Final Evaluation Report

Promoting Social Cohesion and Conflict Transformation through Insider Mediators

September 2017

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Abbreviations

AToT	Advanced Training of Trainers
CL	Community Leader
CM	Community Member
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IDPs	Internal Displaced Persons
IM	Insider Mediator
ISCD	Integration Social Cohesion and Development
KII	Key Informant Interview
LCs	Local Councils
LP	Local Partner
MIS	Management Information System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
Search	Search for Common Ground
SFD	Social Fund for Development
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

1.   Executive Summary

Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the Arab region and among the world's least developed countries. While the country has witnessed successive conflicts over the last decades, the most recent conflict, which began in March 2015, is the worst in Yemen's history. There are 20.7 million people in need some kind of humanitarian or protection support and 9.8 million of them are in acute need of assistance. An estimated 17 million people – 60% of the total population - are food insecure while seven million of them do not know where their next meal is coming from and are at risk of famine. Yemen has become a regional and international battleground, resulting in tremendous economic and social difficulties. The conflict has thousands of civilian causalities, wide destruction of public and private properties, and generated a significant influx of internally displace persons (IDPs). As of publication, there are over 18.8 million Yemeni in need for some kind of humanitarian assistance, according to United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.[1]

Within this context, Search for Common Ground (Search) is leading a United Nations Development Programme-funded (UNDP) project, *Promoting Social Cohesion and Conflict Transformation through Insider Mediators*. The project is part of the UNDP Integrated Social Cohesion and Development and Transitional Justice Programme. Implemented from November 2015 to August 2017, the goal of this project is *to enhance community resilience to violence in four communities (Al-Ma'afer and Al-Shamaytain in Taiz and Lawder and Moudiah in Abyan) in Yemen.*

A final evaluation of the project was conducted in order to capture project results and impact as well as to gather data to increase the effectiveness of future Search programming through continued learning. Qualitative and quantitative tools used to gather evaluation data can be found in Annexes 3 and 4. The project activities (conflict scans, community dialogue meetings and small grant) were implemented in Taiz whereas in Abyan the project implemented the conflict scan only. The qualitative data (KIIs and FGDs) were collected from both Taiz and Abyan; where quantitative data (Survey) were collected from Abyan only.

Key findings from the evaluation include:
  ➢ The vast majority of the survey respondents in Taiz (93%) think that the project activities (conflict scans, community dialogue meetings and small grant) were effective in promoting social cohesion within the communities; only 7% were neutral. The survey respondents in Taiz unanimously stated that the community dialogue and community initiatives enhanced relations among community members. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) respondents in Taiz and Abyan also reflected this position, reporting that the project succeeded in putting in place the foundations for improving social cohesion within the target communities.
  ➢ 86% of survey respondents reported *strong agreement* that dialogue is a good medium to resolve conflicts in their communities.

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[1] http://www.unocha.org/yemen/crisis-overview

- A majority of the survey respondents in Taiz (92%) think that the locally-led initiatives were reflective of the needs and concerns identified during the dialogue processes. Furthermore, 97% of surveyed community members in Taiz believe IMs effectively facilitated and mediated community sessions, empowering community participants to reach collaborative agreements. The majority of those surveyed from Taiz (84%) strongly agree that the IMs did help them reach agreement.
- KIIs and FGDs respondents in Taiz unanimously agreed that community dialogue sessions will continue beyond the life of Search's project. Community Leaders (CL) respondents in Al-Ma'afer, Taiz reported that as a result of the project, community committees have been established to address future conflicts; this was confirmed by the survey respondents.
- Participation in the community decision-making process has increased as a result of the project. The majority of the surveyed respondents in Taiz (97%) reported that they participate in community decision-making processes related to issues of concern in their communities.
- Overall, respondents in both Taiz and Abyan believe that women actively participated in the project activities. KII and FGD respondents in Taiz reported that women played an important role in the project activities. Indeed, a committee of three female community members was established in Al-Ma'afer Taiz, to provide follow up on the results of the local dialogue discussions and to address future conflicts.

2. Project Background

Promoting Social Cohesion and Conflict Transformation through Insider Mediators project is a UNDP funded project implemented by Search. The project is part of UNDP's Integrated Social Cohesion and Development and Transitional Justice Programme. The project started in November 2015 and ended in August 2017. The goal of the project is to enhance community resilience to violence in four communities (districts), (Al-Ma'afer and Al-Shamaytain districts in Taiz and Lawder and Moudiah districts in Abyan) in Yemen. To enhance community resilience to violence, the project contributed in the capacity building of IMs, local formal and informal leaders, in conflict analysis and dialogue design and facilitation. Then conflict scans were implemented in target districts to identify local drivers for conflicts and resources for peace. Dialogue processes then were conducted on priority conflicts and based on the results of these peaceful and cooperative community discussions, community initiatives were proposed and implemented with the objective of resolving conflicts and enhancing social cohesion. The project activities were implemented in coordination with local partners located in Taiz and Abyan. The project provided small grants to support community-based dialogue initiatives in Taiz only.

3. Methodology of the Evaluation
3.1 Evaluation Criteria

As outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToR) (Annex 2), this is an external final evaluation based on the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) peace building evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact), investigating the set of questions listed below, and utilizing and/or addressing the performance indicators described in the project document. The evaluation team made the most of the existing information and full range of stakeholders available at the time of the assignment.

This evaluation is grounded on the guiding principles of Search's work: participatory; culturally sensitive; affirming and positive while honest and productively critical and valuing knowledge and approaches from within the context.

Evaluation lines of inquiry:

Relevance

- To what extent did this project comply with the targeted community needs and existing issues?
- What is the relevance of the interventions as perceived by beneficiaries and external observers?
- How relevant were the instruments (Advance Training of Trainers training, Insider Mediators training, conflict scans, community dialogue meetings and small grants) used during the project to the local communities' needs and capacities?

Effectiveness

- To what extent was the project successful in achieving its stated goals and objectives?
- To what extent was the project effective in providing (Advanced Trainers and Insider Mediators) with the skills and capacities needed to increase community resilience to violence?

- Was the conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions based on an effective (and up-to-date) analysis of the conflict? Did it working on the right issues in this context during the project?
- How effective were the community dialogue and mediation sessions in resolving conflict?
- To what extent did the project contribute to improving relations among groups in conflict?
- What major factors contributed to achievement or non-achievement of objectives?
- How effective were these instruments (conflict scans and small grants) in promoting social cohesion and conflict transformation?

