

**SEARCH**  
**FOR COMMON**  
**GROUND**

# **A YEAR IN REVIEW**

**YEMEN**  
**2021**

# MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

The crisis in Yemen has inexorably deepened, with over 20.1 million people in immediate need of humanitarian assistance to survive. Over four million people, including two million children, continue to be internally displaced, with over 400,000 families migrating or seeking asylum to avoid living in extreme precarity. The socio-economic breakdown is further eroding the resilience of the population which has come to rely more and more on humanitarian relief. In this context, the limited progress of the peace process dampens hopes for a resolution to this decade long predicament.

Over the last year, Search for Common Ground (Search) has relentlessly continued to accompany the people of Yemen through the war, working across dividing lines to bolster the resilience of thousands of individuals throughout the country. As we set out to strengthen the social fabric of communities through our efforts, Search continues to make strides to overcome mistrust and resolve problems before they escalate into violence.

We are proud to have achieved our annual 2021 objectives focusing on stabilization, promoting conflict sensitivity, promoting gender-inclusive peace processes as well as amplifying the successes of locally driven and multi-track conflict transformation to create new avenues and new hopes for a more inclusive peace process. Over 1800 Insider Mediators (IMs) across diverse backgrounds have been actively trained and mentored in settling local conflicts through analyzing the issues, uncovering the drivers of violence, and facilitating dialogue and mediation. This work to prevent, manage, and resolve community conflicts has resonated among stakeholders, including local governments and law enforcement authorities.

Despite the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, our team has worked tirelessly to fulfill its goals efficiently, demonstrating commitment, innovation, and determination. As a founding member of the Yemen Conflict Sensitivity Platform, the Advocacy Working Group, an OSESGY partner, and one of very few continually operating peace-building organizations in Yemen, Search will continue facilitating conditions for lasting peace and forging resilient and capable communities.

We would like to thank each member of our team, our partners, and our donors, for their continued dedication and support, without which, these successes would not be possible. We are looking forward to continuing to contribute to Yemen's long-term stability and prosperity.



**Manzoor Ahmed**  
Yemen Country Director



**Quentin Levet**  
MENA Regional Director

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# A YEAR OF PEACEBUILDING IN NUMBERS

We are Search for Common Ground, the world's largest peacebuilding organization. Since 2010, we have been working to address the root causes of instability and violent conflict in Yemen.

## ACHIEVEMENTS OF 2021 IN NUMBERS.

**59** DEDICATED STAFF MEMBERS  
IN SANA'A 20, ADEN 39

**31** DISTRICTS  
REACHED

**602** INSIDER  
MEDIATORS  
TRAINED  
IN 2021  
353 MALES - 249 FEMALES

**1848** INSIDER  
MEDIATORS  
TRAINED  
SINCE 2015  
1116 MALES - 732 FEMALES

**781** CONFLICT  
SCANS  
CONDUCTED

**141**  
CONFLICTS MEDIATED  
& SETTLED

**181** TRACK II  
ACTORS  
ENGAGED

**7** GOVERNORATES  
REACHED  
ABYAN, ADEN, HADRAMOUT, IBB,  
LAHI, MARIB, TAIZ

**66** COMMUNITY  
INTERVENTIONS

**131** COMMUNITY  
DIALOGUES

**65** PEACEBUILDING  
MEDIA  
PRODUCTION

**28** TRAINED  
WOMEN LED  
CSOS

Thank you to the donors and partners who have provided steadfast support.

### DONORS:



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# 2021 PROJECTS

- Promoting Women Inclusion in Peacebuilding in Yemen; Funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC)
- Lifting Women's Voices in Yemen - Funded by the European Union
- Systems, Health and Resiliency Project (SHARP) - Funded by USAID; JSI Inc. is Consortium Lead
- Enabling Effective and Conflict-Sensitive Responses to COVID-19 to Preserve Social Cohesion in Fragile Contexts - Funded by IcSP - European Union
- Promoting resilience and social cohesion through an integrated response to vulnerable communities in Yemen; Durable Solutions Project - funded by EU; ACTED is the consortium lead
- Regional Atrocity Prevention for REM Populations in Morocco, Libya, Yemen, and Tunisia - USAID funded program
- Yemen Conflict Sensitivity Platform - FCDO funded program
- Supporting Resilience and Food Security in Yemen - ERRY-II - UNDP UNDP funded program
- Promoting Social Cohesion among IDPs and the host communities, funded by IOM



