



# 2018 Voluntary Principles Annual Report

**Building sustainable business practices for peace**

February 2019



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# 1. SEARCH'S COMMITMENT TO THE VPS

Search for Common Ground (Search) is strongly committed to the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPS). The VPS are closely aligned with the organisation's mission of transforming conflict and promoting sustainable peace. In 2018, Search implemented the VPS across numerous country programmes. In this report, examples from **Madagascar, Tanzania, and Guinea** are used. The countries featured in this report are meant to showcase examples of our work on the VPS, however they do not represent the totality of the activities conducted by Search on the subject.

Search works to transform the way the world deals with conflict, away from adversarial approaches and toward cooperative solutions. We shift the everyday interactions between hostile groups of people, so they can work together to build up their community, choosing joint problem-solving over violent means. Within the VP framework, Search remains dedicated to multi-stakeholder engagement, human rights training, and dialogue facilitation to further the adoption and implementation of the VPS.

## 1.1 Summary of Search's commitment to the Voluntary Principles

Search's approach to the VPS is to work alongside communities and companies to mitigate conflicts at their source. This approach rests on four pillars:

1. Building a company-wide commitment to meaningful stakeholder engagement
2. Informing and empowering local communities
3. Creating effective mechanisms for dialogue, collaboration, and dispute resolution.
4. Building local government capacity to be more transparent, communicative, and effective at promoting sustainable community development.

To implement these pillars, Search designs comprehensive interventions that cover a range of activities. Programmes target stakeholders using the following tools:

- **Assessments:** Search's local and international experts employ a variety of assessment tools including surveys, mid-term evaluations, conflict scans and others to analyse the root causes of conflict, including risks for company operations.

For the project "*Boké Hery: Renforcer le dialogue et réduire les conflits entre compagnies minières, autorités et communautés*" in **Guinea**, a conflict scan was conducted to build the capacity of key actors to prevent and manage mining conflicts in a peaceful, constructive and collaborative way. The report was made available to all partners to better the understanding of conflicts related to mining projects by the different stakeholders.

- **Training and Capacity Building:** Search programmes engage multiple stakeholders through trainings aimed at strengthening the knowledge and skill sets needed to resolve conflicts constructively.

Within the framework of the project "*Countering the Resource Curse (Phase II): Promoting good governance and*

*human rights in the extractive sector in Madagascar*” the goal was set to increase good governance and respect for human rights in the extractive sector by increasing awareness and promoting dialogue on the VPs. During the first three months of this project, target participants from companies, government and communities were trained and able to increase their general understanding on the VPs by 31%.

In **Tanzania**, Search provided 8 Training sessions on the VPs reaching 228 police officers. These trainings have proven to be very useful in protecting and upholding human rights and strengthening the mutual relationship between Acacia mining and local communities living around the mining sites. In addition, two capacity building trainings for local government leaders were conducted to strengthen their conflict transformation and community facilitation skills so that they can respond to community issues around the mines in a constructive and collaborative manner.



*Training Facilitator Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Richard Abwao and Search Programme Officer Anthony Guninita training police officers on the session for Human Rights at Kangara Annex Hotel in Tarime, Day on Dec 4th, 2018*

• **Community Outreach and Engagement Activities:** Search organises sporting events, dialogues, mobile cinemas, town halls, and participatory theatre to engage with communities. These initiatives create a safe space to vent frustrations via nonviolent means, while creating opportunities for partnership and collaboration.

In **Guinea** several community outreach and engagement activities have taken place as part of the “*BOKE HERY: Renforcer le dialogue et réduire les conflits entre compagnies minières, autorités et communautés*” project. In 2018, Search used community communication tools, including participatory theatre and radio listening sessions to develop community understanding of mining rights and duties and methods for collaborative conflict resolution.



*Les acteurs en scène, Théâtre participatif du 18/04/2018, Maison des Jeunes de Boké,*

- **Communication Protocol Development/National Level Consultation:** Frequently, the relationship between government, companies, and communities is wrought with poor communication that can exacerbate tensions and lead to conflict. Search helps companies develop pathways for grievance communication and frameworks for addressing issues raised. Moreover, Search engages with national and international governments through public-private partnerships aimed at securing buy-in for the VPs.

In December 2018 the '*Advancing Sustainable Peace and Security*' project in **Tanzania** brought together twenty government officials from the Tarime District Local Government Authority, participants from various villages as well as religious and traditional clan leaders in a District Multi-Stakeholder Meeting. This was done to strengthen the platforms for dialogue and collaborative problem-solving around mining issues between key stakeholders, Acacia and the wider community.



