



OUTCOME HARVESTING EVALUATION REPORT

Youth Community of Practice in Peacebuilding

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Executive Summary

The *Youth Community of Practice (YCoP) in Peacebuilding* was a 6-month project¹ designed by Search for Common Ground (Search), funded by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), and implemented in partnership with Al-Tahreer Association for Development (TAD).

The *Youth Community of Practice (YCoP) in Peacebuilding* project was designed to enhance the peacebuilding capacities of youth and youth-led organizations across 5 target districts in Iraq's Ninewa Province – Mosul, Hamdaniya, Tal Afar, Tal Kaif, and Sinjar – and equip them to work collaboratively to address local conflicts. The overall goal of the project was to empower youth groups and youth-led organizations to work in concert to promote sustainable peace in Iraq. In service to this goal, the project was shaped around two distinct objectives: to increase the capacity and engagement of target youth groups and youth-led civil society organizations (CSOs) to address local-level conflicts in a constructive and collaborative manner; and to improve the organizational capacity of the local partner's peacebuilding work in target communities.² This programmatic strategy was underpinned by a theory of change (TOC) which assumes that: *strengthening the capacities of target youth and youth-led organizations and convening them into a Youth Community of Practice in Peacebuilding will promote the adoption of solution-oriented behaviors among target youth and improve the efficacy of peacebuilding and stabilization programs in their communities through the building of synergies and the amplification of interventions.*

In May of 2020, Search for Common Ground contracted with the Middle East Research Institute (MERI) to conduct an evaluation of the YCoP project utilizing an Outcome Harvesting methodology. This evaluation, which was conducted over the span of 5 weeks between June and July, 2020, generated a final harvest of 15 outcomes. The vast majority of these outcomes suggest that the YCoP project was successful in *increasing the capacity and engagement* of youth in peacebuilding, while the precise spread of the harvest showcases the impact and efficacy of the YCoP's capacity-building component. The most dramatic "change-making" activity appears to have been the 7-day Conflict Mitigation & Mediation trainings, which populated the single largest outcome yield of any programmatic category.

The sudden, unprecedented advent of the Covid-19 pandemic posed a number of logistical and operational challenges in the implementation of the YCoP project. It is imperative that users of this evaluation consider this significant contextual factor when assessing the limitations of the YCoP project. It is notable that, despite profound environmental difficulties, the *Youth Community of Practice in Peacebuilding* was able to achieve considerable – albeit partial – progress toward project objectives.

While the findings of this Outcome Harvest are predominantly positive, harvesters were able to identify several areas of potential growth for future iterations of the YCoP. Our recommendations for improvement center upon strategies and mechanisms to further strengthen, support, and sustain the beneficial changes arising from this project.

¹ Due to disruptions arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, the final project timeline spanned from September 2019 to June 2020.

² Progress toward the latter objective will not be measured in this report, as the Organizational Needs Assessment and Capacity Building component for TAD was not delivered in time to be considered during this evaluation.

The Evaluation Design

To examine the overall impact of the *Youth Community of Practice (YCoP) in Peacebuilding* project, MERI conducted a rigorous summative evaluation utilizing an Outcome Harvesting approach. The Outcome Harvesting methodology is designed to help harvest users understand change processes. It is an approach to monitoring and evaluation that is particularly well-suited to complex contexts, such as Nineveh Province, and to the assessment of programmatic initiatives with multiple variables and dynamics. Instead of attempting to measure the success of specific activities or implementation strategies, Outcome Harvesting generates evidence on the outcomes and effects of a given intervention – positive or negative, intended or unintended, direct or indirect – and works backwards to assess the role of the change agent in contributing to those outcomes.

The design of this Outcome Harvest was developed in collaboration with Search for Common Ground and provided the necessary framework to guide the evaluation. This evaluation was carried out with the understanding that Search for Common Ground (program developer and technical lead for the YCoP project) and GIZ (the YCoP donor organization) are the *primary intended users* of findings from the Outcome Harvest.

The *purpose* of this evaluation was to understand the outcomes of the YCoP project, with the dual aim of assessing the efficacy of current programming and informing the development and strategy of similar projects in the future.

The evaluation process was guided by the series of *usable questions* derived from project objectives.

1. To what extent has the YCoP project increased the skills and capacity of youth groups and CSOs to collaboratively address local conflict?
2. To what extent has the YCoP project empowered the active engagement of youth in local peacebuilding activities?
3. What do these outcomes indicate about how Youth Community of Practice projects should be designed in the future?

