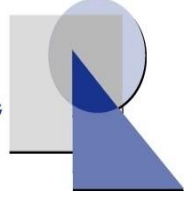




Search for **منظمة البحث**
Common Ground **عن أرضية مشتركة**



Midterm Evaluation Report

**MITIGATING COMMUNAL CONFLICT BY ENGAGING YOUTH CONSTRUCTIVELY IN LOCAL
DEMOCRATIC AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
*through the establishment of Youth Community and Mediation Centers in Casablanca and
Tetouan*

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I. Executive Summary

In collaboration with the local government, and with the support of the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH), Search for Common Ground (SFCG) is implementing a project that aims to prevent and mitigate communal conflict by engaging youth constructively in local democratic and economic development through the establishment of three Youth Community and Mediation Centres in Casablanca and one in Tetouan (YCMC project). To this end, SFCG pursues the following objectives:

- Prevent and resolve communal conflicts - trained youth leaders will mediate, resolve day-to-day conflicts, and foster stability and cooperation within the targeted communities, as well as in schools and in community-(local) government relations, thereby contributing to the creation of a culture of participation, dialogue, and tolerance; and
- Promote youth employment in the targeted communities - trained youth leaders will offer coaching, training, and orientation to marginalized youth to enhance their employability, liaise with relevant government to access job and training opportunities, and encourage youth entrepreneurship.

The community mediation centres were set up in communities that were classified by the National Initiative for Human Development as marginalized and suffering from social exclusion and vulnerability. The Youth Community Mediation Centres project targets youth both as agents of social change and as beneficiaries of the project to be youth leaders and role models for their communities and other youth.

The midterm evaluation assesses the achievements of the project to date with respect to its objectives and the achievement of its outcomes. It also assesses external factors beyond the control of the project that affect negatively or positively the project. Special emphasis is placed on the degree to which the project has succeeded in carrying out the activities outlined in the logical framework and how the implementation of these activities led to the desired changes as measured by the selected indicators of success. Also the midterm evaluation explores the challenges and potential opportunities for improving the project.

The midterm evaluation focuses mainly on the changes in perceptions among the youth participants, non-youth participants and the community members of the roles played by young social mediators and social mediation centres in mitigating communal conflicts to reduce tensions, and in increasing economic opportunities and the economic engagement of marginalized youth in the target communities.

The midterm evaluation has the following objectives:

- Assessment of the effectiveness and quality of implementation
- Assessment of the extent to which project objectives as defined in the logical framework have been met at the date of the midterm evaluation, and assess the likelihood of achieving them in this project
- Identify potential opportunities for improving the project

Although the evaluation was carried out under generally good conditions and with good support from all concerned, the evaluator met with some constraints, which are highlighted below:

- The unavailability of some local stakeholders such as the Division de l'Action Sociale (DAS) representatives of INDH who had other commitments and were not able to meet the evaluator.
- The difficulty of having a relatively large sample to the financial and human resources available for this midterm evaluation.
- The Tetouan portion of the project was not included since it started after Casablanca as an extension to this project.

The project is moving steadily and effectively towards its objectives. Despite the positive outcomes underscored above, it is however too early to determine the long term impact it has had on the target beneficiaries. What is obvious is that project activities have positively influenced the communities and local stakeholders on the value and importance of alternative means to dispute resolution, win-win conflict approaches and interest based resolution techniques are beneficial for urban communities grappling with youth violence, extremism and social disenfranchisement. There is an increased ownership of the concept and practice of community mediation and many local stakeholders think of it as a new paradigm for effecting

social change. Essentially, the project has been effective in changing perceptions of the community and stakeholders. The concrete outputs in terms of improved capacity to resolve disputes and facilitate access to and create economic opportunities are expected to take place later in the project and will require more concerted action.

Changes in Knowledge and Attitude were noted in this midterm evaluation:

- Strong results were achieved in terms of changes in the awareness and attitudes in the trained group of young social mediators. These changes are largely related to the relevance of community mediation and the skills and practice of community mediation.
- The changes in awareness and attitudes in community members were negligible with respect to the role of the YCMC project in the promotion and improvement of economic opportunities.

In general, there is a clear need for a stronger focus on the capacity building of the community dispute resolution systems embedded in communities in order to increase their effectiveness and impact.

The midterm evaluation produced the following recommendations:

- ⇒ SFCG-M should ensure that the community mediation centres have both the necessary resources and necessary expertise to set up an organizational system that will facilitate access to community mediation services in the targeted communities.
- ⇒ SFCG-M should build the capacity of youth mediation centres to have a more independent approach to tackling local problems and ensuring sustainability.
- ⇒ More capacity building is required in terms of how youth community mediation centres can become hubs that facilitate access to employment.
- ⇒ Organizational systems have to be developed to document the intervention of youth community mediation centres in order to have a reflective approach that can ensure institutional learning and formative evaluation.
- ⇒ A long term action plan to promote a culture of peace, promote community mediation and foster constructive approaches to resolving communal conflicts has to be designed and developed collaboratively with youth and communities.
- ⇒ More capacity building for youth community mediation centres to secure local partnerships independently from SFCG to ensure sustainability.

II. Introduction

Moroccan cities suffer from a chronic problem where disadvantaged youth live in unhealthy environments and experience a myriad of conflicts and social problems. The problems plaguing these communities hinder democratic development in Morocco and exacerbate social tensions.

