The microfinance sector during 2010 witnessed a notable growth and turning points during which the active borrowers reached more than 65,000 a 100% increase from previous years and over 55,000 active savers. However in 2011 the microfinance sector like any other sector was affected by the ongoing uprisings and demonstrations which started early 2011, microfinance operations where highly affected, in effect reducing growth of microfinance in the country. In addition, the microfinance outreach in Yemen is still limited, reaching 5% of the estimated demand which is 1 million potential market for microfinance.

To address the current situation in Yemen and the impact of the uprisings and demonstrations had on microfinance operations in country, in order to continue the reduction of poverty and unemployment, YMN boosted the awareness of microfinance in the country with the launching of the “Microfinance Promotional Campaign” between 7th December – 17th December 2011. Here the network increased awareness of microfinance, reached out to all using a number of promotional tools including: Newspapers, a number of short advert flashes on TV, a documentary film on microfinance aired on TV, a 45 minute discussion aired on the main Yemen channel, local radio stations, billboards, distribution of flyers, putting up tents in the governorates, promotional items etc creating a simultaneous 10 day awareness campaign in Yemen.

YMN Congratulates the Member of the Year 2011

The Yemen Microfinance Network would like to congratulate its member Al-Tadhamon Microfinance for winning the award “2011 Member of the Year”, the award acknowledged Al-Tadhamon Microfinance participation in the networks activities and initiatives over the past year, recognizing its professionalism in its communication and coordination with the network throughout the year. The award was presented in the networks annual dinner.

Practitioner of the Year 2011

The Yemen Microfinance Network would like to congratulate its member Aden Microfinance Foundation (AMF) on winning the award “2011 Practitioner of the Year”, the award based on eight indicators such as; number of borrowers, PAR, number of loans disbursed and its value, recognized Aden Foundation for its program throughout 2011, the award had much more value and meaning considering the 2011 Yemen experienced.

Al Amal Microfinance Bank has won Hanson Wade Award
“Successful Product Innovation”

Following the followed achievements, Al Amal Microfinance Bank has won Hanson Wade Award “Successful Product Innovation” in Africa and Middle East after over 60 entries submitted competing for the award. This achievement of Al Amal has been announced during the Innovation & Investment Conference held in Nairobi-Kenya between 18-19 Oct 2011, organized by Hanson Wade and attended by more than 120 investors and Microfinance practitioners.

In spite of challenges facing Microfinance industry in Yemen caused by the current crisis since February 2011, Al Amal Microfinance Bank did not stop its achievements regionally or globally, proving itself as the most successful Bank amongst the banks for the poor underlined to AGFUND, headed by H.H Prince Talal Ben Abdulaziz. Though recently established, AMB has won a number of recognition and financial awards in the Arabic world and in the globe, of which is the Islamic Microfinance Challenges 2010 and the global award Most Innovative Microfinance Product.

Hanson Wade, the organizer of the award and the conference, is an international organization with a variety of activities, based in London – U.K. Hanson Wade events are held globally in major cities across North America, Asia, Europe, Africa, Middle East & South America addressing different issues related to Microfinance and investments etc.
Training Course in Human Resource Management (HRM)

Yemen Microfinance Network (YMN) conducted a training course in Human Resource Management (HRM) for the Microfinance Institutions. The audience included HR Managers and employees.

The course goals were in managing the HR using the mandatory techniques in getting trained in defining and organizing the organizational chart of the HR, preparing the strategic plan, preparing the analysis and description of the required positions, announcing and advertising, short listing and selecting the employees, and prepare the effective system in evaluating the employees accomplishments.

"TOT Workshop in Training Needs Assessment and Trainer’s performance assessment"

On 23rd of November 2011 YMN completed a Training of Trainer’s (TOT) workshop which focused on identifying training needs as well as assessing the trainer’s performance. During the workshop, a field visit was scheduled to Alkuraimi Islamic Microfinance Bank for training needs assessment under the supervision of the trainer Mr. Adnan Alsada, who assisted participants in analyzing the training needs for Alkuraimi. This TOT course is a consecutive course to the first TOT that was conducted by YMN in March 2011 and was in training and presentation skills to build a database of certified trainers in microfinance.

YMN would like to thank Alkuraimi Islamic Microfinance Bank for hosting the field visit, and the participants who stressed on their needs to have advanced courses in the same field such as evaluating training courses, and preparing training materials. They also hope that YMN can play a role in building and preparing trainers in microfinance sector in general.

YMN held its First Annual Dinner

The Yemen Microfinance Network held its first annual dinner on 15th January 2012; the dinner was to celebrate the end of 2011, a testing time for all in Yemen. The highlight of the dinner was airing the 25 minute documentary film the network prepared on microfinance in Yemen, in addition announcing its two awards, member of the year 2011 and practitioner of the year 2011.

The network also acknowledged its donors: The Social Fund for Development (SFD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for their support over the past 3 years with presenting them a thank you and appreciation plaque. The event was attended by over 80 persons, including network members, microfinance practitioners, NGOs, bankers, media persons, service providers and friends of the network. The event gave the network a chance to officially close year 2011 with its members and friends and look ahead for the coming year, 2012.

Training & Technical Need Assessment (T&TNA)

Following from its first T&TNA back in June 2010, the network conducted its second T&TNA in December 2011, a two week study. The purpose of the assessment was to outline the training and technical assistance needs for 2012 for the networks members – the microfinance institutions. The methodology used was surveys and focus group discussions, with a sample of 127 MFI staff from 5 different governorates, the target audience included managing directors, senior and middle management holding key positions and credit officers.

In addition to outlining the training needs for each tier of MFI staff and the priorities, the study enabled the network to collect information on member’s thoughts and suggestions on the logistics of its trainings. The report also gives some feedback and information on the networks past trainings and how they value its quality including relevant and need based training, the trainers, training module and material, the networks organization and logistical preparation. The report concluded with member’s suggestions to the network in relation to trainings, network activities and general related comments and needs, based on this study, the network prepared its 2012 training calendar.

Out of 75 organizations, Al Amal Bank is the winner of Youth Taqeem Award

For the competition of Taqeem Fund for Evaluation in Youth Employment that is sponsored by Silatech, ILO and their partners, Al Amal Microfinance Bank, along with 9 organizations, was competitively selected for Youth Taqeem Awards after about 75 organizations from MENA applied for the competition.

Al Amal Bank would receive a grant amounting to $USD 30,000 for a Technical Assistant to develop a Monitoring & Evaluation system for measuring the loan impact on client’s. The M&E system will be developed in 2012 in cooperation with an international consultant and this will mark Al Amal Bank as the first Microfinance Bank in MENA to maintain such system in monitoring its credit activities.

Mr. Mohammed Al-Lai, the CEO of the bank, represented Al Amal Bank in this competition through its two phases, firstly in Geneva – Switzerland clinic in Oct 2011 and secondly in Doha – Qatar in Dec 2011. The shortlisted organizations for the second phase reached to 15 organizations and eventually in 24th Dec 2011 Al Amal Bank was officially announced with another 10 organizations as the winner of the award.

Building on this and other achievements, Al Amal Microfinance Bank becomes widely-known as the leading Microfinance Bank for Microfinance industry in Yemen and MENA for its initiatives in using technology on its activities, hoping that the 2012 will be a promising fiscal year with more excellence.