Due to the rigid time constraints of this evaluation, outcome descriptions collected during the harvest were simple and included only the following core components: an outcome statement and a contribution statement.

In keeping with best practice, the outcomes collected during this Outcome Harvest exclusively measure *observable* changes (i.e. behaviors, relationships, actions, policies, or practices) in social actors (i.e. individuals, groups, communities, organizations, or institutions) influenced by the change agent. To qualify as an outcome, changes in attitude or knowledge had to be substantiated by associated behavioral changes. Additionally, changes that the change agent controlled or funded (e.g. the youth sub-grant initiatives), were not considered as outcomes, but as project activities.

To control for the subjectivity of program staff, mitigate the need for additional credibility checks, and reap the important learning benefits of undesirable outcomes, harvesters explicitly requested change agents and other informants to report both positive and negative outcomes. Ultimately, only 2 negative outcomes emerged during the harvesting process. This limited harvest may be, at least in part, reflective of deficiencies in the project documentation provided by various partners. Unlike the Trainer Reports, the training post-test questionnaires and endline YCoP surveys administered to youth beneficiaries did not appear to include questions designed to solicit critical feedback and constructive recommendations. This

may have artificially constrained beneficiary responses in a manner that does not accurately reflect their sentiments. Additionally, although YCoP beneficiaries did offer unsolicited criticism during data collection, this input could not be formulated as outcomes, which removed it from consideration within this Outcome Harvest.

Evaluation Methodology

MERI's endline evaluation exclusively utilized the Outcome Harvesting methodology. Throughout the evaluation process, harvesters and change agents focused on identifying and formulating outcome descriptions in order to substantiate the significant changes – intended and unintended, positive or negative – that occurred as a result of the YCoP project's activities. These outcome descriptions also sought to establish the specific contributions of the YCoP project to any observable changes. The evidence that emerged was analyzed with a view to assess the relevance, efficiency, efficacy, and potential sustainability of the project; identify lessons learned; and tease out strategic implications in order to inform the development of future programming.

To maximize the caliber of the outcome descriptions generated during the harvesting process, MERI's endline evaluation utilized a rigorous multimethod approach. Methods included a preliminary desk review of project documents and existing evaluation materials; a series of focus group discussions with youth beneficiaries; augmenting interviews with expert consultants hired by the project; Outcome Harvesting workshops with change agents; and a number of substantiation interviews with independent and knowledgeable third parties. Due to restrictions and risks associated with Covid-19, all data collection activities were conducted virtually.

1. *Desk review.* As relevant materials became available, subsequent to the conclusion of project activities, MERI embarked on a thorough review of project documents provided by Search for Common Ground. These documents included the original YCoP project proposal and log frame; needs assessments; summaries of pre and post surveys from each training component; final reports from trainers & consultants on project curricula; output indicators; and other evaluation materials determined to be of relevance by Search for Common Ground. All documentation provided was carefully reviewed in order to glean evidence of potential changes.
2. *Focus group discussions.* Subsequent to the review of project documents, MERI conducted two virtual data collection sessions with youth beneficiaries of the YCoP project. Each session took the form of a 2-hour focus group interview. To ensure a safe space for women's participation and facilitate an analysis of how outcomes may differ by gender, these FGDs were gender-segregated. Four male youth engaged in the first session, and two female youth participated in the second session, subject to their respective availability. FGD participants were recommended by TAD staff and subsequently recruited by Search for Common Ground.
3. *Augmenting interviews.* MERI conducted three augmenting interviews with expert consultants hired by Search for the YCoP project. Two male consultants and one female consultant were interviewed, comprising the total number of consultants hired to deliver the YCoP capacity-building trainings for youth beneficiaries. These interviews were utilized to verify information from the project documents, flesh out draft outcome descriptions, and collect additional outcomes.

4. *Outcome Harvesting workshops.* During two consecutive Outcome Harvesting workshops, MERI engaged directly with change agents from Search for Common Ground to review, revise, and augment preliminary outcome descriptions and collect additional outcome descriptions. Guests from donor organization GIZ were also present in the first workshop. These events allowed harvesters and workshop participants to collaboratively generate a refined set of outcome descriptions.
5. *Substantiation interviews.* In order to verify available data, MERI staff conducted a series of phone interviews (determined by need and availability) with independent and knowledgeable third parties who were familiar with individual project outcomes and the contributions of change agents.

