



## Final Evaluation: Executive Summary

Peace Pioneer Phase II

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## Introduction

- **Lebanon's population:** 6.9 Million
- **Syrian Refugees:** 1.5 Million
- 76% of Syrian refugees live **below poverty line** (USD 3.84 per day) (2017)
- 1.5 million **vulnerable Lebanese** in need.
- **USD 4.5 billion** of aid channeled to Lebanon by the donor community and humanitarian and development partners under the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) 2017-2020
- **Funding required:** LCRP 2019 appealed the international community for USD 2.62 billion for the provision of humanitarian and protection assistance

In Lebanon, the civil war's consequences on the country's institutions, economic system, and social fabric remain unresolved. A delicate sectarian power balance, political fragmentation, and limited resources have resulted in unequal access to essential services and economic opportunities, often becoming a trigger of conflict in the country. Peacebuilding in Lebanon, therefore, remains a significant priority. In this framework, most national peacebuilding organisations' incomes depend on grants and donations from international donors and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs). However, funding is decreasing due to shifting donor priorities, and funding sources now need to be diversified to ensure local civil society organisations (CSOs) sustainability of action.

Despite its ongoing economic crisis Lebanon is a wealthy country with an incredible number of billionaires per capita.<sup>1</sup> Such wealth could support

locally-led peacebuilding initiatives that otherwise lack funding, or depend on international assistance. Traditionally motivated by different interests, the private sector and CSOs have rarely had avenues for collaboration that promote sustainable and long-term engagement for peace. But for the past few years, the private sector has become more engaged in social issues and initiatives: an engagement that typically manifests itself through philanthropic activities led by the companies themselves. Search saw in this evolution an opportunity to further advance a cohesive pursuit of peace-building in Lebanon, by forging connections and opportunities for partnerships between businesses and CSOs. If leveraged positively, these partnerships have the potential to magnify a structure's public value and to stimulate socio-economic growth, on a scale that could not be achieved by each sector separately. By pursuing mutually beneficial gains, both sectors would directly contribute to the promotion of sustainable peace in Lebanon.

Responding to this need and opportunity, **Peace Pioneers Phase II**, implemented by Search Lebanon with the generous support of the Embassy of Switzerland in Beirut from July 2018 to June 2019, aimed to *stimulate private sector engagement in peacebuilding with CSOs in Lebanon*. Building on the relationships created between CSOs and private sector actors during Phase I implemented in 2017-2018, the second phase of the project enlarged its participants' pool and continued to support the development of partnership and support mechanisms between the

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<sup>1</sup> Forbes ME. 2020. The World's Richest Arabs 2017. [online] Available at: <<https://www.forbesmiddleeast.com/list/the-worlds-richest-arabs-2017/>> [Accessed 17 May 2020].  
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private sector and CSOs that will, in the longer term, maximise peacebuilding efforts throughout the country.

These rationales of a second phase were taken into account as evidenced and deemed required in the Phase I final evaluation, particularly around exploring and widening the pool of private sector participants in the future phases. In addition, a second phase was also recommended by Phase I project's stakeholders, as they had expressed their interest in participating in future phases to foster trust and overcome barriers to collaboration. Noting that Phase I activities did not culminate in full partnerships between the sectors as intended, although they were successful in initiating several discussions and overcoming certain barriers that had previously kept both sectors from engaging each other (See: [Peace Pioneer Phase I Final Evaluation](#)).<sup>2</sup>

In the pursuit of this objective, Search trained private sector stakeholders, equipping them with the tools and concepts to better understand the investing value of peacebuilding, but also promoting the integration of positive conflict management within their own business practices and internal policies. In parallel, CSOs and private sector actors were offered a **safe space to connect** and discuss potential avenues for engagement and collaboration, addressing stereotypes and exploring concerns towards each other openly. As part of this engagement, a short survey was conducted, fostering a better understanding of CSO and private sector motivations and perceptions towards collaborative engagement and formal partnerships. In addition, two case studies of ongoing partnerships as well as an action-oriented tip-sheet were developed to disseminate knowledge and define key steps towards the establishment of partnerships between CSOs and companies for the concerned actors.