According to the Moroccan Department of Statistics, 70% of the Moroccan population is under the age of 32 while the number of people living under the threshold of poverty reached 5 millions in 2004 (16,5% of the total population)¹. Rural migration has played a major role in the proliferation of new forms of social exclusion, such as the slums phenomenon. According to Morocco's Ministry of Housing, more than 4 million people reside in 770,000 unhealthy housing units in slums in peri-urban areas.

High unemployment rates and high illiteracy rates as well as all the other forms of social exclusion such as deprivation from basic services and social marginalization have exposed Moroccan disadvantaged youth to the dangers of adhering to a culture of victimization and alienation and a lack of interest in public life.

In disadvantaged areas, poverty, unemployment, exclusion, and social marginalization have caused an increase in extremist and radical ideas. Community oriented action is a powerful tool for youth integration into society, a tool that allows youth community leaders to become active agents of social transformation. By addressing some of the social issues that confront these people, they can move away from despondency, hopelessness and violent activities to more constructive participation in community life.

The Moroccan government is now more than ever conscious of the necessity of integrating the youth in public life and bringing the excluded communities out of their exclusion. The INDH (the National Initiative for Human Development) is a medium term national initiative launched in May 2005 by The King Mohammed VI, which seeks strategic partnerships with NGOs to implement projects of social transformation and change.

¹ Direction de la statistique, 2004

Efficiently addressing the challenges posed in the excluded areas in Morocco is central to the stability of the country. It is timely to engage with local civil societies in participatory conflict prevention efforts in order to transform the way the Moroccan society deals with conflict: away from adversarial approaches, toward cooperative solutions.

Social or Community Mediation as a Paradigm for Social Change

What is Social or Community Mediation?

Social or community mediation is viewed as a process of dispute resolution in which one or more impartial third parties intervenes in a conflict or dispute at the request of the conflicting parties and assists and facilitates their negotiation and their development of a consensual, informed agreement. The primary purpose of social or community mediation is to resolve disputes to repair and create social ties that are cohesive and sustainable. In community mediation, the decision-making authority rests with the conflicting parties themselves. Recognizing participant needs, cultural differences, and variations in style, the mediation process allows participants to define and clarify issues, reduce obstacles to communication, explore possible solutions, and, reach a mutually satisfactory agreement. Mediation presents the opportunity to express differences and improve relationships and mutual understanding. Mediation allows for a win-win outcome instead of the usual win-loss scenario. It focuses on the positive interaction and non-adversarial relations. It changes the underlying approach to conflict and problem management.

Social or community mediation is a practice that is primarily inscribed in a proximity approach to resolve communal problems and conflicts. It is an approach to solving conflicts at an early stage perhaps before they reach the level of overt conflict. In contrast to traditional mediation services in general which focus on the resolution of specific disputes, this approach is largely preventive in nature given the fact that it focuses on knitting communal ties through the provision of community mediation services. In a sense, it prepares the ground for interventions that deal with social tensions and frictions that are not necessarily manifesting themselves as overt conflicts. One of the advantages of social mediation is that it acknowledges social frictions as one of the roots of causes of crime and violence, and it suggests a way of addressing it. Social mediation is an approach that calls for the

empowerment of individuals in a community to take more responsibility for maintaining peace and preventing crimes and violent acts, as well as equips them with the skills and tools to do so. Mediators themselves learn how to cope with and express themselves in all kinds of situations, especially those where tensions are very high. These youth are leaders and role models in their communities.

History of Community Mediation

The field of community mediation in Morocco is still a fledgling one both at the level of theory, research and practice. In fact, it is only recently that the field has started evolving. To date, only very few university programs focus on social mediation like the *licence professionnelle* in social mediation which was started in the Faculty of Education in Rabat in 2007. Other programs such as the INAS (l'institut national de l'action sociale) has courses that cover the theme of social mediation, but these efforts are still way below the needs in Morocco.

Concretely, there are no documented programs or experiences of community mediation in Morocco apart from those initiatives pioneered and spearheaded by Search for Common Ground – Morocco to launch a number of social or community mediation centers in a number of Moroccan cities. Search for Common Ground as an international NGO, whose mission is to change the way institutions and individuals deal with conflict away from adversarial approaches to constructive approaches to resolving conflict, has implemented several projects that focused on the field of mediation and conflict resolution in general. The work of Search for Common Ground on community mediation in Morocco comes after an extensive work conducted over a period of three years between the years 2005 and 2008 to build national capacity to provide alternative conflict resolution services in both civil and business disputes. Also, SFCG-M worked with women listening centers and feminist NGOs to build their capacity to provide family mediation services.

The community mediation projects launched by SFCG focus on youth as agents of social change and try to build their capacity to increase their capacity and knowledge to mitigate and resolve communal conflicts, especially conflicts involving youth. These projects are implemented in target communities which suffer from marginalization and social exclusion, hence being a fertile soil for a number of social and communal problems such as crime,

violence and radicalization. The trained youth become community mediators and play the role of agents of social change who try to help themselves and their communities break free from the harsh reality of social exclusion by adhering to a constructive approach to problem solving.