Efficiency
- Did the project deliver its outputs and objectives in an efficient manner (results against costs)?
- Were activities cost-efficient (resources applied results)?

Sustainability
- To what extent are the objectively verifiable results sustainable beyond Search or UNDP support, disaggregated by gender and location?
- What could have been done differently so the project becomes more sustainable in the future?
- Have new mechanisms been designed to continue any work initiated by this project? If yes, will the initiatives sustain post-project?

Impact
- What are the broader changes, positive or negative, intended or unintended, of the interventions in the context? To what extent are these changes desirable?
- What changes can be ascertained in attitudes, behaviors, and relationships as a result of the community dialogue sessions and mediation activities?
- What could have been done differently to make the project be of higher quality, greater impact? This will include technical lessons, lessons about project management, and working within local communities' context.
- Capture and/or incorporate success stories, when applicable, that have been the most significant changes as a result of the project interventions.

3.2   Sampling

The evaluation used both qualitative (Annex 3) and quantitative (Annex 4) data collection methods. Two main sampling techniques were used for the final evaluation. For key informants (KIs), a purposive sample was used based on the knowledge and involvement of the selected respondent in the project. A simple random sampling of community members involved in the project's dialogue processes and the community initiatives was used to identify survey respondents.

The evaluation consultant applied to the survey a 95% confidence level of accuracy and a margin of error 10%; the target population was 320 and the sample size was 76 community members. The overall sample of the study was 147 individuals. The disaggregation according to various stakeholders and target groups follows in **Table 1**:

Stakeholders/beneficiaries	Location	Tool	Number targeted	Note
Project Staff	Sana'a	KII	2	
ToT trainers	Taiz	KII	3	2 females
ToT trainers	Abyan	KII	3	1 female
Insider Mediators	Taiz	KII	6	4 females
Insider Mediators	Abyan	KII	4	2 females
Local Partners	Taiz	KII	2	
Local Partners	Abyan	KII	1	
Community Members	Taiz	FGD	26	11 females
Community Leaders	Taiz	FGD	20	12 females
Community Leaders	Taiz	KII	4	
Community Members	Taiz	Survey	76	43% females

Table 1: Sampling

3.3 Evaluation methods and data sources

For the purpose of this evaluation and based on the above sampling, primary and secondary data were collected using the following methods and data sources:

- Desk review
- FGDs using semi-structured guides and conducted with key target groups, disaggregated by gender
- KIIs
- Individual response surveys

Desk Review

The evaluation reviewed available project documents, including:

- Project proposal
- ISCD review report and stakeholder workshop report
- Quarterly progress reports submitted to the UNDP, conflict scans reports, validation meetings, dialogue proposals writing training materials and grant finance management training materials
- Advanced Training of Trainers (AToT) and Insider Mediators (IMs) training documents
- Knowledge Exchange Event Report, August 2017

Focus Group Discussions

FGDs were conducted in the target districts as highlighted in Table 1; and eight to 14 community members took part in each FGD.

Key Informant Interviews

KIIs were conducted with different stakeholders as highlighted in Table 1; and it targeted Project staff, trainers, IMs, LPs and CMs in the target areas.

Individual Response Survey

The survey for targeted community members was developed to collect data on the effectiveness, efficiency, impact and relevance of the project as per the project logical framework. The individual surveys provided information on the following indicators:

- % of community members aware of dialogue processes occurring in their sub-district
- % of community members who believe the dialogue processes were effective
- % of community members who report a feeling of solidarity within the community
- % of community members who report a sense of belonging to the communities

Survey data collection targeted 75 community members randomly selected from targeted districts in Taiz, taking into consideration that the dialogue and post dialogue activities were not implemented in Abyan as reported in the project document.

Evaluation Team

In addition to the consultant, seven data collectors were recruited in Taiz; two data collectors were recruited in Abyan. Two trainings, one in each governorate, on the evaluation questions and the specific tools were conducted on 25 July 2017 in both governorates separately. Data collection began on 26 July 2017 and was finalised 2 August 2017. During data collection, the consultant closely monitored the FGDs and supervised KIIs' implementation with the support of the FGD moderators. Gender sensitivity was taken into consideration in the target districts through deployment of two female enumerators.

At the end of each day, the evaluator and field teams met together to record and review the data collection findings. The field team members transcribed fieldwork notes on a daily basis and sent them to the consultant. The most expressive expressions or quotes were captured and incorporated within the report. Following the data collection fieldwork, the consultant compiled the fieldwork notes and data. The quantitative and qualitative data was analysed with a gender and district level disaggregation; the report narrative as well as any graphs reflect this multi-level analysis. The evaluation is synthesised in accordance with the DAC criteria. The effectiveness section will focus more on the project indicators as specified in the logical framework as well as the quantitative data obtained from the field survey. The drafted report was shared with Search and UNDP for review and inputs. Search and UNDP's comments were incorporated into the final edit of the evaluation report.

3.4   Evaluation Limitations and Challenges

Key limitations and challenges includes:

1. The project did not have a baseline to compare the evaluation survey findings.
2. The deployment of the data collectors was difficult considering the safety and security concerns in accessing field sites.

3. The project activities (conflict scans, community dialogue meetings and small grant) were implemented in Taiz, whereas in Abyan the project implemented the conflict scan only. The qualitative data (KIIs and FGDs) were collected from both Taiz and Abyan; where quantitative data (Survey) were collected from Taiz only.
4. Eight KIIs were initially planned as per the inception report, but only six individuals were able to show up due to the movement restrictions in Taiz.

4.   Analysis and Findings
4.1   Relevance

Based on the desk review of the project documents, Search designed the project based on context analysis which found that almost all of the country has been affected by unrest, tension and conflict since 2011. The conflict and difficult economic situation can be associated with various types of trauma, lack of community coping mechanisms and potential tensions between host communities and IDPs. The project sought to identify and address sources of tension, to promote social cohesion and prevent these divisions from embedding in local communities.

Search selected target districts in Taiz and Abyan in consultation with UNDP, based on both organizations' prior work in the governorates, identified need, local civil society willingness to engage in the project and the accessibility of specific communities due to the current conflict context.