# SEARCH'S 10-YEAR STRATEGY FOR THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

Search's 10-year strategy for the Arabian Peninsula (AP) Conflict Geography aims to contribute to the efforts to end Yemen's violent conflict and establish sustainable peace in the AP region. This requires a long-term end to the violent conflict, as well as improvement in the social, political, and economical conditions that results in a more inclusive and equitable society, in which men, women, and children can live in peace and dignity. Search has adopted a multi-country approach given the interconnected nature of the conflict in the Arabian Peninsula that necessitates a regional strategy that crosses national borders. Search aims to strengthen its presence in Yemen by engaging with civil society, academia, and other actors in Saudi Arabia (KSA), Iran, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, and other Gulf nations, and developing cooperative joint initiatives with partners in those countries to promote regional peace. 2022 programming will prioritize implementing this AP approach to forge greater, more sustainable and long-lasting peace. Our team has five particular strategic objectives that have shaped and continue to shape our programming and strategies in Yemen.

## THE FIVE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES ARE:

- **Social Cohesion and Stabilization:** To promote social reconciliation in Yemen to counteract divisions and overcome long-held prejudices.
- **Responsive Governance:** To foster inclusive and responsive governance in Yemen, with an emphasis on equal access to public resources and economic opportunities.
- **Support to Peace Process:** To promote an inclusive and realistic peace process that ends the violent political conflict in Yemen.
- **Economic Transformation:** To empower a generation of young people in the region to contribute to an economic transformation that meets everyone's needs.
- **Engagement within Gulf Countries:** To weave collaborative relationships among the populations of the Arabian Peninsula to foster peaceful regional cooperation.

As we look back onto the achievements of 2021, we are proud to have been building on our eleven years of experience in Yemen to contribute to local and national peace, using a variety of tools such as community dialogue approach (CDA), addressing local conflicts through mediation, media programming, supporting social cohesion and good governance at the community level, empowering marginalized groups as women, girls, children, and youth. To further support the national peace process, we have also begun linking Track III peacebuilders with Track II and Track I actors, with particular focus on promoting peace through empowering women and youth and connecting them with civil society organizations, authorities, and the UN Special Envoy for Yemen (OSESFY). Despite the many challenges, local and subnational peacebuilding efforts have persisted with the support of community leaders, CSOs, local authorities, and communities at large through IMs who were trained by Search.

Thus, as we look into 2022, Search will capitalize on its Yemen experience to strengthen social cohesion and responsive governance while also assisting Yemen's peace process. Furthermore, Search will collaborate with youth, government, and the private sector to develop and promote conflict-responsive economic opportunities to foster peace. For regional peacebuilding, Search will also collaborate closely to plan and implement multi-country programs to improve collaboration among youth, academics, civil society, and research organizations.

# YEMEN: THE CONTEXT



## *Yemen is in its seventh year of active war, with the remote hope of peace.*

Yemen is in its seventh year of active war, with distant hopes of peace. Increased violence, persistent complexity, and large-scale humanitarian disasters have emerged from this protracted situation. High-level peace talks and cease-fire initiatives have failed, and social relations at the local level have deteriorated, culminating in increased inter-communal violence. At the same time, the vulnerable population has suffered greatly from the second and third waves of COVID-19. Despite the development of vaccines, misinformation, lack of access, and improper communication have resulted in slow rates of vaccination in the country, putting a large population in danger.

Ground armed clashes have raged throughout the year, with intense fights and numerous civilian deaths reported, primarily in Ma'rib, while frontlines in the south coast regions have shifted dramatically. As a result, more people were displaced, and despite humanitarian efforts, the IDPs' needs remained mostly unmet. Due to the poor public infrastructure, many vulnerable families are unable to access basic services such as healthcare and education. Year after year, migrants from African neighborhoods risk their lives crossing Yemen on one of the busiest migratory routes in the globe.

There is an urgent need for humanitarian, development, and peace nexus approaches to assure the continuation of crucial emergency response, support longer-term needs as stabilization, social cohesion, and responsive government, and prevent further systemic collapse.

