sponsored trips and cultural activities, enhancing the cultural value of their exchange.

Before leaving for Germany, the Yemeni exchange students met several times with their German counterparts to show them Sana'a and discuss their expectations and concerns living in a new country. One of the students, Laila, even invited the girls to go to a Yemeni wedding! At times cultural differences can feel profound, but all of the Bochum University students have extensive experience living abroad and studying the Middle East.

In Germany, the Yemeni students have reported that they are adapting well, despite the cold weather! They tutor Arabic part time and are exploring the college town of Bochum and its neighboring cities.

One key feature that both parties appreciate is the comprehensiveness of the scholarship – applications are need-blind, and allow students from all walks of life to participate in this important exchange experience. While German students are given inclusive packages, Yemeni students are also given a stipend in exchange for tutoring that allows them to live comfortably in this more expensive country.

### *Interview with Aaron Jyllkä (Middlebury '11)*

Aaron Jyllkä recently completed his fall semester abroad at the YCMES. Here he talks a little about his experience living and studying in Yemen.

*Can you tell us a little about yourself and your academic interests?*

Ever since high school I've been interested in languages and have studied several. I am junior at Middlebury College and study mathematics and Arabic and Russian languages. I am hoping to live and work abroad in the future, and this is the first time that I have done so.

*What has your Arabic experience been prior to the YCMES?*

I took one year of Arabic at Middlebury College.

*Why did you choose to study in Yemen and at the YCMES in particular?*

I was looking at several different language institutions in different countries. However, I was intrigued by Yemen as I knew very little about it and yet it has frequently been in the news. I know two students from my school who studied Arabic at the YCMES and it came highly recommended.

*What do you enjoy about living in Sana'a?*

*What are the challenges?*

I was immediately impressed by how open and welcoming the people are. I enjoy the abundance of cheap, tasty street food as well! It is difficult to find your way around the city as it is not well-mapped. I think the YCMES is very well located because it is near to many institutions and restaurants and its proximity to Tahrir Square and the Old City provides many opportunities for going out with friends.

*Can you tell us a little about any trips or activities you have participated in?*

I went to a hamam with some of the male students and teachers. It stood out in my

mind because of its strong parallels to Western traditions and yet it has an utterly different, exotic nature. The connotations that hamams carry in the west are very different from what I found to be here, and I walked out refreshed and rejuvenated.

*What is your assessment of the security situation in Yemen, and Sana'a in particular?*

In my experience, the security situation in Sana'a is less severe than the media would have one believe. The presence of so many security personnel assured me that I was in good hands.

*What kind of students would flourish in Yemen?*

I think students with an open mind, independent nature, and a zeal to learn the Arabic language will do very well here. In addition, if you start out with a solid foundation in spoken Arabic you can quickly immerse yourself in local culture.

***Eid Trip to Aden***  
***By Danielle Demers***

The wind was too much for me. After a day of fresh fish-eating/sea castle exploration/shisha-and-chai drinking frenzy, we awoke on our second day in Aden with one collective goal: the beach.

Piled with three fellow students in the back of a Yemeni friend's Hilux pickup, we careened down a highway on our way to the neighborhood of 'Little Aden'. Rumor had it there was a beach nearby where we could go swimming for free – and, more importantly, in our bathing suits. But as I sat in a pickup bed and we cruised at 120km/hr, the wind and my hair were stinging my face, and I was beginning to have second thoughts.

We arrived in Little Aden, and then kept on going. Right at the fish stand. Left at the oil refinery. Straight ahead until you reach a small beach club but turn right again. Everybody out – we walk from here.

As we shuffled over the ridgeline of natural dunes, I looked down into a protected bay. The call to prayer echoed around the barren red mountains that cradle Aden until it reaches the sea. Women and girls splashed awkwardly in the shallows – it is difficult to swim while wearing an abaya, headscarf, and perhaps even niqab. Some stopped to wave, and we waved back, but we had farther to go.

Up over one of the small red rocky mountains that do not stop until they reach the ocean, and then down and around, bleached coral pricking my

ankles. This beach had better be worth it.

And it was.

Suddenly, the mountains opened up to reveal white sands and blue water. We jumped in immediately. The water was warm and, despite cryptic warnings, there were neither sharks nor stingrays nor disgruntled army soldiers to be seen.

Blue water, blue sky, and red-brown mountains all around. Small red-brown hands of Yemeni children who stumbled upon us a half hour earlier thrust into my field of vision with stones and shells they have collected to 'zayyan' – decorate – our sandcastle. They did not speak fus7a and I did not speak their dialect of Arabic, but we managed to create a mighty city.