Based on the Search's efforts in identifying the districts and the sub-grants' target groups, the project was well received by the population. According to the field survey in Al-Ma'afer and Al-Shamaytain in Taiz, 71% of respondents believe the project was *strongly relevant* to their lives and current needs while 29% believed the project was only *somewhat relevant* (**Figure 1**). The KIIs and FGDs in both Abyan and Taiz supported the survey's findings; they also highlighted a need to expand the outreach of some community initiatives (for instance, respondents in Al-Ma'afer highlighted the need to expand their water project's network to reach the whole community), implement additional initiatives (i.e. rehabilitate community pump warehouse) and support women's income generating activities. These responses may explain why some respondents found the project to only be *somewhat relevant*.

29%

71%

■ Somewhat relevant   ■ strongly relvant
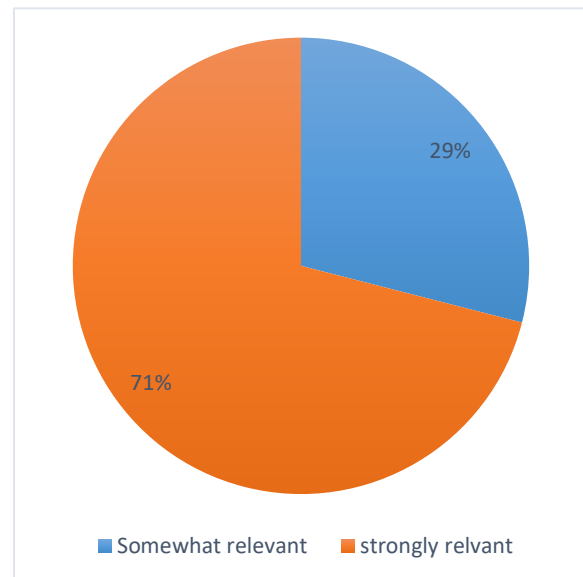
Figure 1: The project responds to current community needs

Enhancing community resilience to violence is seen as a priority for both males and females targeted by the project. The community members interviewed also believe that the project activities of conflict scans, community dialogue meetings and small grants are appropriate. Both male and female respondents in Taiz and Abyans noted that traumatised and deeply divided

populations need more than just food, medical supplies and fuel: opening local-level dialogues and creating spaces for sharing ideas and concerns is an essential step toward the long and difficult process of addressing conflict. Indeed, female beneficiaries in the Al-Shamaytain FGD stated that because of the local dialogue sessions they now live in an atmosphere of harmony. Interviewed CM, CL, IMs, trainers and local partners in both Taiz and Abyan believe that the project laid the basis for a culture of dialogue within the communities, and that this approach will be adopted for conflict prevention and transformation. They also reported that the project came while conflicting parties were in disagreement; the project addressed the relevant disagreements and bridged the gaps between the adversaries.

The interviewed trainers in both Taiz and Abyan find the project appropriate in general and the ToT training appropriate in particular. One trainer stated that "when we went to the target communities we found them suffering from different conflicts, and they were in need of dialogue to address those conflicts." The trainers also found the selection of IMs from within the target communities was an excellent strategy as they best know the drivers and causes of conflict in the local communities. One of the trainers suggested that it would be even more appropriate if IMs in future projects were selected from among influential decision makers within the target community. These individuals would have previous experience and pre-existing capacities in decision-making processes, which may benefit the project.

4.2 Effectiveness
4.2.1 Project success in achieving target indicators

According to the desk review of the project documents and the evaluation findings, almost all of the project seven indicators were achieved, as illustrated in **Table 3** in the "Project Indicators" section. However, there were a few points in the Logfram that could have been made clearer:

1. "% of attendees who validate results of the review of the ISCD project's report." This indicator was achieved, but the result obtained was descriptive. The relevant activity report indicates that the majority of the attendees validated the results of the review, but there is no quantifiable measurement for "majority." The target indicator is considered achieved.

2. "90% of trainers/Insider Mediators have 50% increase in knowledge of conflict analysis, mediation, and dialogue design and facilitation…" was not a realistic benchmark as trainers and IMs scored more than 50% in the pretests (on the trainers side only 29% reported 50% increase). The consultant in consultation with the project team measured the per cent of the trainers and IMs who have 90% knowledge of conflict analysis, mediation, and dialogue design and facilitation according to the post-test results.

3. "# of Insider Mediators who join MENA CGI's Roster of Yemeni Dialogue Facilitators Gender, Governorate." According to the project team, Abyan is excluded as there were no dialogues implemented there. The same applies to the indicator "Promote exchange between participants and encourage peer-learning."

4. The indicator relevant to the number of "Media pieces about Yemen Common Ground Institute Award" is achieved as reported by the project but there is no number in the report to measure against the target of five pieces.

5. The project staff stated and the consultant noticed that the project posted on Facebook and sent messages via Whatsapp highlighting stories from the field that emphasise the role of dialogue in promoting social cohesion; but there is no report to verify the number of posts and messages against each indicators of 100 and 150, respectively.

4.2.2 Effectiveness of Project Activities in Building a Culture of Dialogue for Resolving Conflict

The survey respondents believe that the dialogue processes were effective in dealing with the community's priority needs and concerns. A majority of the respondents (96%) found it effective while 4% remained neutral, as highlighted in **Figure 2.**

The project activities contributed to enhancing community members' participation in non-violent conflict resolution processes, as confirmed by 100%, of survey respondents in Taiz. Furthermore, the majority of the survey respondents (97%) believe that they are able to participate in community decision-making processes.
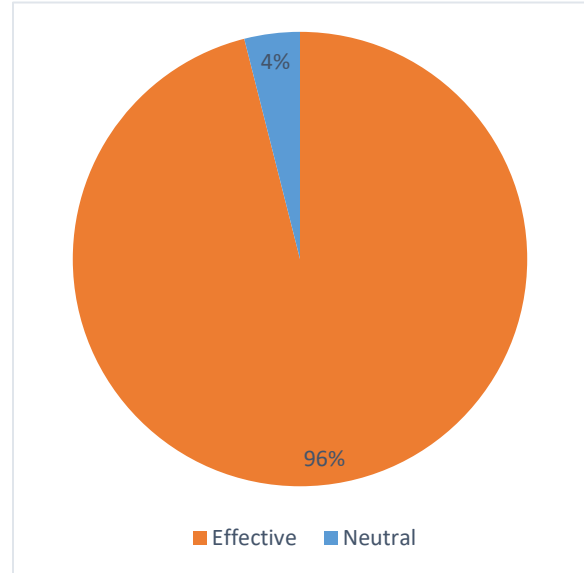
Figure 2: Dialogue processes were effective in dealing with the community issues