In the west where community mediation is much more developed, however, the roots of community mediation can be found in communities themselves and stem from people's interest to find a better way to resolve conflicts, and their interests to improve and complement the legal system. Citizens, neighbors, local leaders and communities became empowered, realizing that they could resolve many complaints and disputes on their own in their own community through mediation. Experimental community mediation programs using volunteer mediators began in the early 1970's in several major cities in the US (e.g. New York, Washington DC, San Francisco.). These proved to be so successful that hundreds of other programs were founded throughout the US in the following two decades. Community mediation programs now flourish throughout North America and Europe².

The practice of social and community mediation in Europe and North America has taken several different paths. There is a myriad of experiences that vary according to the context of each country and communities where the social or community mediation centers were created. However, the general pattern that characterized community mediation is that it has opted for the use of trained community volunteers as the primary providers of mediation services; volunteers are not required to have academic or professional credentials³. The main mission of social or community mediation centers is to provide direct access of mediation to the public through self referral and to initiate, facilitate and educate for collaborative community relationships to effect positive systemic change. Therefore community mediation centers engage in public awareness and educational activities about the values and practices of mediation and provide a platform for dispute resolution at the early stages of the conflict as well as providing an alternative to the judicial system at any stage of the conflict.

² Christa Daryl Slaton. Community mediation service: A model for teaching democracy and conflict resolution. Paper presented at the 1994 American political science association annual meeting, NY, Sept 1994; Social mediation and new methods of conflict resolution in daily life. Proceedings of the seminar organized by the interministerial Delegation for urban affairs under the French presidency of the EU. Paris Creteil, September 2000; Timothy Hedeem. Institutionalizing Community Mediation: Can Dispute Resolution "of, by, and for the People" Long Endure?

³ Christa Daryl Slaton. Community mediation service: A model for teaching democracy and conflict resolution. Paper presented at the 1994 American political science association annual meeting, NY, Sept 1994.

However, it is worth mentioning that in general community mediation in Europe and North America took two main paths. The first path is that of institutionalization whereby social or community mediation centers were created to operate as a backup for the burdened judicial system. In this context, social or community mediation centers were created to improve the efficiency and variety of available methods of processing disputes. The objective of these neighborhood justice centers was mainly to offer mediation services that would help the judiciary system in:

- Reducing the burden of cases in the court system,
- Increasing the efficiency of case processing,
- Reducing court system costs,
- Improving the quality of justice,
- Providing a more appropriate process for selected types of cases,
- Providing more efficient and accessible services to citizens,
- Reducing case processing costs to the justice system, and
- Improving citizen satisfaction with the justice system.

The second path of community or social mediation, however, favored an informal approach to addressing social or communal conflicts by embracing community mediation as an empowerment tool for individuals and communities to take back control over their lives from a governmental institution (the courts) that were seen as not only inefficient, but oppressive and unfair. This is the case of many community programs set up in the US⁴. This vision included equipping citizens to resolve their own disputes and the building of a truly alternative system that would keep many disputants from seeing the inside of a courthouse. The "alternative" in alternative dispute resolution was a parallel, citizen-run and community-centered dispute resolution system.

⁴ Christa Daryl Slaton. Community mediation service: A model for teaching democracy and conflict resolution. Paper presented at the 1994 American political science association annual meeting, NY, Sept 1994.

Some Applications of Community Mediation

Neighborhood and Community Disputes

These types of disputes are considered the major caseload of most community mediation programs studied⁵. They consist of interpersonal cases involving neighbors or family members or others who have a fairly close relationship. These cases can range from noise complaints, landlord/tenant and consumer/merchant disputes, to assaults, threats, and harassment problems.

Juvenile and School Mediation

Most community mediation programs believe that the sooner people learn basic problem solving and communication skills, the sooner they can solve their own problems and improve their relationships. Violence is dramatically affecting our children. Much of the violence that modern urban societies grapple with is perpetuated by young people. Thus, some community mediation programs studied in the West (North America and Europe)⁶ set up school conflict resolution programs to promote a culture of constructive problem solving and instill values that help decrease violent behavior. Often, schools with mediation programs report a reduction in violent behavior and incidents involving their students. In the “Regional Education and Training Academy of Marrakech, Tensift, Alhouaz”, the authorities reported that in a recent school year, 19,000 students dropped out during the school year due to conflicts at school. The National Ministry of Education in Morocco now has included school mediation as a priority in their “*Plan d’Urgence*”. Close to 1,000 mediation facilities or listening rooms have been established in the Regional Education and Training Academy of Marrakech, Tensift, Alhouaz.

⁵ Ibid, Timothy Hedeem. Institutionalizing Community Mediation: Can Dispute Resolution "of, by, and for the People" Long Endure? Christa Daryl Slaton. Community mediation service: A model for teaching democracy and conflict resolution. Paper presented at the 1994 American political science association annual meeting, NY, Sept 1994.

⁶ Social mediation and new methods of conflict resolution in daily life. Proceedings of the seminar organized by the interministerial Delegation for urban affairs under the French presidency of the EU. Paris Creteil, September 2000

Timothy Hedeem. Institutionalizing Community Mediation: Can Dispute Resolution "of, by, and for the People" Long Endure?