A total of 4 outcomes were discounted during the iterative data collection process and in the substantiation phase. The credibility of the remaining 15 outcomes resides in the fact that each outcome was either substantiated by an independent and knowledgeable third party; triangulated through multiple sources of data; or repeatedly verified with diverse social actors and final beneficiaries the YCoP project claimed to have influenced. After controlling for differences in opinion and perspective, the outcomes that emerged from these processes encapsulate and crystalize the essential facts of each story of change.

Outcome Harvesting generates both qualitative and quantitative data about outcomes. While the data collection methods used for this particular evaluation – such as interviews, focus group discussions, and workshops – were primarily qualitative in nature, a quantitative element was approximated through the process of classifying outcome descriptions. After outcome descriptions were finalized and substantiated, they were classified in multiple ways – including by their relevance to *social structure*, *target district*, *gender*, *project objectives*, *programmatic activities*, and other emergent themes – in order to make sense of available data and build answers to the evaluation questions.³ The act of classifying outcomes generated a numeric value for each predetermined category, instantly revealing which categories held a higher number of outcomes overall, greater positive outcomes, or greater direct outcomes. This information was used to highlight areas of programmatic strength, as well as to identify areas that require attention and improvement.

In the analysis that follows, outcomes will be referenced via in-text brackets or delineated in footnotes. The number assigned to each outcome reflects its position in the appendix, which includes the complete list of finalized outcome descriptions collected during this Outcome Harvest. A negative sign preceding an outcome number indicates an undesirable outcome.

Contextual Information and Limitations

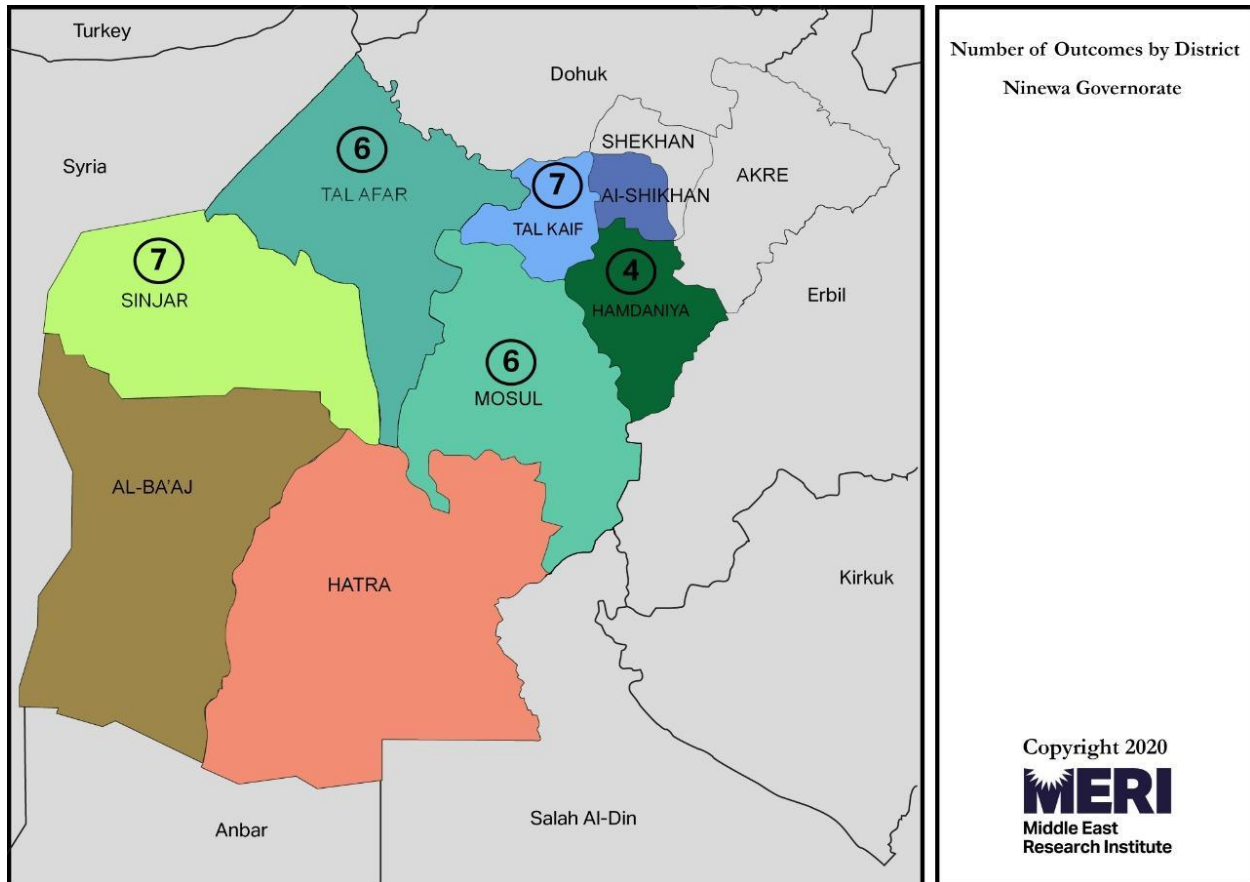
- Due to constraints arising from the YCoP project schedule, limited time was allocated for the Outcome Harvesting process, which is a notoriously time-intensive method of evaluation. The abbreviated nature of this Outcome Harvesting may have had an impact on the caliber or quantity of the outcome descriptions that were gathered within it.