During this project, Search pursued the formalization of two partnerships, each linking specific CSOs and private sector companies based on their common interests and preferred field of intervention. However, these partnerships did not concretise to date, mainly due to the use of different languages and the failure to reach a common understanding of the value proposition of the partnerships. Although the project did not reach its intended impact of fostering partnerships between CSOs and the private sector, it did produce many key learnings on what works and what does not work in pursuing this objective.

Through its two phases, Peace Pioneers demonstrated that **there is a will and interest from both sectors to engage in common ventures.**

*“At the beginning of Phase I, the private sector showed little interest in working with the civil society in peacebuilding initiatives. By the project’s end, and building on the momentum forged through several key workshops and endeavors, actors from both domains have stressed the need to leverage the window opportunities that his project presents to create new and strengthen successful partnerships. Project participants emphasized the importance of combining social impact with profit, ensuring sustainable projects that fulfil both parties, setting clear incentives, conducting proper assessments, building capacities, and creating a follow-up mechanism”<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> Peace Pioneer Phase I Final Evaluation:

[https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Peace\\_Pioneers-Final\\_Evaluation-20180329.pdf](https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Peace_Pioneers-Final_Evaluation-20180329.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> All ten stakeholders interviewed as part of Phase I Final evaluation mentioned that their level of interest in partnering on peacebuilding initiatives has increased as a result of the project. In Phase II final evaluation, participants’ expressed various interests in joining the project, and exploring new av  
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Although interest and willingness were expressed, key wedges remain: on the one hand, while private sector actors are looking for innovation, they also want insurance of a return on investment. On the other hand, CSOs are looking at the bottom line: the belief that pursuing international fundings is a better use of their time remains majoritarian, while the requirements imposed by the private sector may seem discouraging. By exploring those beliefs and enquiring about the participants' beliefs and visions for future endeavors, Search learned how key steps could be improved to secure concrete results:

- Actors should develop a **clear understanding of each others' incentives**: learning from the Bank Audi - Peace Labs case, Search believes that representatives should be better prepared to engage with each other. This could be done by providing targeted coaching on how to conduct negotiations and increase each sector's awareness of the other's initiatives and actions.
- **Relationships, instead of starting in a partnership-oriented manner, could be based on service provision**. By working together in less constricting frameworks, both sectors would learn to interact in a more fluid manner, and through experience, develop a more solid shared vision for future, wider interventions. These primal collaborations would also softly inject peace-building approaches and perspectives in the overall corporate culture, raising the sector's awareness about potential collective actions.
- The attractiveness of suggested approaches and actions would be **increased if they are linked and aligned with government strategies that already have corporate buy-in**.
- **Connections should also be sought in other common areas of intervention**. For instance, CSOs could pursue the integration of peace-building in other areas where businesses engage in the community, thus creating greater and more concrete opportunities for mutually beneficial partnerships.
- To encourage the engagement of corporations in the pursuit of peace-building, **opportunities for progress and celebration should be promoted**. For instance, the private sector would benefit from the integration of conflict prevention approaches in their risk management techniques and mechanisms. The effective use of peace-building approaches in business ventures could then be celebrated, for instance by creating an index of companies engaging in peacebuilding efforts, and then publicly recognising their efforts.

## Evaluation Findings

The summative final evaluation of **Peace Pioneers Phase II** was commissioned by Search and was conducted in October 2019 with the overall objective to examine the relevance, effectiveness and engagement of stakeholders, capture successes and failures, and harvest key learning outcomes by answering a series of evaluation questions using a mixed method approach and a rating model/scoring matrix to test the overall feasibility of Peace Pioneer Model (testing the ToC).

This paper will seek to summarise and provide an overall outlook of the evaluation findings and results to contribute to Search's holistic programming, reflective processes and decision making. The perspectives and realities of the project's stakeholders were taken into account as basis for the analysis and data collated through KIIs according to the evaluator's perspective thus rendering findings developed to be of a high relevance for similar future programming.