As the leading peacebuilding organization working across dividing lines in Yemen, Search has aligned its work with this local context and strengthened its peacebuilding programming through increased pockets of local stabilization and social cohesion, contributions to the national peace process through scaling up Track-II work, and improved conflict sensitivity support to humanitarian programming in Yemen in 2021. We aim to continue this relevant work in 2022 and beyond.

# ***GENDER MAINSTREAMING***

A Gender Mainstreaming Strategy was developed for the Yemen Country Office to identify and address gender inequalities in programs and operations. To achieve gender equality both at the institutional and the programmatic level, the strategy will help in:



**Aligning Search programs  
with strategic gender  
approach and  
commitments;**



**Building institutional  
capacity for Search in  
Yemen for gender  
mainstreaming;**



**Creating a conducive  
environment for  
gender equality at the  
institutional level.**



**Mobilizing resources for  
gender-responsive  
peacebuilding and women  
empowerment programs.**

The strategy will be implemented, through an action plan which would be developed and updated on an annual basis.



## **HEALTH FOR PEACE: APPROACHES TO STRENGTHENING HEALTH SYSTEMS IN THE CONTEXT OF PEACEBUILDING**



**An insider mediator briefs a community member about the COVID-19**

The conflict in Yemen further hindered public health services with far-reaching complications on the wellbeing of the vulnerable, particularly women, girls, and children. Over 40% of health services are not operational due to lack of resources, non-payment of salaries to health workers, governance challenges, and conflicts around health issues. Additionally, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the ability of healthcare facilities to function and has strained already limited resources.

Search is working to foster the integration between public health initiatives, humanitarian assistance, and peacebuilding efforts through the Systems, Health, and Resiliency Project (SHARP), together with the National Yemeni Midwives Association (NYMA) and the Yemen Family Care Association (YFCA) in a consortium led by John Snow Inc. (JSI) and funded by USAID. Through the common ground approach and conflict transformation, Search is promoting and facilitating dialogue among the communities and service providers to address tensions that have arisen in these fragile settings. This is critical for creating demand and addressing sensitivities around Reproductive, Mother, and Child Health (RMNCH) and nutrition services, improving healthy behaviors, and strengthening community-local government relationships. Identifying and addressing conflicts, challenges related to health, as well as building understanding and mutual trust are key strategies towards achieving this. We trained health professionals in interpersonal skills and fostered their relations with local communities and IMs, who are actively leading mediation to health-related conflicts in the workplace and in the communities. IMs conducted a conflict analysis with the communities, local authorities, and health professionals to identify disputes around health issues. Conflicts were resolved through discussions, and Search provided resources to promote and support community activities to address long-standing healthcare concerns. Working together on interventions promotes social cohesion and resolves outstanding conflicts. Search is also supporting consortium partners with conflict-sensitive programming of health and nutrition intervention.

## A Success: Conflict Resolution to Restore and Improve Hospital Waste Management System.

### 📍 Al-Rajaia Health Center in the Al-Shamaytayn District, Taiz Governorate

Under the SHARP project, the project team scanned a conflict emanating from a local resident blocking the construction of a hospital's waste management pit in the Al-Rajaia Health Center. Given that the dispute was unresolved, the local government filed a complaint against him, leading to that resident's imprisonment. The situation further escalated into a bigger conflict between locals and the health center's management. As a result, the villages were split into two factions, each supporting a different side. This has hampered excavation, and the solid waste pit wasn't completed on time, posing an environmental and public health concern, as well as the risk of escalation of violence among the village's various groups.

**Anwar Kamel, a health center employee, was trained as an IM by Search through the SHARP project.** He took this as a challenge and initiated a series of mediation attempts to address the conflict. With the support of the SHARP team, he developed a mediation plan and communicated with the conflicting parties, who accepted him as a neutral mediator and offered to cooperate in addressing the dispute. Mr. Kamel used conflict scan documents to gather information, and held discussions with the parties. He also conducted an exercise to assess and examine the potential implication of the issue, particularly because the health center serves over 20,000 people. Following several dialogue sessions between the conflicting parties, an agreement was concluded, and a significant dispute was resolved. In Al-Rejaia Health Center, the excavation was completed successfully, and a hospital waste pit was constructed. A follow-up committee was formed to ensure that the waste management system was functioning properly and that the parties' relationships were maintained.