Innovative Applications of Community Mediation

Beyond their traditional mandate, community mediation programs have proven to be highly effective in addressing harsh social realities in modern urban societies (e.g. France, UK, USA, Sweden)⁷. Community mediation provides an additional track for social workers to be involved in parent/child disputes; school conflicts including and other civil disputes. Community mediation programs throughout Europe and North America are also involved in a diverse variety of innovative applications involving such issues as construction of social ties through the organization and facilitation of regular community dialogues to resolve community problems, the work with prisons to facilitate the reintegration of released convicts, the work on race and migrant relations in multicultural communities, the work on the unemployment problematic in densely populated urban areas suffering from economic crises, the facilitation of the resolution of religious disputes and the setting up of community policing initiatives to help reduce violence and maintain peace and safety in neighborhoods.

Social or Community Mediation in Morocco

Social or community mediation in Morocco as mentioned earlier is a concept that is still in relative infancy. The emergence of the concept comes as a response to concrete community problems that necessitate concerted action of communities and local authorities to achieve effective results. Difficulties are linked to urban lifestyles. In the most deprived areas, tensions are exacerbated by social exclusion, unemployment and economic problems and are an area where social or community mediation can offer solutions. Poverty and other social problems will not go away over night, but an approach to problem solving through alternative dispute resolution can over night change give new options for dealing with social ills, discontentment, social disenfranchisement and poverty that the community can implement immediately.

It is one of a range of approaches that address this tough urban reality in a constructive way. Social or community mediation as such has been largely shaped and spearheaded by Search for Common Ground in Morocco through the creation of several social mediation centers targeting youth and run by volunteering youth.

⁷ Ibid, Christa Daryl Slaton. Community mediation service: A model for teaching democracy and conflict resolution. Paper presented at the 1994 American political science association annual meeting, NY, Sept 1994.

Since the first pilot project of the MediAction initiative in Casablanca and Rabat in 2006, Search for Common Ground-Morocco has continued to develop tools to make the concept more operational and implementable. Many cases of social/ community mediations have been managed throughout Morocco. The primary purpose is to bring the practice and concept of social mediation to light and to create sustainable and operational community mediation centers which provide effective community mediation services targeting especially youth in disadvantaged areas.

**USAID Funded Project:
Mitigating Communal Conflict by Engaging Youth Constructively in Local Democratic and Economic Development (YCMC) project**

In collaboration with the Moroccan local government, Search for Common Ground (SFCG) was awarded a grant of \$404,546 from USAID Morocco to implement a 19-month project (January 2008 to July 2009) which will establish four Youth Community Mediation Centers (YCMC) in Casablanca and Tetouan. The Tetouan aspect of the project is an expansion of the Casablanca project and was funded 10 months after Casablanca. The project aims to mitigate community conflicts by constructively engaging youth in local democratic and economic development processes through the work of the youth community and mediation centers. To implement this project, Search for Common Ground has partnered with a number of local associations in each city, such as the National Delegates of Education and ANAPEC and is conducting the project in collaboration with the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH).

Background, Goals and Objectives of YCMC

The YCMC project aims at improving the skills of youth leaders in non-violent conflict management, community leadership, and constructive communication to help them engage more effectively with their socially and economically excluded peers. In collaboration with the local government and with the support of the INDH, the youth plan activities of awareness raising and social mediation to become a productive force in their community, thereby allowing youth and other beneficiaries to contribute to the stabilization and long-term development of the Moroccan society.

In the context of the YCMC project, SFCG works to achieve the following objectives:

- **Strengthen the capacity and skills of youth leaders and local municipalities to prevent and resolve communal conflicts** - trained youth leaders will mediate, resolve day-to-day conflicts, and foster stability and cooperation within the targeted communities, as well as in schools and in community-(local) government relations, thereby contributing to the creation of a culture of participation, dialogue, and tolerance; and
- **Promote youth employment in the targeted communities** - trained youth leaders will offer coaching, training, and orientation to marginalized youth to enhance their employability, liaise with relevant stakeholders to increase access to jobs and training opportunities, and encourage entrepreneurship among marginalized youth.

SFCG expects the following results by the end of the grant period:

- Community mediation and conflict prevention practices institutionalized in the three targeted impoverished areas of Casablanca and in one in Tetouan;
- Increased access to the job market for marginalized youths;
- Strengthened local civil society;
- Improved community-government relations;
- Enhanced democratic citizenship and economic participation among marginalized youth in Morocco.

II. Methodology of the Midterm Evaluation

The subsequent sections describe and outline the intended audience of the mid-term evaluation, its scope, approach, and evaluation objectives. This document is the report of the mid-term evaluation of the YCMC project conducted in Casablanca. Tetouan was not included in the midterm evaluation as a source of data since activities started in October 2008. The YCMS project in Casablanca started in January 2008 and will be completed in July 2009. The evaluation was conducted in early 2009 by Seddik Ouboulahcen the Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist at Search for Common Ground -Morocco.

Scope and Purpose of the Midterm Evaluation

The midterm evaluation covers the relevance of the project and its effectiveness to date in addressing the set objectives. It also studies the changed perceptions among the youth participants, non-youth participants and the community members of the roles played by young social mediators and social mediation centres in mitigating communal conflicts to reduce tensions, and also the roles they play in increasing economic opportunities and the economic engagement of marginalized youth in the target communities.

It assesses the achievements of the project with respect to its objectives and the attainability of its outcomes. It also assesses the project design including, to what extent the assumptions/risks outlined in the logical framework are valid and identifies external factors beyond the control of the project that affected it negatively or positively. Special emphasis is placed on the degree to which the project has succeeded in carrying out the activities outlined in the logical framework and how the implementation of these activities led to the sought changes as measured by the selected indicators of success. Also the midterm evaluation explores the areas of challenge and potential options for improving the project.