*Search staff introducing the work of the organization and the Common Ground Approach (CGA) during District Multi-stakeholder Meeting in Tarime in December 2018*

## 1.2 Search's Participation in the Structures of the Voluntary Principles

Search is a member of the Steering Committee of the VPs, as well as of the Board of Directors of the Voluntary Principles Association. Representatives of Search have actively and regularly taken part in meetings of the Steering Committee and of the Board of Directors, including in the retreats of the VPs. Search is an active member of the NGO Pillar of the VPs and has contributed to the working groups on training by sharing our experience. In addition, Search takes part in the meetings of the In-country Working Group in Myanmar.

Search submitted its 2017 annual report to the Secretariat, and took part in the Annual Plenary meeting in Washington DC, where our Senior Director of Partnerships and Engagement, Mike Jobbins, spoke on the panel on Public Security where he presented Search's work with public security forces in the Democratic Republic of Congo around changing social norms related to gender based violence. Search also hosted the NGO roundtable preceding the plenary, as well as the VP Steering Committee meeting held in connection with the plenary.

In February 2018, Matilda Flemming participated in the Voluntary Principles Initiative In-Country visit to Nigeria to represent the international NGO pillar of the VPs. The visit took place at the initiative of the Dutch chairmanship of the VPI, and was organised by the Nigeria In-country Working Group with the purpose to support the Nigerian In-country working group, enhance the understanding of the Nigerian VPI-context and to do outreach within the country.

Search continues to actively engage in dialogue with other participants of the VPs, including the companies we work with, NGOs and governments.

## 2. PROMOTION OF THE VPS

In this section, we detail our efforts to raise awareness and promote understanding of the VPs with both internal and external stakeholders, and our efforts to promote the adoption of the VPs into relevant government or corporate policies, as well as international standards and/or guidelines. We draw on examples from our work in Tanzania and Madagascar.

### 2.1 Tanzania

The project "*Advancing Sustainable Peace and Security in Tanzania*" is a 24-months project designed to foster sustainable, positive, and cohesive relationships between community members, government, decision-makers, ACACIA and other stakeholders in mining communities at local and district levels - focusing around three mining sites: Bulyanhulu and Buzwagi in Shinyanga Region, and North Mara Gold Mine in the Mara Region. An important element of this project has been to raise awareness and promote understanding of the VPs to key stakeholders including top-and middle managers from ACACIA mining.

Search engaged ACACIA leadership in the North Mara Mine in a pre-training assessment and determined that although some managers and supervisors knew broadly about VPs, a majority could benefit from a more in-depth focus on the safety and security of operations in their respective departments, as well as from a deeper

understanding of human rights issues and risk management. The Search team collaborated with the managers and decision-makers through the training in understanding the history of the VPs and their application, as well as the tangible steps the company and individuals could take to minimize the risks of human rights abuses in communities located near the mining site.

During a previous phase of the project, the framework of the VPs was acknowledged by trained staff as very relevant to their work and daily activities, and many requested Search to consider conducting the trainings on a quarterly basis, engaging new incoming managers as well as key mine staff. Therefore in 2018, Search re-emphasized its VPs training, and expanded its programming to include 605 Officers (M 494, F 111) in North Mara; 176 Officers (M 142, F 34) in Buzwagi; and 232 Officers (M 196, F 36) in Bulyanhulu. **In total 1013 Officers were trained in 2018 in all 3 mine sites.** Further, a follow-up to last year's Training of Trainers and a review of the Police Training curriculum and tests are both planned for the first quarter of 2019, in partnership with ACACIA's Human Rights and Security Departments.

## 2.2 Madagascar

The project *“Countering the Resource Curse (Phase II): Promoting good governance and human rights in the extractive sector in Madagascar”* started in October 2018 with the purpose to contribute to increasing good governance and respect for human rights in the extractive sector in Madagascar by focusing on increasing awareness and promoting dialogue on the VPs on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR).

To achieve this, Search conducted a VP training workshop for different stakeholders including members from Madagascar Oil, local authorities, security forces and CSOs to increase both understanding of the VPs, as well as confidence in their ability to collaborate with each other. According to the knowledge assessment, the participants' knowledge of the VPs increased by 32% on average. Specifically, 82% of those participants increased their knowledges by at least 20%. Search also produced a guide on VPs in Malagasy and published 1000 copies which will be distributed during the course of project implementation alongside key activities such as community dialogues, roundtables and refresher training sessions.