**Community Dialogue Session in Al Maqatera district, Lahj governorate.**

**IMs leading the community Dialogue Session in Al Maqatera district, Lahj governorate.**



# SOCIAL COHESION TO ENHANCE RESILIENCE

## *Supporting Resilience and Livelihoods in Conflict Zone*

The UNDP's Supporting Resilience and Livelihood Project in Yemen (ERRY II) was a multi-sectoral project involving various national and international organizations. The project aimed to support the crisis-affected communities to enable them to better manage local risks and shocks, as well as to build their resilience and self-reliance throughout the longstanding conflict. Search has led social cohesion efforts through Search's CDA to help local communities collaboratively identify and address local drivers of instability and conflict, while working together to manage and mitigate local conflicts. Search also identified and trained male and female IMs in mediation and facilitation skills to promote social cohesion and mediate conflicts at a local level.



*Participants during dialogue session in Khanfer city*

## *A Success: In the Conflict Zone, Ansam - a female Mediator Re-opens a Vital Road*

### **Taiz's Al-Shamaytayn district**

Ansam Abdel Basset is a female IM working in Taiz's Al-Shamaytayn district to promote social cohesion and community engagement as part of the ERRY-II project. Ansam has been involved with the Social Fund for Development (SFD), and received mediation training from Search. Despite her training and abilities, Ansam was not initially met with community support in her new role for being a woman. The community was hesitant to accept a woman leading the process to resolve disputes, which was traditionally seen as a man's role. However, Ansam applied her CDA knowledge to gradually acquire support from other male and female IMs, eventually garnering trust within the community due to her strong facilitation skills and efforts to find common ground between the community.



Once met with more acceptance, Ansam was able to begin her work in driving positive change. The conflict scan exercise identified a five year outstanding dispute over an access route to Al-Shobab between the landowners and community members that used that path to access the main road. The landowners threatened the community, and several violent incidents were reported as a result of the lack of an alternative route, thus forcing locals to take other longer and more dangerous routes.

Ansam led the process of resolving this conflict with the support of her fellow IMs. Leveraging her skills in mediation and searching for a way to find a common ground among disputing parties, Ansam approached the landowners and relevant community members to participate in a dialogue session. Despite much resistance, she was able to gather conflicting parties to participate in negotiation and discussion sessions. She facilitated three dialogue sessions: one for male stakeholders, one for female stakeholders, and one for all groups of stakeholders. This initial arrangement was key in gaining trust and in accommodating certain levels of comfort among community members. Landowners remained resistant to giving up their property, given the lack of an immediate advantage in doing so. However, following the dialogues, the landowners acknowledged that there were unused areas on the property that they would be willing to share if a road was built which the community would commit to gathering funds for. Ansam was able to facilitate this agreement, engaging both sides to find a common goal of improving community infrastructure. This approach paved the way for both parties to collaborate and to entrench a track record of trust towards Ansam and other female IMs. This longstanding conflict ended with an unprecedented result, particularly as a woman succeeded in concluding a common ground.

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**"It was a great experience to be part of the Search Program. I was scared at first during the training, and I imagined gathering tribal conflict parties and asking them to discuss and find solutions to the conflict was a difficult task. Once I learned to facilitate the dialogue and practiced mediation, it was easy for me to do this." Ansam added, "it was easier than I expected and I achieved more than I have hoped."**

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***Locals at work: Constructing a vital road to end an outstanding conflict***



# PROMOTING WOMEN PEACE AND SECURITY IN YEMEN



With the support of Global Affairs Canada (GAC), Search aims to build bridges between isolated Yemeni women and existing women's groups engaged in national Tracks I and II of the peace process. The project contributes to transforming norms surrounding gender roles in the four target governorates of Taiz, Lahj, Ibb, and Abyan, all of which constitute key contentions in the conflict in Yemen. This holistic approach ensures meaningful participation of a diversity of Yemeni women in peacebuilding and the amplification of their voices into the national peace process. This has been achieved largely through forming women's peace committees and bridging the gap between grassroots women peacebuilders through capacity building and promoting a culture of non-violence. This initiative contributes to enhancing the gender-inclusive approach and women's capacity to lead grassroots peacebuilding initiatives, supporting inclusive and diverse women-led contributions to the national peacebuilding process, and mainstreaming positive social norms around women peacebuilders.