As the tide began to come in, their mothers returned, offered us to stop by some time for tea. We were sad to decline, but we had a date at the Chinese Restaurant (I don't even remember it's name, but when you are the only functioning Chinese restaurant in a country, do you even need one?).

As we piled back into the Hilux, I looked over the ocean. The moon was rising, heavy in the evening heat. The women and girls were gone, and the call to prayer began to sound again. We were far from the chilly mountains of Sana'a. Certainly far from my home in New York City. And I was so very, very glad to be there.

## Welcome New Staff!

Jeraldine Neel  
CBE Director



Jeri has been instrumental in starting our CBE program. She was most recently the director of an ESL program in Colorado. A lifelong English instructor, she also speaks proficient 'amiyya' and has lived and worked in 8 different countries in the Middle East.

Chris Whitney  
English Teacher

Chris comes to the YCMES after a successful year in Erbil, Iraq, where he helped to found an English faculty and the University of Erbil. He has lived and taught English in several countries and is looking forward to using his expertise to help develop our program as it expands.

Siovanna El-Nashir  
English Teacher

Formerly working at AMIDEAST, we are happy to have 'Sio' join our team. A criminal justice specialist and now a career English teacher, she comes to us from Aden, as is enjoying the much milder Sana'a weather!

John Shaw  
English Teacher

John comes to us after living and teaching in East Asia for several years. Originally from Florida, John uses his time off from teaching to bike around the world, most recently across the USA.

Kathleen Ahearne  
English Teacher

Kate comes to us from Australia. In the past she lived and taught in Libya, and is happy to have returned to the Middle East!

Ezadeen Al-Hammadi  
Financial Assistant



Ezadeen Abdullah joined the YCMES team on Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> as an Accounts Officer. Born in 1983 and graduated from university in 2006, Mr. Ezadeen now is participating his master in business administration and management at Maastricht School of Management. His professional experience includes more than four years experience in the fields of Accounting and different areas of management."

Mac Skelton  
Program Officer



After graduating from Davidson College, Mac spent a year living and working in Yemen. He has since worked for the Obama campaign and the Buxton Initiative, an interfaith dialogue organization. He is proficient in Spanish and Yemeni "amiyya", and in his spare time enjoys Ultimate Frisbee and falconry. After 6 months with us, we are thankful for his work and sad to see him go!

Hannah Poppy  
CBE Coordinator



Hannah recently graduated from Cambridge University with a major in Arabic. She comes to us after living and studying for a year in Aleppo, Syria, and traveling extensively throughout the region. She speaks proficient 'fus7a' and Syrian 'amiyya' and looks forward to picking up the Yemeni dialect!

Kevin Davis

CBE Administrator



Kevin comes to us from the University of Washington. He is TEFL-certified and speaks French, and is excited to pick up some Arabic during his stay with us!

Danielle Demers  
Student Affairs Coordinator



Danielle recently graduated from Mount Holyoke College with a major in IR and minor in Middle East Studies. Prior to YCMES, she studied and interned in Beirut, Lebanon. Originally hailing from New York City, and is looking forward to expanding her Arabic.

Paul Leuk  
Admissions Fellow



Paul recently graduated from Notre Dame, where he majored in History and minored in Arabic. After studying abroad in Cairo, and realizing that there is no job market in the States for history majors, he made his way to Yemen. He is currently enjoying his stay, although he would very much like a good donut.

## What's New in Yemen

Although Yemen unfortunately makes the news in less than ideal circumstances, there is much more happening in this country than what one hears on TV. Here is some recent in-country news...

### Aden Hosts 20<sup>th</sup> Gulf Cup

Aden was chosen to host the 20<sup>th</sup> Gulf Cup of Nations football tournament, which began on November 22<sup>nd</sup> and continued to December 5<sup>th</sup>. Eight national teams representing the countries of the “khaleej” compete every three to four years for the prestige of claiming regional supremacy.

Although the Yemeni team was defeated early in the competition, fans around the country have nevertheless turned up in support of the competition. It is estimated that the tournament produced over 600 million USD in revenue for Yemen, as fans from around the region have shown up in droves to support their favorite teams.

### India-Yemen Partnership Addresses Rural Women

The Yemen Times reports that a ‘cross-border partnership between researchers in Yemen and India

aims to improve the lives of these country’s rural women via educational interventions and self-help groups’. The initiative will seek to determine reasons for girls dropping out of school, and then develop a curriculum to address these reasons.