To promote the adoption of the VPs, companies and government officials were targeted to design action plans to increase community access to reliable and transparent information about the activities of mining and oil companies. A first cross sector committee meeting on the VPs was organised with several recommendations for concrete actions and several more are planned for the following year. In addition, two national roundtables on VPSHR will take place in the new year, after the elections.

## 3. COUNTRY IMPLEMENTATION \

### 3.1 Boke Hery: Renforcer le dialogue et réduire les conflits entre compagnies minières, autorités et communautés (Guinea)

Search Guinea is implementing a 21-month project with GIZ, funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The project intervenes in the mining areas of the prefectures of

Boké and Boffa which have the largest reserves of bauxite, estimated at 25 billion tons. The region is facing a cumulative impact of cluster mining companies that explore or exploit the mineral, both at the environmental and social/cultural level. Boke has received the status of Special Economic Zone which brings both positives and negatives with it such as the immense demographic growth which has multiplied by 4 over the last three years and brings with it increased demands for additional social services. To face these challenges, the BOKE HERI project aims to increase the understanding of the communities impacted by mining operations as to their rights and duties in relation to the exploitation sites and assist them in the implementation of these rights and in the mobilization around it.

From July 2017 to June 2018, Search carried out several interventions to enhance people's understanding of their rights and responsibilities in mining areas including activities such as: Conducting sensibilisation sessions reaching 4184 people directly; Strengthening the capacity of key actors by developing coordination and consultation mechanisms; Facilitating information flows through setting-up a website; Launching a media campaign; Assisting with the implementation of local community initiatives and carrying out a conflict scan. Besides developing community understanding of mining rights and duties, these methods also contribute to and can be used for collaborative conflict resolution.

### 3.2 Fandriaka: Mise à l'échelle des initiatives durables pour améliorer les conditions de vie des communautés de producteurs de vanille (Madagascar)

Search started a pilot project from May 2017 for 12 months in 7 communities in the Sava region to promote spaces for dialogue and consultation between stakeholders for greater social cohesion in the communities touched by the vanilla sector. This project falls under the framework of the strategic alliance of GIZ, Unilever, Symrise, and Save the Children. It aims to: A) Achieve social cohesion between vanilla producers and other actors in the value chain and B) Ensure that small vanilla producers are able to defend their interests through capacity-building in the area of leadership and negotiation skills. The project was specifically designed to respond to the challenges that hinder the stable development of the vanilla sector and the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of small producers. One of the key challenges identified is the existence of multiple conflicts between the different actors involved in the production chain of the vanilla, the lack of trust between them, and the lack of a platform for dialogue to bring together the different actors, help them identify their common interests and seek joint solutions to the problems inherent in the chain. At the Community level, small producers find it difficult to organise themselves which further weakens their bargaining positions.

To tackle these issues Search started with an institutional and contextual analysis of farmers' structures in the vanilla sector. This was important for the further success of the project as it provided a description of the situation around farmers' structures and the vanilla sector, as well as an analysis and a proposal of solutions for a better structuring. Other activities included: 50 people trained in leadership, negotiation and communication (including CGA); 13 community volunteers trained and coached to conduct the dialogues community and listening groups; 44 community dialogues taking place; 3 multi-actor forums established; 15 programmes produced and broadcasted on two radio partner stations; 14 listening groups formed and 8 direct emissions

### 3.3 “Tuunganishe Mikono kwa Maendeleo Yetu Endelevu” (Tanzania)

This project is implemented as part of Search's *Advancing Sustainable Peace and Security* in Tanzania



Programme. It is a 24-months project (running from January 2018 to December 2019) supported by Acacia and designed to foster sustainable, positive, and cohesive relationships between community members, government, decision-makers, Acacia and other stakeholders in mining communities at local and district levels. The project goal is to foster sustainable, positive, and cohesive relationships between community members, government, decision-makers, Acacia and other stakeholders in mining communities at local and district levels.

Search started with strengthening the existing positive relationships and building trust with district and local government officials and communities by involving them more deeply in the activities, engagements and meetings. To strengthen information sharing with the communities and partners, radio programmes were used which exponentially scaled up our ability to share information, and provide an additional platform for dialogue between multiple stakeholders, communities and partners. Finally, the integration of sustainability elements into the implementation, by including government officials and communities' input during influencer mapping meetings remained an important focus.

For the next year, Search will continue to implement a wide variety of activities including but not limited to: interactive radio programming; Initiatives to support alternative, non-mining economic development efforts; Police, G4S, and Sungusungu trainings on VPs; Advanced training sessions for Acacia Sustainable Communities and Search staff on safety and security and human rights and social cohesion, outreach, and awareness activities.