The project successfully achieved its results through training 329 IMs in mediation, conflict resolution, conflict analysis, gender mainstreaming, UN-SC 1325 Resolution, and developing policy papers. Through the IMs, 391 women-related community conflicts were identified, validated, and resolved jointly with the community and authorities. Furthermore, Search's community dialogue was able to address 86 long outstanding community conflicts. The communities worked together to identify and address root causes and obstacles to bring sustainable peace and social cohesion at a local level.

Within the project, **7 women-led Conflict Resolution Committees (CRCs), and 30 track II women representing 11 political bodies and coalitions from Yemen's five governorates were Identified and men representing 11 political entities and alliances from the five governorates across Yemen.** The women were provided with sets of training and networking opportunities as well as being connected with track-III women, insider mediators, INGOs, CSOs, government officials, and media professionals. A media campaign promoting different themes on gender, peace, and Covid-19 prevention in conflict settings was executed and reached over 429,901 people across dividing lines. During the first six weeks, the Women Empowerment Platform ([Ante Laha](#)) had over 6,000 followers on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#), and the numbers were growing fast. **This has been achieved through training 74 media professionals across Yemen and developing and implementing a national media campaign.** Believing in the bottom-up peacebuilding process, Search engaged track III and II women with national authorities to discuss the national women-related issues they selected. National authorities showed remarkable support to appoint 10 women in governmental positions such as Deputy Governor for Women Affairs in Abyan and Women Affairs Advisor for Lahj Government. Healthy communication channels between Track III, WLOs, Track II, Media, TAG group, and special envoy office were created with tangible achievements crowning the fruitful efforts of all peacebuilding layers engaged in the project.



***Community Dialogue Approach helps in resolving old disputes and brings new perspective and hope - Here a literacy center of Khanfar reopened and started functioning after 8 years, when it was shut down due to a conflict.***



## *A Success: Bushra Alsaadi - A Track II Woman Mediated the Local Ceasefire*

Shoqra, one of Abyan's coastal cities, lost access to a majority of basic public services during armed confrontations between the Internationally Recognized Government (IRG) and the Southern Transitional Council (STC). Many women have lost their families, while others have been subjected to domestic violence and societal discrimination, eroding their lives as a result of the ongoing conflict. Many families fled Shukra in search of a secure place, while others remained trapped in a miserable situation.

Bushra Alsaadi, one of the insider mediators trained under the Women and Peace Project, continued her efforts as peacebuilder in Abeyan. She is the founder of the Southern Women for Peace committee and she remained committed to conflict resolution and finding ways to end the insecurity and bring peace and stability in Yemen. Bushra decided to negotiate with the conflicting parties in and around the Shoqra to end conflict and keep the people safe. Bushra started gathering information on the root causes of the conflict as well as the implications of the long-running conflict and frequent collisions between the parties.

She decided to mediate and met with representatives of the local conflicting parties, as well as a number of the local leaders and community groups. She conducted 19 meetings in total. The aim was to find a common ground to end the local conflict and mitigate the unfolding disaster. Initially, she faced resistance, and her role as the mediator was challenged. Although her initiative was not accepted at first, as a result of her persistence and persuading skills, they eventually accepted Bushra's appeals.

Bushra gained support from other community leaders, both women, and men, and presented the impacts of conflict, particularly the civilian casualties. Families of troops and citizens who died as a result of conflict supported her initiative. **Bushra's persistence eventually led to joint agreements and a ceasefire declaration.** Many committees were formed to monitor the situation in the region, which was gradually starting to wind down. This is what brought Bushra great joy, she understood that her efforts weren't in vain. **Today, Bushra has become a beacon of hope and a peacebuilding champion in the region.**

Despite some breaches of the ceasefire, she continued to work hard to find a common ground among all conflicting parties and find a political solution once and for all for the country's armed conflict. **Bushra proved to be a role model as a mediator working to bring peace to the region, and she was praised by all parties and local authorities.**



# PROMOTING SOCIAL COHESION AMONG INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE (IDPS) AND THE HOST COMMUNITIES



*Community dialogues in Tuban-Lahj*

Search is providing a rapid action to support the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in the implementation of their EU-supported project on 'Enhancing Resilience in Vulnerable Communities in Yemen'. The project promotes resilience in Yemen, through supporting the management and the reintegration of IDPs, addressing community recovery needs in targeted communities, and strengthening relations and coexistence of IDPs with the host communities.