The initiative has already secured funding from the British Council. Professor RK Jayaraman of Sana’a University stated that “[In India] we have similar poverty, environment, sanitation and education issues. We have the same problem of girls dropping out of schools,” and that this would allow teams in India and Yemen to learn from one another’s successes and failures. He added “The successful integration of Yemen into the international community depends on the growth of its rural areas. We want to empower families. If you educate a woman you educate a family”.

## Around Sana’a

### Holiday Orchestra at Mokha Bun

On Friday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> the Sana’a Holiday Orchestra played its annual concert at the Mocha Bun coffee house. The air was certainly festive as Yemenis and expats from around the world sipped hot chocolate and listened to Christmas favorites in the lovely café garden.

### Rock Climbing in Yemen

Yes, there is rock climbing in Yemen! The *Yemen Adventure Club*, run by an American expat, hosts day trips every Friday as well as extended hiking and climbing trips to different locations around Yemen. Climbers are a mix of expats from all countries and industries, as well as several local students. The club has recently extended its services to local villagers, who participate in climbing and community service days.

### YCMES Lecture – “Water in Yemen: Challenges and Solutions”

As all Sana’a residents know, northern Yemen is currently suffering from a water shortage that may soon escalate to a crisis. Bern Schoenewald, the director of the German Development Bank and water specialist, gave a lecture on this topic to YCMES students last month.

### French Cultural Center Performance

A few weeks ago the French Cultural Center hosted an elaborate performance that combined elements of Yemeni traditional music and dance with modern day hip-hop, rap, and break-dance. The result was certainly unique, and delighted audiences of all ages. The music and dance troupe will be leaving shortly for Europe, where they will tour and encourage dialogue on traditional Arab art forms.

## الواقع المرّ للغة العربية

في قصيدة رائعة قدّم الشاعر حافظ ابراهيم قصيدة في رثاء العربية لنفسها حيث جاء في مطلعها :

رجعت لنفسي فاتهمت حصاتي و ناديت قومي فاحتسبت حياتي  
رموني بعقم في الشباب وليتني عقت فلم أجزع لقول عداتي

كثيرون هم من تكلموا عن هذا لواقع المرّ للغة العربية و القليل فقط من ابنائها الذين يدركون أهمية هذه اللغة في هويتنا العربية , تلك الهوية التي ترتبط ارتباطاً وثيقاً باللغة العربية. فتراثنا العربي كله مكتوب باللغة العربية , آدابنا و علومنا , وثقافتنا... كل ذلك مدون بالعربية .

فكيف بنا إذا أتى يوم و أجيالنا القادمة تجهل تماماً معاني و مفردات و بديع آدابنا و ثقافتنا العربية !! و كيف بنا يوماً نقف أمام العالم نتشوق بأننا عرب و نتقوه بكلماتٍ و تعابيرٍ مشوةٍ ... نصفها بالعربية !

ماذا ستقول عنا الأجيال القادمة؟! و من سيهتمون بمسح هويتهم؟! هل سيهتمو الشرق و الغرب في ذلك؟! أم سيهتموننا نحن الذين لم نهتم بلغتنا و نوصلها إليهم بشكلها الصحيح و رونقها الجميل؟!!

نعم و الف نعم ... نحن !!

نحن الذين وأدوا لغتهم

نحن الذين نبتز أطرافاً منها يوماً بعد يوم بحجج و اهية و أعدار هزيلة !

نحن الذين شرّعنا قوانيننا للتعليم و جعلنا الهامش مكاناً للغة العربية !

نحن الذين صورنا العربية بصورة يهابها و يكرهها الدارسون!

نحن الذين و ضعنا العربية قيد حلقة صغيرة من الإستخدام !

نحن الذين نبحث دوماً عن لغات و سيطرة في تعليم لغتنا لغير أبنائها !!

هذا هو الواقع المؤسف لهذه اللغة ... أبنائنا اليوم ينجحون في صروف شتى من العلوم , كالفيزياء و الرياضيات و اللغات الأخرى و لكن الكثير منهم يفشل !!! ولكن في ماذا ؟ وللاسف الشديد تأتي الأجابة "في اللغة العربية".

إننا لغتنا اليوم بحاجة إلينا .. بحاجة إلى وقفة جادة إلى جانبها و تصحيح مسارها و البحث في أساليب جديدة تُعيد لها مكانتها ومجدها و التفكير من جديد في إعادة صياغة مناهج تعليمها كان ذلك لأبنائها أو لغير الناطقين بها . كل هذا من أجل هويتنا ( العربية) فلنولي لغتنا اهتماماً يتناسب مع منزلتها العظيمة.

أ/ عبدالكافي شمسان