Some of the highlights and pictures of Search's activities were posted on Search Tanzania Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SearchforCommonGroundTanzania/>.

### 3.4 Other VP related initiative: Peace Pioneers II (Lebanon)

As part of our Sustainable Business Practices approach, Search aims to transform conflicts between communities, local government and the private sector in countries which are emerging from conflict or experiencing political and social upheaval. In these fragile contexts the private sector plays a crucial role in ensuring that socio-economic development is felt by all. Closely related to our work on the VPs, Search is currently working on a second phase of an innovative project, *The Peace Pioneers*, to stimulate private sector engagement in peacebuilding in Lebanon. This project encourages successful models of partnership and support between the private sector and CSOs to enhance peacebuilding efforts throughout the country.

Peacebuilding in Lebanon remains a major priority, however peacebuilding initiatives lack funding, or are dependent on international assistance which is unsustainable. It is therefore imperative to forge connections between the private sector and Lebanese CSOs. The Peace Pioneers project spearheaded the efforts of bringing together CSOs and the private sector by providing insights into the benefits of partnerships. Specifically, it aimed at better understanding how each sector perceives the other in order to inform ideas for bringing them together in collaboration.

During phase II a high-level training on the Common Ground Approach (CGA) was conducted to 12 participating businesses with the dual purpose of informing them about the investing value of peacebuilding, as well as to integrate and promote positive conflict management within their own businesses' practices and internal policies. In parallel, Search facilitated individual meetings to discuss collaborations and avenues of wider engagement. Finally, a case study on cross-sectoral partnerships in Lebanon will be developed into a tool to monitor the partnership's dynamics, the benefits that come from a multi-sector cooperation and best practices.

For 2019 additional meetings are planned to further support the integration of the CGA approach into the companies' policies and procedures. The Peace Pioneers project team will keep supporting, engaging and coaching CSOs and private sector entities into jointly developing specific ideas for collaboration.

Throughout this project we learned that CSO-business partnerships have great potential in Lebanon. There is an increasing recognition of the important role of private sector in development, the shrinking of CSOs' budgets, a renewed private sector interest in investing in country development, as well as their increasing interest in identifying sustainable partners to support. However, we also learned that external factors such as political and economical instability can impact private sector project participants negatively due to the high uncertainty in the future of the coming period and readiness to invest time, effort, and funds in such projects. Therefore, to ensure a successful collaboration, it is necessary for the partnerships to embark on projects that benefit from both sectors' respective capabilities, underscore their mutual interests, and are conducive to long-term impacts. These results are supported by our main findings from the "Mapping the private sector-CSO partnerships" survey which indicates that most of our stakeholders are driven to create a sustainable and impactful partnership.

## 4. LESSONS LEARNED

Search has learned important lessons in its implementation of the VPs. Search employs a non-adversarial approach to conflict, working to clearly communicate its independent role to communities and local partners, and building on longstanding relationships and local staff. Maintaining impartiality in company-funded initiatives is therefore key to identify areas of collaboration and to serve as a trusted mediator between communities, police, government, and industry.

Throughout the implementation of the "**Boke Hery**" project in Guinea, Search realized that communities are relatively unaware of their rights and especially their rights vis-à-vis mining companies. For example reforms about mining governance do not reach the general population and the authorities are not close enough to the people to ensure they have access to the right information. There is a real crisis of trust between the main actors involved. This also links to the influence the intellectual elite such as unemployed nationals and young graduates have. They are considered as better informed about socio-economic public policy and are trusted by the local populations. This however is too often linked with the spread of incorrect information, rumours and an increase of violent conflicts.

From the "**Advancing Sustainable Peace and Security**" project in Tanzania, Search learned the importance of continuous engagement and capacity building of local leaders at all levels. Village, clan and government leaders were frequently identified as most influential and trusted leaders, as well as reliable sources of information within their respective communities. For successful community engagement it is therefore mandatory to maintain a strong relationship. In addition, to increase the sense of ownership of local community members, the timely delivery of feedback on community concerns should be taken seriously. Last year, community members especially in North Mara asked Search to share feedback resulting in surveys and claims in order to know what is going on in their villages. Search has used social cohesion activities and other forum to disseminate relevant messages to community members and other stakeholders and will continue to work internally and with Acacia to ensure that pressing issues are addressed in a constructive and mutually beneficial way.

As a general lesson, the role of national and local governments in the implementation of the VPs must be elevated for the continued success of the principles. Many issues faced by rural communities stem from a lack of

government buy-in and support. To help manage and set the proper expectations, the VPs and its members must better engage governments at all levels.