4.2.3 Effectiveness of Project Activities in Promoting Social Cohesion

Survey respondents appreciated the project activities and believe they addressed the relevant priority issues of the target communities. A majority of the survey respondents (93%) think that the project activities (conflict scans, community dialogue meetings and small grant) were effective in promoting social cohesion within the communities; only 7% were neutral, as illustrated in **Figure 3**.
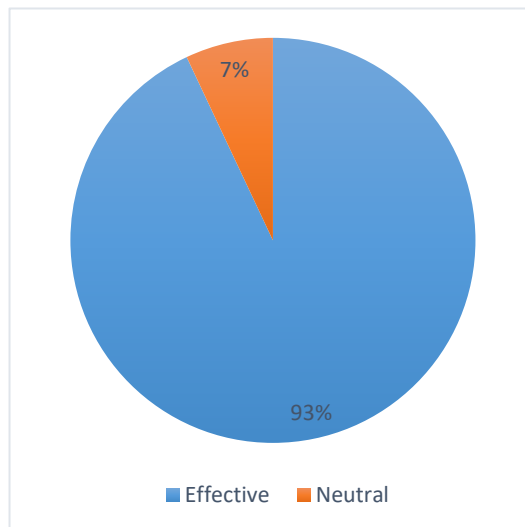
Figure 3: Project activities were effective promoting social cohesion within the community

When asked how the project was effective in promoting social cohesion within the communities, respondents noted the following:

- The community members have become more aware of the need to discuss their issues at the community level.
- The project selected community leaders who are members of the same community and trained them on mediation, which contributed to promoting social cohesion.
- The number of conflicts has decreased, which has led to a better living situation within the villages with less tensions among community members.
- The project has strengthened the cooperation and social ties among the community members.
- The villages are now less affected by regionalism and conflicts.

The KIIs and FGDs respondents in Taiz and Abyan supported the above findings. Respondents in Taiz, in particular, believe the project succeeded in putting in place the necessary foundations for improving social cohesion between the host communities and the IDPs living with in Al-Lakamah, Bani Ahmed of Al-Shamaytain districts. The project helped the community members to address issues around IDPs living in the village's school. The IDPs were provided with an alternative place to live, and, consequently, the students were able to resume their education. The community members reported that addressing the IDPs' housing problem through non-violent and collaborative process has increased the communities' resilience to violence.

Moreover, 86% of survey respondents reported *strong agreement* that dialogue is a good medium to resolve conflicts in their communities. The interviewed community members in Taiz believe that the project created a culture of dialogue to address conflict in a peaceful manner, which has resulted in a decreased number of conflicts. The KIIs and FGDs respondents stated that dialogue is the best way to address conflict and that those who were responsible for resolving conflict could be promoted as Dialogue Champions. Those champions can help further promote the dialogue culture, share their experiences and coach other target group in other projects.

Regarding the local initiatives, a majority of survey respondents in Taiz (92%) think that local interventions were based on the agreed upon results of community dialogue process (**Figure 4**.)
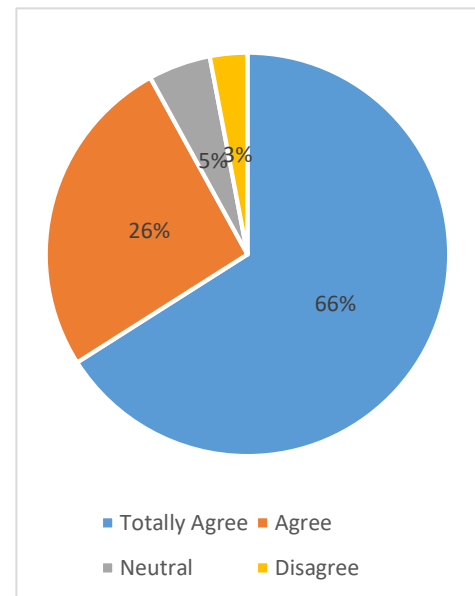
Figure 4: The interventions implemented are based on the results of dialogue process

A majority of the survey respondents (71%) also reported that they are *strongly satisfied* with the local initiatives implemented as a result of the dialogue processes; while 3% were *neutral*, as illustrated in **Figure 5**.
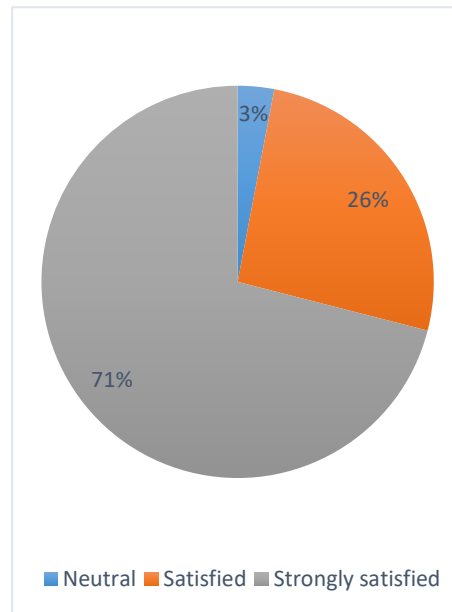
Figure 5: Satisfaction with the Interventions implemented as a result of dialogue processes.

4.2.4   Effectiveness of Capacity Building Activities

The project implemented a AToT for 20 trainers from both Taiz and Abyan; these participants in turn trained 120 IMs from the target districts of Al-Ma'afer and Al-Shamaytain in Taiz and Lawder and Moudiah in Abyan in conflict analysis, mediation and dialogue design and facilitation. Twenty-seven (54%) of the IMs were female, achieving the project's target.

According to the pre/post test results, both the trainers and IMs reported a 90% increase (the target indicator) in knowledge on conflict analysis, mediation and dialogue design and facilitation, with the exception the IMs in Taiz where their overall increase of knowledge is reported 4% below the target.

AToT participants in both Taiz and Abyan reported:
- They learned how to deal with conflict and conflict transformation, and how to use relevant conflict transformation tools i.e conflict scan, validation meeting, dialogue proposal writing etc.
- They have realised a personal level change, with one participant stating, "I started dealing with the people regardless of their backgrounds or affiliations; I feel I can influence a person's behaviour and orientation through what I learned in the training."
- They have learned teamwork, time management and coordination techniques.