Type and Approach of Midterm Evaluation

The midterm evaluation was in general both formative and summative in nature. It is couched within a reflective approach that attends to both the process of implementation as well as the actual outcomes achieved to date. Formative evaluation provided information about how the project operated and how to improve it. The typical source of data for the formative evaluation is the project operational documents such as the quarterly reports and monthly M&E reports. The summative evaluation provided information about the overall effectiveness, and outcomes of the project. The sources of data for summative evaluations are beneficiaries, local leaders and communities. A combination of key informant interviews with local leaders and community members as well as questionnaires administered to youth from representative targeted communities was used to collect data.

The Midterm Evaluation Design

The midterm evaluation adopts a quasi-experimental design that allows room for the comparison of baseline data and performance at midterm. Mainly performance is measured through the comparison of the state of the key selected indicators. As the midterm evaluation, data was mainly collected in the three prefectures in Casablanca. The comparison to measure performance and outcomes is done using the baseline results of the three prefectures in question. Given the fact that Tetouan is an extension of the project that started after Casablanca, it is assumed that performance and outcomes especially with respect to the perceptions of youth and community members will not be at the same level.

The midterm evaluation objectives are:

- Assessment of the effectiveness and quality of implementation
- Assessment of the extent to which project objectives as defined in the logical framework have been met at the date of the midterm evaluation, and assess the likelihood of achieving them upon project completion
- Identify potential options for improving the project

The sample

In February 2009, Search for Common Ground-Morocco staff conducted the midterm evaluation field work in the three targeted communities in Casablanca. Participants in the survey were selected and contacted with the help of Redouane Houlam SFCG field coordinator in Casablanca. A total of 41 people participated in this midterm evaluation: 19 youth participants in the social mediation training cycle, 8 non-participants, 12 community members, and 2 school administrators.

- **Youth**

Both participant and non-participant youth ranging from ages 16 to 26 were interviewed about their roles in mitigating communal conflicts in their communities to decrease social tensions and help promote a culture of peace and social mediation. They were also interviewed about their perception of the availability of employment opportunities for themselves and for their peers.

The sample included a mix of male and female youth, both participants and non-participants, all of whom lived in Mers Sultan el Fida, Hay Moulay Rachi and Sidi Bernoussi/ Sidi Moumen neighbourhoods.

The youth interviewed fall into three different categories:

1. Participants in the YCMC training cycle and project- YCMC youth social mediators (19)
2. Non-participants in the YCMC training cycle who have been coached and trained by YCMC young social mediators (3)
3. Non participants (5)

- **Community members**

In-depth interviews were conducted with local community members. The community members' sample consisted of 12 (4 female and 8 males) people aged between 28 and 49. Community members were interviewed about their perception of the role youth play in their communities to mitigate communal conflicts, help promote a culture of peace and reinforce social cohesion. They were also interviewed about the role played by the community mediation centres in promoting economic opportunities for youth in their communities.

- **Local leaders**

Two school administrators were in Sidi Moumen were interviewed about the work of social mediators and the community mediation centres and how their schools have interacted with that project.

IV. Findings and Midterm Evaluation Outcomes

A General Appraisal of the Effectiveness of Implementation

To achieve the set goals and objectives of the YCMC project, SFCG-M took a certain approach and set out with a certain number of activities: a situational analysis of Casablanca, the establishment of steering committee (SFCG, INDH, associations, Wilaya of Casablanca), an consensus building seminar in June 2008, intensive training cycles with 75 youth leaders from 3 prefectures of Casablanca on conflict management and entrepreneurial spirit /

employability skills, the organization and opening of three temporary community mediation centers (until INDH de-blocks its co-financing) in Casablanca and the opening of a permanent mediation center in Tetouan, the organization of intensive public outreach events and press to raise awareness about community mediation and entrepreneurial spirit and publicize the existence of community mediation services in the targeted communities of Casablanca and Tetouan.

An analysis of the project documentation shows that SFCG and its partners are meeting its objectives at the level of outputs. In fact, 75 youth from the three selected impoverished neighborhoods in Casablanca have been intensively trained in community mediation, conflict resolution, project management and entrepreneurship. Another group of 30 youth has also been trained in Tetouan. More than originally expected in the project proposal.

The YCMC project has been widely covered through both print and audio-visual media. Several articles, radio shows and TV interviews accompanied the activities of the community mediation project which has triggered an increased interest in community mediation. The treatment of community mediation in the media, the interest of several national institutional stakeholders both locally as well as the increasing demand of local grassroots NGOs for trainings in community mediation are indicators that interest in community is rising. Several outreach activities including community discussions, community organizing days (on such topics as the environment) peer to peer trainings, theater, cultural competitions, radio talk shows have been organized by young social mediators in their targeted communities with the support and coaching of SFCG.

Search for Common Ground has also organized a number of meetings both formal and informal with key stakeholders in Casablanca and Tetouan to gain both formal and informal support for the project. In this context, two start up seminars involving key stakeholders were organized to build consensus, networking and reflection on how best to implement the Youth Community Mediation Centers project in Casablanca and Tetouan. Additionally several meetings were held regularly with key stakeholders like Governors, *la Division de l'Action Sociale* (DAS) and INDH officials, delegates from the National Ministry of Education and local NGO partners to facilitate the process of project implementation.