³ Many outcome descriptions have relevance to multiple classification categories, such as *target district* and *project objective*. Other categories, such as *social structure*, *gender*, and *programmatic activity*, are mutually exclusive.

- Inevitable delays related to the Covid-19 pandemic and an inflexible final deadline for the YCoP project meant that the Outcome Harvesting process was initiated before all programmatic activities had been completed. As a result, incomplete project information was available at the outset of the Outcome Harvesting and in its design phase, which had repercussions throughout the process. Youth sub-grant initiatives could only be partially evaluated, as 7 out of 20 initiatives had been completed by the advent of the Outcome Harvest. Additionally, the final programmatic element (Organizational Needs Assessment and Capacity Building for TAD) had not been completed, and was therefore excluded from consideration and evaluation within the scope of this Outcome Harvest.
- Short projects, like the YCoP, do not always provide the time, resources, and robust relationship-building necessary for outcomes to emerge from project activities. Furthermore, while changes sometimes occur long after a change agent's activity, little time elapsed between the conclusion of multiple programmatic components and the completion of the Outcome Harvesting process. These factors made it difficult to 1) identify outcomes within certain categories, and 2) assess the sustainability of the project as a whole.
- Search for Common Ground was the organization responsible for designing and overseeing the YCoP intervention, and was therefore considered to be the primary change agent. However, since Search is not registered to operate in Ninewa, activities under the YCoP project were heavily delegated, resulting in a complicated matrix of change actors. The multiplicity of organizations and individuals contracted to deliver specific components – including TAD, Deloitte, and independent consultants – obscures lines of accountability for certain changes collected during this Outcome Harvest.
- One of the traditional challenges of the Outcome Harvesting methodology is that it presents an unconventional way of thinking about change. This method does not measure progress toward predetermined objectives, but rather collects evidence of what changed and works backward to elucidate change processes. This methodology was new to many Outcome Harvesting participants, and required a substantial degree of explanation and guidance during data collection activities. In Outcome Harvesting evaluations where program teams and participants face a steep learning curve, limited outcomes, missed outcomes, and gaps in documentation are likely.
- Due to divergent positions and perspectives between project partners, Al-Tahreer Association for Development chose not to participate in the Outcome Harvesting workshops and in data collection activities more broadly. This inhibited the ability of harvesters to engage in a robust process of triangulation with YCoP staff positioned on the ground in Ninewa, and precluded the integration of their valuable perspectives.
- The process of conducting this Outcome Harvest made it clear that some YCoP project activities were not implemented in the order delineated on the Integrated Log-Frame. Had the prescribed order been followed, this may have generated additional outcomes or shifted the contours of the project as a whole, potentially leading to different recommendations for future project design.

Key Findings: Answers to three evaluation questions

The finalized data set gleaned through this Outcome Harvest is comprised of 15 outcomes. Outcomes registered across all 5 target districts in Ninewa Governorate – Mosul, Hamdaniya, Tal Afar, Tal Kaif, and Sinjar – indicating a relatively equitable spread in terms of overall programmatic impact.