The key element of the intervention is to resolve and mitigate common disputes among the IDPs and host communities and ensure that aid delivery is conflict-responsive. To achieve this, Search has strengthened the capacities of 53 Insider Mediators (IMs) in Lahj and Marib governorates on conflict analysis, mediation skills, and resolving conflicts. Local-level disputes among the IDPs and host communities, as well as intra-communal conflicts, were identified and addressed by IMs. Joint Conflict Resolution Committees (CRC) of Insider Mediators from IDPs and host communities were formed to promote harmony and social cohesion among the groups. Most of the conflicts were around access to basic needs and access to resources.





*IMs capacity building training (CDA) - Lahj*

Community consultations were conducted in Marib and Lahj with 457 people of which 31% were women from IDPs, host communities, and local authorities. The process provided an opportunity to manage 24 conflicts, and to discuss 12 long outstanding conflicts that were validated by the community members and agreed to be addressed on a priority basis. The IMs also prepared conflict management action plans for every district. Search supported IMs with the establishment of the Conflict Resolution Committees (CRCs) in six districts that were linked to local authorities, and local councils' offices. IMs received coaching to function as an independent entity, under the direct supervision of the local council director. As part of the CRCs start-up, Search provided IMs with a step-by-step mediation guide including documentation tools to be used while carrying out conflict mediation tasks.

The IMs are involved in mediating conflicts and work to strengthen social cohesion among host communities and IDPs. Some of the conflicts addressed to date were about; disputes on access to health services and facilities, school and education services, and water resources. Search has successfully built the local peacebuilding capacities, which would keep motivating the communities to look for common ground in solving and mitigating conflicts through non-violent manners.



*IMs capacity building training (CDA) - Marib*

# ADVANCING TOLERANCE IN YEMEN

Yemen's vulnerable populations, such as the Muhamasheen and internally displaced people (IDPs) are particularly at risk in this crisis context. The historically marginalized Muhamasheen occupy the lowest rung of Yemeni society because they are perceived to be "outsiders". They are often displaced into the most dangerous conflict zones, recruited into armed groups, and denied access to basic services and humanitarian aid. The conflict has also heightened threats to displaced Northerners in southern Yemen who have been disproportionately affected by widespread violence against civilians.

To address these issues, Search is implementing a project aimed at identifying risks of violence and resilience mechanisms to support vulnerable populations in Yemen. Search first conducted desk and field research to understand potential risks of violence and human rights abuses involving vulnerable populations, the opportunities to support groups facing these risks, and the circumstances that inhibit them from accessing health, education, and justice services.

**Search is now designing and implementing programs aimed at addressing issues identified in the research, which were validated and prioritized by community members.**

## **This includes:**

- building local capacities to foster local-level positive relationships between diverse groups across divides;
- increasing locals' understanding of shared values and commonalities to encourage acceptance
- creating avenues and opportunities to address discrimination and exclusion prevalent in communities; and
- increasing locals' awareness of legal rights and issues related to public services.

Search has implemented media programming to address social stigma towards vulnerable groups, rumors and misinformation, and other key issues and risks associated with COVID-19 Pandemic in Yemen.





# HUMANITARIAN, DEVELOPMENT, AND PEACE - CONFLICT RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMING IN A HUMANITARIAN CONSORTIA



Search is implementing the 'Durable Solutions Project' in a humanitarian consortium led by ACTED, and consisting of CARE, International Rescue Committee (IRC), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and Danish Refugee Council (DRC), funded by the European Union. The project aims to promote resilience and social cohesion among the vulnerable IDPs, returnees, and host communities in Yemen, through conflict-responsive and integrated programming.

Search is contributing through leveraging its CDA, building consortium capacity to design and deliver more conflict-sensitive interventions, and equipping the local authorities with various methods of managing tensions at the local level between host communities and IDPs. At the community level, the project aims to improve stabilization through identifying local trusted actors from within the IDPs and Host Communities to work as local level IM. The IMs' act as local peacebuilders, and Search developed their capacity to map community conflicts, facilitate community dialogue sessions between IDPs and HCs over disputes, and design community action plans to address issues around the conflicts and to meet immediate needs of the communities contributing to humanitarian, development and stabilization efforts.