The interviewed IMs in Taiz reported:
- They have gained skills needed to lead dialogue sessions and were able to empower local community members by transferring dialogue facilitation skills in the case of an IM's absence and for future dialogue meetings.

- Trainings increased the ability of IMs and the community to non-violently deal with conflict. One of the IMs in Al-Hayyab, Al-Ma'afer, reported, "We solved the conflict over water project, which was there for years back. We also solved the Health Center conflict and we managed to rehabilitate the community road."
- The IMs' training empowered the IMs to address conflict regardless of how large or daunting the issue. One of the interviewed IMs reported that the Shubat Al-Kalaebah water project was a particularly difficult and fraught issue, as the local council and a member of parliament and other dignitaries could not resolve it; and yet the IMs managed to solve it peacefully through dialogue
- The IMs' training empowered the IMs to mitigate local conflict risks. One of the IMs reported in Al-Jabziah, Al-Ma'afer, "In one of the dialogue sessions, one of the parties to the conflict wanted to throw a grenade at the other participants but the IM used the techniques conflict transformation and prevented a real massacre from happening."
- Celebrating the IMs success stories and encouraging IMs experience sharing is a crucial success factor for future interventions.
- The interviewed IMs also suggested that Search increases the daily allowance provided for the IMs, as the current pay is not enough due to inflation.

4.2.5 Major Factors Contributing to Achievement or Non-Achievement of Objectives

The KIIs and FGDs respondents in Taiz and interview respondents in Abyan reported that women played an important role in the project activities. For instance, in Shubat Kalaebah of Al-Ma'afer, Taiz, a committee made up of three female community representatives was established to provide follow up for the dialogue discussions' results and to address future conflicts.

Despite the active role of women in the conflict transformation activities, respondents in both governorates believed that women could be more productive and engaged if they received more capacity building training, with a focus on leading dialogue sessions. In addition, as the target communities grapple with poverty and daily pressures to earn each family's living expenses, the local community members (men and women) in Taiz unanimously recommended linking any future conflict transformation projects with support for women income-generating activities, which focus on tailoring, textiles, handicrafts, cattle and beekeeping. One female IM from Al-Shamaytain went further saying, "I think women after the dialogue sessions should be exclusively given the right to implement at least one women community development initiative by their own."

Engagement of women occurred less often in Abyan than Taiz due to the strict roles and traditions that limit women's movement in that governorate. Therefore, the IMs in Abyan suggested supporting women by: encouraging NGOs to establish women's coalitions to perform advocacy for women related issues in the community; providing capacity building for women to be more engaged in community activities; and establishing a voting system to ensure women's participation in community actions.
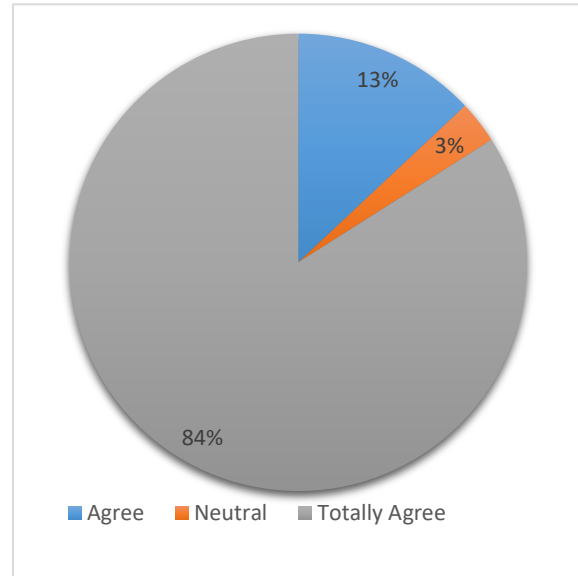
4.3 Efficiency

Search pre-identified the target districts in consultation with UNDP, based on both organizations' prior work in the governorates of Abyan and Taiz. Search also decided to implement sub-grants

in Taiz only where there is greater need and less donor engagement, as compared to Abyan. The pre-identification of the districts at the project start was an efficient step taken ahead of the project implementation.

A majority of surveyed community members in Taiz (97%) think IMs were good at facilitating and meditating community dialogue sessions. They were able to effectively help the dialogue participants reach agreement around particular conflicts. The majority of those surveyed (84%) *strongly agree* that the IMs helped the community reach collaborative agreements, as shown in **Figure 6.**

The interviewed trainers believe this project helped change community members' mindsets, moving them away from individual-based solutions and towards finding solutions that are beneficial for the whole community.

Figure 6: IMs were good at reaching a common ground among participants

The interviewed trainers and IMs thought that time allocated for their trainings was not enough and suggested that the durations of future trainings should be long enough to cover all the topics of the relevant Agendas.

Interviewed IMs in Taiz and Abyan believe the project activities need more time for implementation and Search needs to simplify implementation procedures. There were also delays in implementation of activities reported in the project quarterly reports. Search should review the implementation processes and procedures for possible improvement and most importantly ensure that the reasons for a delay and the potential new date for implementation are effectively communicated to the target group.

The interviewed trainers further reported that Friedrich Ebert foundation, GIZ and Care are other actors working on the same issues in the area; the disk review also noted that Social Fund for Development (SFD) is active in the targeted regions. However, these organizations have a different approach, which focuses on emergency-based projects, i.e. WASH or capacity building. Search could better coordinate with these INGOs – with the help of the local partners and beneficiaries – to plan their interventions based on the outcomes (e.g., community needs) identified by the community dialogue sessions. This will work to reduce future efforts' costs through improved and coordinated targeting.

4.4   Sustainability

KIIs and FGDs respondents in Taiz unanimously agreed that community dialogue sessions will continue beyond the project. Specifically, community members interviewed in Al-Ma'afer, Taiz

linked their belief in the project's sustainability to the community's now ingrained belief that dialogue is the best way to resolve conflicts. The survey respondents, as well as the CLs who participated in the KIIs in Taiz, reported that community committees have been established as a result of the project; these committees are designed to address future conflicts through dialogue and mediation.

KIIs and FGDs respondents in Abyan believe that the conflict scan meetings were useful for the community. However, they noted a need for further support to effectively convene community dialogue sessions and subsequent community initiatives. They think that implementing the whole interrelated set of the project activities will contribute to promoting the sustainability of the intervention.