Despite some of the challenges that delayed the project, such as the delays by INDH with respect to the provision of venues and equipment for the youth community mediation centers as agreed upon with INDH. To date, the YCMC project is advancing steadily in a satisfactory way to meet outputs agreed on in the project contract. Mainly, the set target of trained youth in social mediation has been met and the young social mediators are active and operational in the three prefectures in Casablanca. Intensive awareness-raising has been conducted in targeted communities and local partnerships were sought to help institutionalize community mediation in these impoverished communities and ensure sustainability in the future.

There are, however, some areas of challenge that need to be pinpointed in this vein. So far, the official inauguration of the youth community mediation centers has not taken place in Casablanca. SFCG has set up temporary cells where young social mediators have been working. The fact that permanent centers have not been secured is a major threat to the sustainability of the initiative. Also, it should be mentioned that there have been some challenges faced in securing INDH support to fund the grants of the selected winning businesses as agreed on initially. This aspect also constrains the efforts of SFCG to promote youth employment in the targeted communities – youth should be offering coaching, training and orientation to marginalized youth to enhance their employability, liaise with relevant stakeholders in order to increase access to jobs and training opportunities, and encourage entrepreneurship among marginalized youth. However, the fact that the permanent centers have not been opened has made this aspect difficult to execute fully.

To remedy the situation that SFCG-M has not yet received the small grants promised by INDH and equipment of the youth center, Search for Common Ground put more emphasis on increasing access to coaching and training on employability. In fact, a partnership was sought with ANAPEC (*Agence Nationale de la Promotion de l'Emploi et des Competences*) to increase access to small loans, small business opportunities and employability.

Capacity Building Within the Project

The project's main emphasis on capacity building is with respect to conflict management, life skills, center management, case management, strategic planning, training of trainers, and project management, entrepreneurial skills and employability skills. The project has been successful in this aspect of building a network of young social mediators who are intensively

involved in the awareness raising about alternative dispute resolution and show ownership of the concept through taking independent leadership to organize events on their own. In fact, one of the multiplier effects of the project needs to be highlighted in this context. Trained youth in Casablanca conducted several mini-trainings about community mediation and how it helps resolve disputes in high schools in Sidi Moumen and Hay Moulay Rachid. The YCMC project did not intend to work with schools. However, the high schools of the two prefectures were very impressed by the public outreach and work of the youth that the school administration asked for the youth leaders to come to the high schools and conduct training and outreach on mediation and entrepreneurial skills.

The survey of the perceptions of trained youth about the relevance of the chosen modules and how they affect their work as volunteer community mediators shows that youth are very content with the quality of the trainings they have received. In fact, 85% of trained youth affirmed that the skills they have acquired within the framework of this project will definitely help them be successful young community mediators that intervene to mitigate communal conflict and role model a constructive approach to conflict management. When surveyed about their perception of their skill level as community mediators 58% rated themselves as average, 26% as advanced, 11% as beginners and 5% as very advanced. This result shows that young social mediators believe that they have some level of skill in conducting community mediation work, but it also pinpoints their awareness of their need for more capacity building as community mediators.

Performance as Measured by Indicators

1. Perceptions about the role played by YCMC in reducing social tensions and promoting a culture of peace

There are three indicators related to this change: 1.) The reduction of social tensions in communities; 2. The promotion of a culture of peace; and 3.) The ability of youth to counter negative messages indicates. The baseline data reported that:

1. 47 % of community members say that youth manage to counter negative messages as a result of the work of community mediation centres

2. 75 % of community members say that youth play an important role in promoting a culture of peace in the community (the results of this indicator are related to the perception of the role played by youth in general not just trained community mediators)
3. 20 % of youth and community members link a reduction in social tensions to the work of mediation centres

The midterm evaluation survey suggests an increase over the baseline indicators in the level of perception of community members of the roles played by youth to counter negative messages and to promote a culture of peace in communities. In fact, surveyed community members and youth reported an increased capacity of youth to promote a culture of peace, model positive and constructive conflict management behaviour and to counter negative messages in different contexts, namely, in sports playgrounds, schools and neighbourhood hangouts. By organizing several outreach activities to raise awareness about the need for a different approach to resolve differences away from adversarial approaches youth have been able to create a space for dialogue about how to resolve and manage differences and conflicts in their communities.

“I have never heard of community mediation before. I think these youth are doing a great job in bringing to our attention the existence of other ways of resolving differences other than fighting or resorting to law” Aicha (43, Sidi Moumen)

The results of the midterm evaluation indicate that:

1. 69 % of community members say that youth manage to counter negative messages as a result of the work of community mediation centres and,
2. 82 % of community members say that youth play an important role in promoting a culture of peace in the community (the results of this indicator are related to the perception of the role played by youth in general not just trained community mediators)
3. 35 % of youth and community members link a reduction in social tensions to the work of mediation centres.