On the consortium level, conflict sensitive programming was encouraged particularly because humanitarian interventions unintentionally aggravate tensions, as decisions on aid beneficiaries selection and on how aid is delivered can have a meaningful impact on social cohesion, and can exacerbate simmering tensions in communities, including host communities and IDPs. Search has worked with its partners to increase awareness on conflict responsive programming and strengthened capacities of partners' staff to strengthen social cohesion within targeted local communities. With support from the Yemen Conflict Sensitivity Platform (YCSP), Search conducted meetings with project managers and senior staff of consortium partners to advise conflict-sensitive programming and review and update the planning and implementation documents. These meetings are also used to share updates, discuss challenges and lessons learned in addressing conflict sensitivity considerations. **Search trained 67 staff (42 males and 25 females) of the Durable Solutions Project Consortium partners in conflict-sensitive programming.**



Thuraya Ameen a 21-year-old IDP, college student is an Insider Mediator. Thuraya was forced to leave her home behind in Sana'a to flee to the Lahj governorate. "Moving from home was already tough, leaving all our family behind and I did my best as an insider mediator to prove that we can coexist with host communities, regardless of race, education, or even place of birth," Thuraya said in a conversation with the Search team.

## ***CONFLICT SENSITIVE WASH PROGRAMMING - SEARCH SUPPORT TO ACTED***

Under the Durable Solutions Project, Search conducted the conflict scan exercises around various water schemes. This supported the consortium to understand people's perspectives and the tensions that communities experience while planning and implementing WASH programs. The conflict scan results, for example, highlighted certain issues over the quantity of water at Al Rajiea water point, which were addressed through mediation, and the problems were resolved. In the site of Alghauria, the local communities identified an alternative source of water to resolve a conflict around a water scheme. Similarly, several conflicts arose in the context of ACTED's continuing WASH programs, which were detected and managed with the help of the trained IMs as part of the project.



# SOCIAL COHESION AND PEACEBUILDING IN COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE

With the support of the EU-Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), this multi-country initiative aimed to: provide an effective, conflict-sensitive response to the COVID-19 pandemic that prevents further deterioration of social cohesion in fragile contexts in the middle east. The initiative is ensuring citizen acceptance of the response through access to reliable information; mitigating the negative impact of the crisis on social cohesion and preventing it from exacerbating existing conflict dynamics.

In Yemen, we worked through the network of Search's existing trained IMs, through building their capacities on covid-19 response, rumor management, messaging on peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity, and trained health officials and linked them with communities. To address conflicts arising around the health issues and Covid-19 response, we carried out community dialogues and mediation and also provided support to health centers to better cope with the response. Rumor assessment and context analysis helped design and disseminate media to promote Covid-19 response across the country.

## *A Success: A Conflict Around Health Services Resolved During Covid-19 Pandemic*



Through a conflict scan exercise, the IMs identified several disputes among the communities in Beet Aiad village in Tuban. One of the outstanding conflicts in the village was a dispute in the local health center resulting from insufficient basic test facilities. Women were obliged to travel 100 kilometers to Ibn Khaldoon Hospital to take the basic diagnostic tests. This resulted in tension between hospital staff and local communities, which triggered several heated negotiations with the risk of violent manifestations. The Covid-19 pandemic had further exacerbated the situation and increased the burden of nearby hospitals.

This issue was discussed through a community dialogue which included representatives from the local council, health officials, and community members. The communities and the health officials took steps to address conflict, and several measures were concluded, including purchasing the required equipment to conduct basic diagnostic tests. This process assisted the local community in building trust with the health services, and several Covid-19-suspected cases were identified through the installed equipment. This action was supported by the Behavior Change Communication campaign initiated by Search to contain the pandemic in conflict-ridden Yemen.

# ***A PEACEBUILDER APPROACH TO PREVENTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE***



**Lifting Women's Voices** in Yemen is a 3-year EU supported project aimed at promoting women's rights to freedom from violence and mitigating the acceptability of gender-based violence in Yemen. This is driven by women-led Civil Society Organization (CSOs) across dividing lines in Yemen. Search has identified credible local Women-led CSOs who are engaged in women empowerment through addressing issues faced by women, and are working to promote the role of women in peace and security. Search is working with eight CSOs in Lahj and Hadramout, and have strengthened their capacities to lead grassroots violence-reduction initiatives. We are also strengthening collaboration on GBV, and countering negative social norms surrounding GBV through local-level media engagement.

