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**YEMEN**

## SUCCESS STORY

# Youth's Disability Fuels Determination

### Blind youth shatters stereotypes in USAID-funded workshop



Fatima Al-Aiel, Save the Children

*Nashwan Al-Ahdel, blind since age 10, trained other youth to fix equipment and create handicrafts at a USAID-supported Youth Empowerment Project workshop.*

*"My presence has helped participants better understand issues of discrimination and how discrimination is often based on false assumptions," says Nashwan Al-Ahdel.*

Nashwan Al-Ahdel, a 27 year old from Ibb governorate, has been blind since he was 10 years old. He had to drop out of school, as the school could not accommodate him after he lost his sight. Despite his disability—or perhaps because of it—Al-Ahdel has developed unshakeable willpower in facing new challenges. Al-Ahdel's determination has helped him hone his special talent for fixing household tools, well as his skill in producing a variety of handicrafts, such as making ornaments out of plastic bottles.

Because of his talents and his resolve in overcoming obstacles, Al-Ahdel was asked to serve as a trainer at a three-day workshop sponsored by the USAID-funded Youth Empowerment Project, which is implemented by Save the Children. At first, the other participants were unsure what they could learn from a blind person. But after Al-Ahdel demonstrated his skills, his sessions grew in popularity; some participants even tried to do the same tasks with their eyes closed and realized how much skill and perseverance is required.

The admiration of the other young people attending the workshop gave Al-Ahdel a big confidence boost and convinced him of his ability to achieve more and learn new skills regardless of his disability. "I am very proud to have participated as a trainer in this workshop. It has greatly increased my self-esteem. It has empowered me to be proud of my skills and to develop them further and to offer my skills to others," he said. "My presence has also helped participants better understand issues of discrimination and how discrimination is often based on false assumptions," he added.

Under Yemeni law, any Yemeni person has the right to an education and schools are required to include people with disabilities. Therefore, Al-Ahdel is now continuing his education and has reached grade 11.