This suggests a 22% increase for the first indicator on the ability of youth to counter negative messages which was 69% at midterm and 47% at baseline. Only a 7% increase was measured for the second indicator concerning the perception of community members of the role played by youth in general in promoting a culture of peace and social mediation in their neighbourhoods. The indicator on the perception of community members of the role played by youth in promoting a culture of peace in the community was 75% at baseline and 82% at midterm. Although, the 30% increase targeted in the logical framework for midterm was not met, the results of these first two indicators remain largely satisfactory because only 31% of the surveyed sample seems to have a negative perception of the role played by youth in countering negative messages and promoting a culture of peace in their communities as substantiated by the results of the indicator on countering negative messages which scored 69%. Also, the state of the indicator about the role played by youth in promoting a culture of peace was high in baseline (75%) so it is only normal that the increase was not substantial.

However, the results concerning the link between the work done by social mediation centres and young social mediators and the reduction of social tensions in the selected communities as measured by the third indicator remain quite modest. Only a 15% increase has been reported in this respect. The results of this indicator are as the following:

- 35 % of youth and community members link a reduction in social tensions to the work of mediation centres.

Despite the big number of outreach activities interventions reported by young social mediators to mitigate and resolve disputes in their communities, it seems that the community members and non participant youths still believe that young social mediators play only a limited role in reducing social tensions effectively. This result is not altogether surprising, given the fact that the social and community mediation centres have started operating in the temporary only since late December 2008 and early January 2009. Also, it seems that in evaluating this result surveyed participants were looking at the overall picture in their communities and measured the performance of young social mediators against that. In the absence of a concrete census and analysis of the types of social tensions and conflicts that prevail in each community, it remains difficult to establish a clear cut link between how the work of young social mediators helps reduce social tensions.

2. Improving the economic opportunities

The baseline results of the indicators related to the improvement of economic opportunities for youth in the targeted communities indicated that:

- 33 % of surveyed youth identify sustainable employment opportunities
- 12 % of community members say that mediation centres are playing a role in promoting economic opportunities for youth in the community
- 0 % of trained youth report the availability of sustainable employment opportunities in their communities
- 15 % of youth and community members directly link an increase in economic opportunities for youth to the work of mediation centres

Despite the challenges mentioned earlier met by SFCG-M with respect to INDH funding and delays in opening the permanent centres in Casablanca, Search for Common Ground-Morocco strived to continue working on promoting and improving the economic opportunities of youth in the targeted communities. This has been largely done through the organization and facilitation of training workshops around the themes of entrepreneurship, project set up and management, employment days and the knitting of relations with ANAPEC and other institutional partners involved in promoting employability.

The results of the midterm evaluation concerning this component remain a little mixed. In fact, the community members and youth surveyed suggested the following:

- 41% of surveyed youth identify sustainable employment opportunities
- 39 % of community members say that mediation centres are playing a role in promoting economic opportunities for youth in the community
- 37% of trained youth report the availability of sustainable employment opportunities in their communities
- 19 % of youth and community members directly link an increase in economic opportunities for youth to the work of mediation centres.

Although there is an increase in all four indicators related to the improvement of economic opportunities for youth in the targeted communities, the increase did not reach the 30% target increase identified in the logical framework for each indicator except for the indicator related to the percentage of trained youth who report the availability of sustainable employment opportunities in their communities which featured a 37% increase. This result is explained by the fact that trained youth have been exposed to an intensive training in both entrepreneurship and other modules which have increased their perception about their employability skills.

When probing questions were asked about why they think they have more chances to get jobs, youth reported that this project has been instrumental in empowering them with both attitudes and skills that will help those secure jobs. It should also be mentioned that the activities of the YCMC project focused mainly on capacity building, increasing access and awareness raising is also behind the fact that community members and youth are hard in their evaluation of the outcomes of the project since they link it to the actual creation of jobs for youth. The actual creation of jobs has not been one of the objectives of the project, but it seems that it affects the results about increasing access to jobs and improving the economic opportunities for youth.

Sustainability

The evaluation also considered to what extent benefits of the project are likely to continue after the project ends through the perceptions of the surveyed participants. It was noted that several factors determined the level of sustainability of the project. These factors are highlighted in this section, pointing out their positive or negative effects.

Local contribution

Although most youth surveyed within the framework of this midterm evaluation view financial support as necessary for the sustainability of the project, it is encouraging to note that they are taking initiatives to carry out the work using their own resources. In addition, to using the platforms already available in their communities, local youth centers, schools and partner NGOs they are aware of the necessity of taking initiatives to create their own body of young social mediators. They believe that this will position them better to receive more contributions at the local level both financial and capacity building oriented support.

Policy

The project has triggered a debate, at least among the trained youth, about the legal aspects and institutionalization of community mediation. The basis already exists for the project to make a significant impact on policies related to community mediation and social development in general. It is early to determine how the institutionalization of community mediation might affect the community mediation centers in terms of availability of funding, authority to mediate and resolve cases, the applicability of its intervention to decrease courts' case loads etc. In this vein, youth voiced the need for institutionalization as a factor that might ensure the sustainability of the community mediation centers.