Search strengthened the organizational capacities of CSOs in financial and operational management, budgeting, compliance, monitoring and evaluation, peacebuilding, and gender program development through a comprehensive capacity-building program. The CSOs conducted conflict-sensitive situation analysis through conflict scan tools as well as through focus group discussions. The analysis assisted CSOs to facilitate community dialogues through their trained IMs. The dialogues were held with both men and women leaders and authorities to discuss issues surrounding GBV or enticing violence in communities that affect girls and women in particular.

Together with the communities and relevant authorities, the CSOs addressed several conflicts and disputes around GBV and women-related issues. The CSOs developed proposals on conflict-sensitive GBV prevention programs and Search approved and financed eight projects. Search is supporting these organizations in implementing the interventions through providing hands-on capacity building in technical aspects, financial management, operations, and compliance. To support the Yemen peace process, we held a meeting between the grassroots women peacebuilders, Track-III women, and Tracks II and I peacebuilders together with the UN Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for Yemen (OESGY). The consultation focused on UN resolution 1325, issues related to women and GBV, and the Yemen peace process.

## *A Success: Preventing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Conflict Setting through Building Local Capacities*



*An intervention implemented by WLOs - Women Economic Empowerment helps in reducing violence against women*

One of the women-led local partners of this project, Ghiras Al-Khair Foundation of Hadramout, is engaged in promoting livelihoods, education, and women issues. After receiving training under the project, Ghiras foundation established a family counseling unit for women's issues in the local council's office, with the support of the District's General Manager. The unit is currently providing support for women to address family and GBV issues. Ghiras Al-Khair received recognition for its activities, and received funding from the UNDP on women empowerment programs.



# LOOKING AHEAD: WHAT WE'RE LOOKING OUT FOR IN 2022

**Stabilization and creating social cohesion and peace at a local level, supporting the national peace process, and promoting conflict sensitivity** all constitute the priority areas for Search in Yemen during the years ahead. Search would be aligning its work with Arabian Peninsula (AP) strategic objectives with an increasing shift towards vertical cohesion and promoting national and regional networking as well as increasing the work with youth and women to promote economic transformation within Yemen and in the region.

**Community Dialogue Approach proved to be effective in promoting a culture of dialogue to resolving local conflicts and promoting non-violence at a local level.** This has been complemented with our media and communication interventions. Over time, through the WPS and Gender projects, we were successful in lifting the voices of the grassroots women peacebuilders to promote an inclusive peace process. This has largely been done through building capacities of track-III women and linking them with the track-II and where possible with Track-I peacebuilders. We also promoted networking and linkages among the national civil society, organizations, and youth engaged in peacebuilding in Yemen. These are some of the great steps toward an inclusive national peace process. Search will focus on multi-track peacebuilding initiatives in the coming years, to build on existing experiences as well as to align our work with AP strategy.

**Search has recently established a peacebuilding Working Group in Yemen, together with the peacebuilding organizations and those working on conflict transformation.** This forum will lead advocacy on conflict-sensitive and peace programming and a learning forum of peacebuilding and stabilization work. Promoting Triple Nexus - integrated Humanitarian, Peace, and Development work would be one of the advocacy priorities in the protracted crisis in Yemen.

**Search is already working with humanitarian INGOs in consortia to integrate peacebuilding and conflict transformation in humanitarian and development programming.** We will build on this experience and would replicate such models for future programming and to support the nexus approach together with other organizations.

**We need to strengthen team capacities to capture learnings on the results and enduring changes. Staff and our local partners' capacity building on the Common Ground Approach (CGA) will be a priority.** A comprehensive media and communication strategy will help in promoting the visibility of our work as well as disseminating our messages on peace among stakeholders.

**We have established an accountability and feedback mechanism, developed country specific finance, operations, and HR procedures, and required systems to ensure compliance within the country office and to improve organizational visibility and credibility among the stakeholders and donors.** Strictly following these procedures, will help improve quality and accountability as well as improve Search's image as a credible and transparent organization working in Yemen.

# LET'S TALK PEACEBUILDING!

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