Capacity building activities for trainers and IMs were noted as a central project component promoting long-term sustainability. Trainers and the IMs interviewed for the evaluation reported an increase in new skills and their intent to continue applying their capacities beyond the project, both in their personal lives and in donor supported initiatives if requested. The interviewed IMs reported that they learnt from the peer-exchange interactions during the training and noted that they gained greater experience from applying their trainings in the field, which sharpened their skills. Finally, IMs also highlighted that the conflict scan training helped them to better identify key conflict drivers and how to address and engage with them in working towards non-violent resolutions. They further requested Search support to update them on new development in the field of conflict transformation through sharing relevant publications and e-materials.

One of the IMs stated, "We are not afraid of conflicts anymore after the experience we had in addressing them through dialogue." Another IM from Taiz noted, "We tried to bring those conflict players to the spot light and we managed to make them part of the solution on top of their earlier role of being part of the conflict." A female IM from Taiz further stated, "This project enhanced my skills and I learnt how to manage a dialogue session. During the training that we had as part of the project, our trainer asked a question, when an IM is conducting a dialogue session and he/she receives an urgent notification to leave for another work what shall he do? The answer was to enable one or more than one of the participants to lead the session. We worked based on that assumption and it empowered me as a leader and I helped some of the community members to play the leading role during the sessions."

Activity implementation in the field was conducted through local partners. Search's support empowered local partners to support conflict transformation processes by building relationships between civil society organizations and local communities and IMs. Future projects may consider addition capacity building activities so that local partners can more effectively lead key programme elements, i.e. developing proposals to address local conflicts, programme fundraising, report writing and networking.

4.5 Impact

4.5.1 Project contribution to improving relations among groups in conflict

All the survey respondents in Taiz think that the community dialogue and community initiatives enhanced relations among community members; a majority of respondents (78%) believe this significantly enhanced relations, whereas 22% believe it had a smaller effect, as shown in **Figure 7.**

The overwhelming majority of the survey respondents (74%) think that the community dialogue and community initiatives very strongly increased solidarity within their communities. The positive link between the project activities on one hand and solidarity on the other is clear: respondents believe that dialogue and community initiatives brought the community together and increased solidarity, as shown in **Figure 8.**
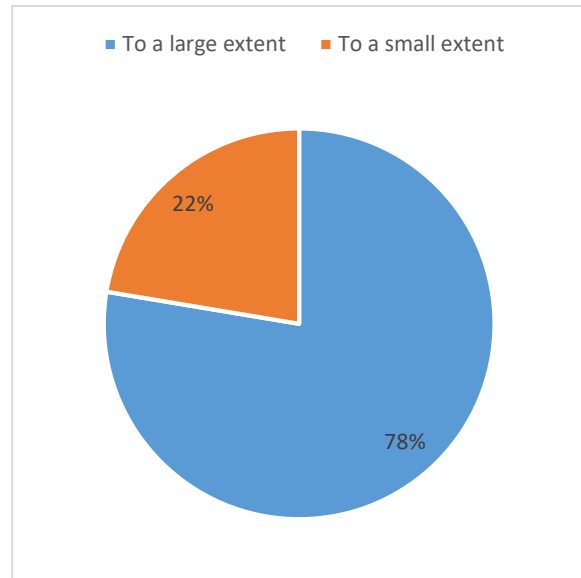
**Figure 7: Community dialogue and initiatives enhanced relations among CMs**
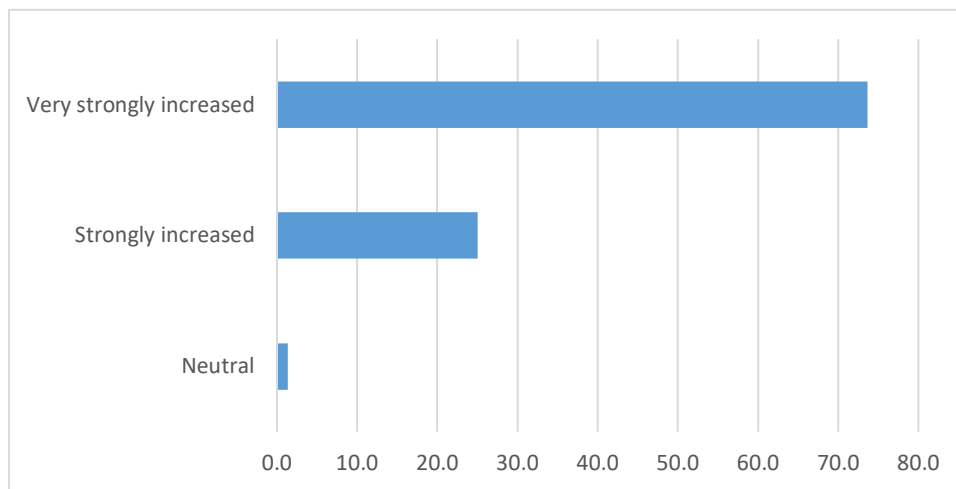
Figure 8: Community dialogue and community initiatives increase the solidarity within your community

Furthermore, 91% of the survey respondents share a strong or very strong sense of belonging in the targeted communities, as compared to 5% who think there is a weak sense of belonging and 4% who were neutral, as shown in **Figure 9.**
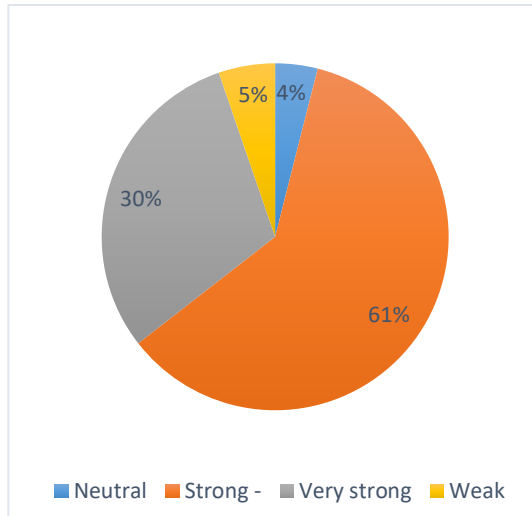
Figure 9: Sense of community belonging among people living in the community

Political differences remain a causal factor for respondents who felt a weak sense of belonging. Others discussed the personal interests of some community members who respondents do not believe share the same sense of belonging.

Among those who believe the sense of belonging in the targeted communities is strong, 91% think the sense of belonging positively affected their cooperation, as they care for and trust each other. Respondents believe there is a clear, positive relationship that exists between the sense of belonging and the cooperation, care and trust among community members.