Constraints to the Midterm Evaluation

Although the evaluation was carried out under generally good conditions and with good support from all concerned, the evaluator met with some constraints, which are highlighted below:

- The unavailability of some local stakeholders such as the Division de l'Action Sociale (DAS) representatives of INDH who had other commitments and were not able to meet the evaluator.
- The difficulty of having a relatively large sample to the financial and human resources available for this midterm evaluation.
- The Tetouan portion of the project was not included since it started after Casablanca as an extension to this project.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

The project is moving steadily and effectively towards its objectives. Despite the positive outcomes underscored above, it is however too early to determine the long term impact it will have on the target beneficiaries. What is obvious is that several activities have been carried out for some of the outcomes, which have created a strong awareness of the objectives of the YCMC project and have also positively influenced the thinking of communities and local stakeholders on the positive import that community mediation can bring to disadvantaged

urban communities. There is an increased ownership of the concept and practice of community mediation and many local stakeholders think of it as a new paradigm for effecting social change. Essentially, the project has been effective in developing perceptions but the concrete outputs in terms of improved capacity to resolve disputes and facilitate access to and creation of economic opportunities are expected to take place later and will require more concerted action.

Changes in Knowledge and Attitude:

- Strong results were achieved in terms of changes in the awareness and attitudes in the trained group of young social mediators. These changes are largely related to the relevance of community mediation and the skills and practice of community mediation
- The changes in awareness and attitudes in community members were negligible especially with respect to the role of YCMC in the promotion and improvement of economic opportunities.

In general, there is a clear need for a stronger focus on the capacity building of the community dispute resolution systems embedded in communities to increase their effectiveness and impact.

- ⇒ SFCG-M should ensure that the community mediation centres have both the necessary resources and necessary expertise to set up an organizational system that will facilitate access to community mediation services in the targeted communities
- ⇒ SFCG-M should build the capacity of young mediation centres to have a more independent approach to tackling local problems to ensure sustainability
- ⇒ More capacity building is required in terms of how youth community mediation centres can become hubs that facilitate access to employment
- ⇒ Organizational systems have to be developed to document the intervention of youth community mediation centres in order to have a reflective approach that can ensure institutional learning and formative evaluation
- ⇒ A long term action plan to promote a culture of peace, promote community mediation and foster constructive approaches to resolving communal conflicts has to be designed and developed collaboratively with youth and communities targeted
- ⇒ More capacity building for youth community mediation centres to secure local partnerships independently from SFCG to ensure sustainability

Appendix

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT TABLE

RESULTS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCE	FREQ. OF DATA COLLECTION	ESTIMATED TARGET
GOAL: To prevent politically motivated violence by engaging youth constructively in Morocco's democratic and economic development, through the establishment of community mediation centers, in three marginalized districts of Casablanca.	% of youth, community members and local leaders who directly link a reduction of social tensions to the work of mediation centers.	Baseline, mid-term and evaluation surveys	At start of intervention (baseline), midterm, and end of project (evaluation)	Assume 0% at baseline 30% at mid-term 60% at end of project
	% of youth, community members and leaders who directly link an increase in economic opportunities for youth to the work of mediation centers.			
OBJ. A: Strengthen the capacity and skills of youth leaders and local municipalities to prevent and resolve communal conflicts in three target districts in Casablanca	% of community members who say that youth play an important role in promoting a culture of peace in the community. (Note: culture of "peace" includes non-violence and mediation)	Baseline, mid-term and evaluation surveys Monitoring and youth project documents in the three sites	At start of intervention (baseline), midterm and end of project (evaluation) Start three months after the training ends and quarterly thereafter.	Assume 0% at baseline 40% at mid-term 70% at end of project 1 project/district 3 months after training 2 projects/district at mid-term 4 projects/district at end
	% of community members who say that youth manage to counter negative messages as a result of the work of community mediation centers.	Baseline, mid-term and evaluation surveys	At start of intervention (baseline), midterm and end of project (evaluation)	Assume 0% at baseline 30% at mid-term 60% at end of project
	Community members report an increased cooperation and partnership between youth NGOs and local municipalities	Focus groups at baseline, mid-term and evaluation.	At start of intervention (baseline), midterm and end of project (evaluation)	Target that there is a more prevalent view among the community members that local governance is strengthened.
OBJ. B: Promote youth employment in three target districts in Casablanca	% of trained youth who report the availability of sustainable employment opportunities in their communities	Baseline, mid-term and evaluation surveys Focus groups (FG)	At start of intervention (baseline), midterm and end of project (evaluation) Three months after the first workshop	40% at mid-term 80% at end of project

	% of community members who say that mediation centers are playing a role in promoting economic opportunities for youth in the community.	Baseline, mid-term and evaluation surveys Focus groups	At start of intervention (baseline), midterm and end of project (evaluation) Three months after start of coaching activities and quarterly thereafter	40% at mid-term 80% at end of project
	% of youth who identify sustainable employment opportunities	Baseline, mid-term and evaluation surveys	At start (baseline), midterm and end (evaluation)	40% at mid-term 80% at end of project
	# sustainable small businesses launched by youth coached as part of the project	Monitoring and business proposal documents in the three districts	Start three months after the workshop ends and quarterly thereafter.	30% of youth identify at least one small business endeavour by mid-term 20% of youth launch small businesses

Assumptions:

- The community will engage with the established mediation centre.
- Local municipalities support the project.
- The local authorities are supportive of the project through INDH.
- Youth from the community support and engage in the project.
- Employment promotion organizations proactively engage with the project.

Risks:

- Low or loss of support from community members, Youth NGO leaders, and local municipalities (Low/Medium)
- Obstacles to the sustainability of the small businesses created through the mini-grant Program. (Low/Medium)
- National and International developments galvanize extremist activities and messages.