## 1. Relevance

The evaluation report concludes that the overall project was relevant to the Lebanese context and met the needs and aspirations of the CSOs and the private sector by design: the former in contributing to achieving long lasting impact of peace-building, and the latter in creating a more stable and prosperous communities (markets). Those priorities and lessons learned from phase I were taken into account and explicitly embedded in project design, particularly around adopting best practices of partnerships that aimed to guide the implementation process as it has created a space of collaboration that lay the foundation of meeting those needs and fostering potential bilateral partnerships and connections between CSOs and the private sector.

Through a study completed in phase one of the project by Beyond Reform and Development (Beyond), Search tried to understand the different mandates and aspirations of the private sector entities and CSOs participated in the project to increase harmonisation and pave the way for bilateral private sector-CSO partnerships. The study concluded that the partnering organisations (CSOs and private sector) can find mutual benefits in creating long-term impact and contributing to peacebuilding in conflict and post-conflict settings.

Despite that, and although some entities drew very close in collaborating with each other through the second phase of the project, these collaborations did not flourish in actual bilateral partnerships because of the unmatched mandates, aspirations and goals of the participating private sector entities and CSOs. The accomplishment of this objective, and the success of this model requires deeper and more comprehensive understanding and therefore needs longer-term engagement for both parties to better understand each other's mandates and ways of working which would result in identifying entry points of collaboration that could materialize in actual partnerships.

This means the relationship between the implementation of the project and the actual realities of stakeholders (CSOs and Private sector) can only be of a general nature whereas design is considered highly relevant and unique. This failure pertains to the absence of clear needs and risks assessment, lack of clear selection criteria of stakeholders and of poor articulation of lessons learned.

## 2. Effectiveness

The project was found effective in achieving one of the planned objectives on outcome level: stimulating understanding, attitudes and perceptions towards peacebuilding and creating space for dialogue between CSOs and the private sector. However, it failed in materializing these attitudes in actual and sustainable partnerships due to several reasons as voiced by the evaluation participants (e.g., difference in interests, lack of communication, etc.). These results are prominently based on the evaluation's participants' perception and mainly on findings around the CGA trainings provided, which were considered excellent. For example, 90% of trainees interviewed indicated that trainings helped them see things differently while 80% indicated using learning outcomes in their daily lives. However, in terms of the partnership building exercise, only 25% of partners found the results achieved from the exercise in line with their missions.

### 3. Efficiency

The evaluation found that the project achieved value for money and can be considered to some degree efficient. However, poor articulation of lessons learned identified during phase one, a small number of stakeholders targeted without clear selection criteria, and the absence of a risks and needs assessment altogether affected the level of efficiency of the project and resulted in noticeable delays and in depreciated interest of stakeholders engaged throughout the life cycle of the project.

### 4. Sustainability

The ultimate sustainability merit desired by this project was to culminate identified entry points and relationships with actual partnerships to last after the end of the project. Although the project did not flourish in achieving that, the effects of some activities are long-term and are highly likely to be sustained. For example, the final evaluation indicates that the capacity built, e.g., the CGA training outcomes, will outlast the project period and the different entities will utilise the acquired knowledge and capacities in their daily life. In addition, the project has succeeded in building up the capacity of and fostering relationships between CSOs and the private sector by creating spaces of collaboration and dialogues around sustainable peace.

### Limitations of the study

The evaluation adopted a summative approach assessing the project's expected outcomes, whereas the formative value of project was only of a general nature given the absence of data on the outcome level. The evaluation did not incorporate further thematic areas of sustainability and efficiency of the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, which were added to this summary by Search. Accordingly, the report failed to provide quantifiable results on outcome level in alignment with the approach adopted.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

**The evaluation report** outlines specific key takeaways evidenced throughout the evaluation process of the project and are in line with Search's critical feedback. These are highly important to the scalability and/or replicability of similar future projects to further promote and stimulate peacebuilding through actionable, successful and impactful partnerships. These can be summarized in two areas:

- Change the modality of implementation and increase Search's involvement that is In addition to coordinating and facilitating communication between CSOs and the private sector towards developing, steering and managing partnerships around specific grants-based projects that are financed and/or co-financed by Search and the private sector (See: Key takeaways, p 29) OR provide coaching to catalyze the process.
- Widen the spectrum of outreach and engage with entities such as the Chamber of Commerce and Ministry of Economy and Trade.