A majority of the survey respondents (98%) think that the project activities helped promote the sense of belonging among people living in the targeted areas, while 1% believed it had a smaller effect and 1% were neutral, as seen in **Figure 10**.
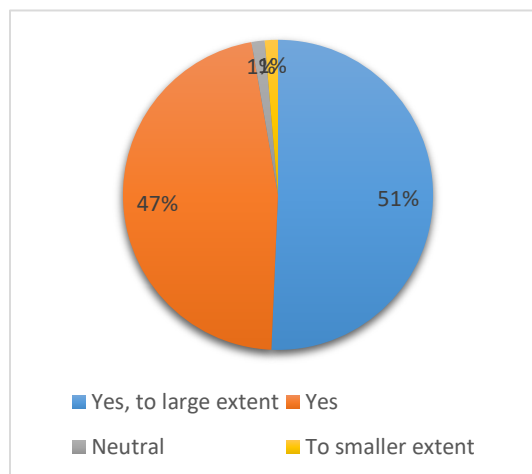
Figure 10: Sense of community belonging among people living in the community

There is no baseline to identify the rates of the participation in the community decision-making process before the project started, but it is important to note that participation is becoming increasingly common among community members. A majority of the surveyed respondents in Taiz (97%) reported that they participate in the community decision-making process in issues related to their communities and that this participation is attributable to the project, especially when compared to other villages or governorates in Yemen (**Figure 11)**.
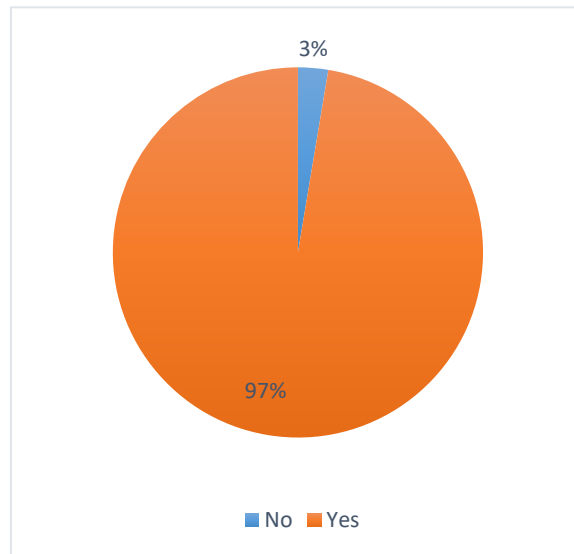
Figure 11: Do people usually participate in decision-making with regard to issues related to community

When respondents were asked about their participation, a number of common practices or spaces were highlighted:

- Community meetings where all village members attend to discuss and resolve personal conflicts. Participants try to reach an agreement through social or political settlement mechanisms.
- Community members discuss issues with the village Sheikh or leader directly. There is a growing awareness that participation is essential to reaching common ground within the community.
- Within certain targeted areas there are now community committees. These committees are a helpful mechanism established by the project to resolve any conflict. The project helped to establish community committees and strengthen the capacity of these committees in initiative and project management and provided them with project oversight. In the future projects by Search or other donors these community committees will be a key asset.

4.5.2   Impact of a Culture of Dialogue on Targeted communities

The KIIs and FGDs respondents believe that the project resulted in a positive impact on their communities. The community members in Taiz believe that the project instituted a culture of dialogue that enabled them to address conflict in a peaceful manner, which has resulted in a

decreased number of conflicts. They intend to continue applying dialogue and inclusive community approaches in the future. Respondents believe that the projects' activities contributed to bridging gaps, building trust, increasing social cohesion within the target communities and allowing them to focus on their livelihoods. In Taiz, respondents expressed their happiness with project and reported positive changes in their lives as a result of reviving some projects that were suspended due to conflicts, such as improving the functioning of health services, water projects and schools. The respondents in Abyan also stated that the conflict scan meetings institutionalised a foundation for dialogue as a means of addressing conflict.

5.   Conclusions

The evaluation indicates that the project was effective in addressing and building a culture of dialogue for resolving conflict. The majority of the survey respondents believe that the dialogue processes were effective in addressing community issues; the project activities contributed to enhancing peoples' participation in discussing and resolving their conflicts; and community members reported that they are increasingly participating in the community decision-making. The findings also demonstrated that the project activities were effective in promoting social cohesion within the target communities. The respondents of the survey appreciated the project activities (conflict scans, community dialogue meetings, and small grants) and believe the activities have addressed key issues in all of the target communities. Finally, according to the pre-post training results both the trainers and the IMs reported a 90% increase (the target indicator) in knowledge on conflict analysis, mediation and dialogue design and facilitation. The exception is the IMs in Taiz, where their overall final achievement is reportedly 4% below the target.

The evaluation also reports that the pre-identification of the districts at the project start was an efficient step taken ahead of the project implementation. The majority of the surveyed community members in Taiz believe the IMs were good at facilitating and meditating community sessions. Therefore, they were able to help the dialogue participants reach an agreement in the discussed conflicts. The interviewed trainers think that this project helped in changing the community members' mindset from working for themselves to working for the whole community. Furthermore, the project promoted peaceful conflict resolution.

The evaluation also found that KIIs and FGDs respondents in Taiz unanimously agreed that community dialogue sessions will continue beyond the Search project. The respondents of the KIIs and FGDs in Abyan think that the conflict scan meetings were useful and need further support to implement the conflict meetings sessions and the subsequent community initiatives. They believe that implementing the whole interrelated set of the project activities will contribute to promoting the sustainability of the intervention. Capacity building was another project component that led to sustainability among the trainers and the IMs. The interviewed trainers and the IMs think that they have learned new skills from the trainings, and they will continue applying what they have learned beyond the project in their personal lives and within their communities. The interviewed trainers and IMs suggested that the durations of future trainings should be long enough to cover the training topics and IMs suggested increasing the training incentives. Local partners implemented the project activities, and Search enabled them to continue the conflict transformation process within their communities beyond the current

intervention, capitalising on the accumulated conflict transformation know-how of the trainers, IMs, local partners and the community.