There was notable differentiation in the number of outcomes populated by specific activities under the YCoP project umbrella. Out of 15 project outcomes, the first 12 were populated by the YCoP’s capacity-building trainings for youth beneficiaries, representing 80% of the total Outcome Harvest. Within this category, 8 outcomes⁴ emerged from the 7-day Conflict Mitigation & Mediation trainings in Erbil (i.e. *Activity 1.5 in the YCoP Log-Frame*). The other 4 outcomes⁵ emerged from the 4-day Advanced Rumor Management & Media training in Erbil (i.e. *Activity 1.6 in the YCoP Log-Frame*). While a greater outcome yield from a particular activity is often an indicator of its success, this is not inherently or exclusively the case. For example, the Conflict Mitigation & Mediation trainings were delivered to 120 beneficiaries, while the Advanced Rumor Management & Media for Peacebuilding training was only delivered to 40 beneficiaries. The discrepancy between their respective outcome yields may be due to this factor or others.

⁴ [1, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12]

⁵ [2, -3, 7, 8]

Of the 15 outcomes that comprise the Outcome Harvest, only 2 outcomes⁶, or 13% of the total, were populated by the YCoP's youth sub-grant initiatives (i.e. *Activity 2.3 in the YCoP Log-Frame*). Of the two outcomes that emerged in this category, 1 was positive and 1 was negative. It is likely that this small and inconclusive outcome yield is reflective of broader operational difficulties and logistical constraints. Inevitable delays related to the Covid-19 pandemic and an inflexible final deadline for the YCoP project meant that the Outcome Harvesting process had to be initiated while programmatic activities were still in process. By the conclusion of the OH data collection phase, only 7 out of 20 youth sub-grant initiatives had been completed, leaving harvesters with a partial data set. Furthermore, as outcomes often take some time to emerge from project activities, it is unlikely that sufficient time has passed to ensure a fruitful harvest in this category. However, due to the limited and binary outcome yield, harvesters are not able to offer robust substantiation for the success of this particular programmatic component.

The final outcome [15] was populated by the YCoP project's first activity, the identification of youth beneficiaries (i.e. *Activity 1.1 in the YCoP Log-Frame*). As this was not one of the project's three programmatic focus areas, a small outcome yield is to be expected in this category.

Outcomes by Activity	
Identification of beneficiaries	1
Capacity-building trainings	12
▪ Conflict mitigation-mediation training	8
▪ Advanced rumor management	4
Youth initiatives	2
Total	15

1. To what extent has the YCoP project increased the skills and capacity of youth groups and CSOs to collaboratively address local conflict?

Capacity is understood as the *skills* and *knowledge* required to perform competently in service to a particular goal. Capacity building is the process by which individuals or organizations obtain, improve, and retain relevant skills and knowledge.

In this instance, the YCoP project aimed to build the capacity of youth groups and CSOs to collaboratively address local conflict. In service to this objective, Search for Common Ground hired expert consultants to conduct a series of capacity-building trainings for youth beneficiaries. In January and February 2020, identical 7-day Conflict Mitigation & Mediation (CMM) trainings in Erbil were delivered to youth cohorts from Mosul, Hamdaniya, Tal Kaif, Tal Afar, and Sinjar, ultimately benefiting 120 of Ninewa's youth. In March 2020, an additional 4-day Advanced Rumor Management & Media for Peacebuilding (ARM) training in Erbil was offered to 40 select youth and media professionals from across the 5 target districts in Ninewa.

Out of 15 outcomes, harvesters were able to identify 12 that correspond to this objective. As might be expected, each of these 12 outcomes⁷ were populated by the YCoP's capacity-building trainings for project beneficiaries.

⁶ [13, -14]

⁷ [1, 2, -3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12]

Available outcomes substantiate that the YCoP project was successful in increasing participant's **acquisition** of both theoretical (i.e. knowledge) and practical (i.e. skills) content. Improved mastery of thematic material among YCoP beneficiaries is demonstrated by outcomes arising from the pre- and post-test results of each training.⁸ Post-test results from the Conflict Mitigation & Mediation trainings are particularly dramatic. Out of 120 youth beneficiaries, 118 demonstrated an average 97.9% increase in their ability to correctly answer content questions at the conclusion of the training [1].⁹ Roughly 93% of these beneficiaries answered over half the questions on the post-test correctly [1]. The Advanced Rumor Management and Media for Peacebuilding training also generated notable results. Out of 40 trainees, 27 demonstrated an average 44% increase in their ability to correctly answer content questions at the conclusion of the training [2].