The KIIs and FGDs respondents believe that the project resulted in a positive impact in general. The community members in Taiz believe that the project instituted a culture of dialogue to address community conflict issues in a peaceful manner, which resulted in decreasing the number of conflicts. They will continue applying this approach in the future. The project also resulted in improving the trainers' and the IMs' knowledge of conflict analysis and dialogue design and facilitation. There were behavioural changes also reported by the interviewed trainers and the IMs on how they deal with conflicts. They consider their training to be an area of expertise that they find useful and intend to utilise it for both their own and their community's interest. Based on the desk review and survey responses, the following improvements regarding local social cohesion and suggestions for improvement are noted:

- All the survey respondents in Taiz believe that the community dialogue and community initiatives enhanced relations among community members.
- Most of the survey respondents believe that the community dialogue and community initiatives increased solidarity within their communities.
- The majority of the survey respondents reported that the sense of belonging among people living in the targeted communities is strong.
- Many of the survey respondents also believe that the project activities contributed to the sense of belonging among people living in targeted area.
- Participation in the community decision-making process is becoming common among community members, according to many of the surveyed respondents in Taiz. Despite the active role of women in the conflict transformation activities, the interviewed respondents in both governorates believe that women could be more productive and engaged if they receive more capacity building in the field of conflict transformation.
- The desk review findings suggest in the future projects that priority shall be given to the development initiatives targeting the largest number of beneficiaries.
- Women after the dialogue sessions should be exclusively given the right to implement at least one women community development initiative by their own.

6.   Recommendations

Finally, according to the evaluation findings Search shall work on the followings:

N	Field / Criteria	Recommendation
1	AToT and IMs training / Effectiveness	- Review future's AToT and IMs' trainings durations to ensure the allocation of enough time to cover each topic in the Agendas.
2	Development Initiatives/ Effectiveness	- In future projects and after the dialogue sessions, women should exclusively be given the right to implement at least one community development initiative by their own.

3	Overall / Effectiveness	The project has its own accountability system on receiving feedback from local partners and target groups. Future projects shall review the current accountability system and ensure that the IMs, CLs and CMs are able to deliver their feedback, comments or complaints about the project. The feedback shall be documented for future learning.
4	Overall / Efficiency	Improving Social Cohesion and Conflict transformation is a priority by the target communities and is essential for the well-being of community members, but the donors and humanitarian actors are not fully aware of that. Search should do further research on how to link Social Cohesion and Humanitarian Support through working with other actors and raise advocacy and more funding to address this issue.
5	Overall / Effectiveness	Gender considerations remain a high priority. Focusing on women and encouraging their involvement in every activity of the intervention remains crucial. Search may support and market to other donors women empowerment actions, like capacity building in conflict transformation and other related fields, income generating activities for women, literacy programs for women and implement awareness campaigns advocating for better role for women within communities.
6	Overall / Efficiency	Strengthen the capacity of the local partners' institutions and personnel, such as developing conflict project proposals, fundraising, report writing and networking as an exit strategy.

Table 2: Recommendations

Project Indicators

N	Activity	Performance Indicator	Variable	Target	Actual reach	%
1	**1a. Search will conduct a participatory review of UNDP's Integrated Social Cohesion and Development project (ISCD) and develop lessons learned**	# of key informant interviews conducted	KII	15	23	153%
		# of focus group discussions conducted	FGDs	6	9	150%
		# of reports produced	Report	1	1	100%
		# of validation workshops held	Workshop	1	2	200%
	1b. Share results with concerned stakeholders (validation):	% of attendees who validate results of the report	Attendees	70%		0%
2	**Conduct an advanced training of trainers (TOT)**	# of Insider Mediators trained –Gender, Governorate.	Male	10	14	140%
			Female	10	6	60%
			Taiz	10	10	100%
			Abyan	10	10	100%
		% of Trainers who have a 50% increase in knowledge of conflict analysis, mediation, and dialogue design and facilitation Gender, Governorate.	Male	90%	90%	100%
			Female	90%	86%	96%
			Taiz	90%	87%	97%
			Abyan	90%	90%	100%
3	**Capacity building workshops for Insider Mediators**	# of Insider Mediators trained - Gender	Male	50	83	166%
			Female	50	27	54%

		% of Insider Mediators who have increase in knowledge of conflict analysis, mediation, and dialogue design and facilitation, Gender and Governorate	Male	90%	81%	90%
			Female	90%	89%	99%
			Taiz	90%	77%	86%
			Abyan	90%	93%	103%
		# of Insider Mediators who join MENA CGI's Roster of Yemeni Dialogue Facilitators Gender, Governorate.	Male	5	4	80%
			Female	5	9	180%
			Taiz	5	13	260%
4	**Conduct conflict scans in Taiz and Abyan**	# of community-level conflict scan meetings held	Taiz	20	26	130%
			Abyan	20	20	100%
		# of stakeholders who participate in conflict scan meetings	Male	200	657	329%
			Female	200	53	27%
			Taiz	200	509	255%
			Abyan	200	201	101%
		# of conflict analysis reports produced	Taiz	2	2	100%
			Abyan	2	2	100%
		% of attendees at validation meeting who validate results of the report	Abyan and Taiz	70%	100%	143%
5	**Provide small grants to support community-based dialogue initiatives**	# of sub-grants awarded	Sub-grants awarded	16	15	94%
		# of action plans produced	Community action plans produced	16	15	94%
		# of stakeholders that participated in dialogue processes	Stakeholders participated	320	1,799	562%

		% of community members who are aware of the process who believe the dialogue processes were effective	All	40%	100%	250%
		# of community-led initiatives addressing conflicts identified during community dialogues	Community-led initiatives	8	29	363%
		% of people respond solidarity within the community	People involved in community dialogues and community initiatives respond solidarity	50%	99%	198%
		% of people feel sense of belonging in the communities	People involved in community dialogues and community initiatives feel a sense of belonging in their communities	50%	91%	182%
6	**6a. Publicly celebrate the culture of dialogue through a Yemen Common Ground Institute Award**	# of awards presented	2 Yemen Common Ground Institute Awards presented (1 individual and 1 project)	2	2-3	100%
		# of media pieces about the Awards	5 media pieces	5		Achieved

	6b. Promote exchange between participants and encourage peer-learning	# of participants that attended conference	Male	15	38	253%
			Female	15	10	67%
			Taiz	15	48	320%
7	Conduct campaigns highlighting stories from the field that emphasise the role of dialogue in promoting social cohesion	# mini-documentaries produced	Documentary	1	1	100%
		# Facebook	Posts	100		Achieved
		# Whatsapp messages	Messages	150		Achieved

Table 3: Project achievement according to the Logfram indicators

7. Annexes