Unlike the Conflict Mitigation & Mediation trainings, however, the Advanced Rumor Management & Media for Peacebuilding training was not an unqualified success. ARM trainees with positive post-test results demonstrated less than half the improvement of their CMM counterparts [1, 2]. Additionally, nearly a third of ARM trainees demonstrated no improvement or a decrease in their ability to correctly answer content questions after this training [-3]. There are a number of possible explanations for these unanticipated outcomes, including discrepancies in learning capacity between the two distinct cohorts; the large size of the training, with 40 attendees; and the limited duration of the training which, at 4 days, may not have been sufficient to facilitate equitable mastery of the training's technical content [-3]. Other factors, such as a poorly designed and delivered curriculum or a confusing post-test questionnaire, cannot be ruled out.

In addition to their contributions to knowledge acquisition, the YCoP Conflict Mitigation & Mediation trainings also appear to have supported the behavioral **application** of theoretical and practical content among youth beneficiaries. There is a small sample of outcomes that provide evidence of this change at the individual level. In one outcome [6], two male attendees of the Conflict Mitigation & Mediation trainings, both Muslim, used effective communication strategies to resolve a personal conflict arising from a miscommunication on a religious topic. The following day, they crafted this experience into a teachable moment for their fellow attendees. In another outcome [12], which took place three months after the Conflict Mitigation & Mediation trainings, a female YCoP beneficiary intervened to mediate a religiously-inflected conflict in her workplace between Christian and Yazidi colleagues.

There is also evidence that the YCoP Conflict Mitigation & Mediation trainings supported the behavioral application of new knowledge and skills among youth beneficiaries at the group level. A cluster of available outcomes¹⁰ demonstrates a successful shift in group dynamics over the course of the YCoP project. In one outcome [4], behaviors of bullying and blame in three separate Conflict Mitigation & Mediation trainings gave way to voluntary collaboration and relationship-building between participants from different ethnic and sectarian identity groups. In another [5], an increase was noted in both the engagement of female participants in program activities and the acceptance of their participation on the part of male attendees from closed and conservative communities (KII:2020). In the last outcome [9], 9 Muslim beneficiaries of

⁸ Changes in knowledge, attitude, and skills (KAS), even when demonstrated by pre- and post-test results, are not typically counted as outcomes. However, there are exceptions, depending on context. In Ninewa, youth inclusion in peacebuilding is not supported or validated at the institutional level. Additionally, content covered in these trainings introduced participants to non-traditional approaches to peacebuilding, which was observed to trigger resistance in some beneficiaries (Trainer Report). Therefore, participants' absorption of this new knowledge, as well as their ability and willingness to apply it on post-tests, are considered to be outcomes in this context.

⁹ Results for the remaining two beneficiaries were not counted due to errors in their pre- and post-test forms.

¹⁰ [4, 5, 9]

the Tal Kaif Conflict Mitigation & Mediation training voluntary chose to collaborate across ethnic, sectarian, and gender identity groups to design a service project for a local Christian church. This outcome is particularly notable given that the Tal Kaif cohort was identified by the consultant trainer as one in which ethnic, religious, and sectarian tensions were especially problematic (KII:2020).

It is worth noting that the Conflict Mitigation & Mediation training modules on effective communication and identity appear to have been most impactful in shifting behaviors and supporting the application of knowledge among youth beneficiaries of the YCoP project.¹¹ No verifiable outcomes emerged to substantiate the application of knowledge from the Advanced Rumor Management & Media for Peacebuilding training.

In addition to supporting the acquisition and application of new information, there is some evidence that the YCoP Conflict Mitigation & Mediation trainings also facilitated the **integration** of that knowledge among beneficiaries. One beneficiary chose to integrate the information gleaned into a 10-episode cartoon series he created for publication on UNDP's website, which covers topics ranging from conflict and dialogue to activism, volunteering, and the coronavirus [11]. Another beneficiary adjusted the content of his regular workshops on women's rights and minority rights and incorporated new material on CVE following the training [10]. No verifiable outcomes emerged to substantiate the integration of knowledge from the Advance Rumor Management & Media for Peacebuilding training.

Finally, both the Conflict Mitigation & Mediation trainings and the Advanced Rumor Management & Media for Peacebuilding training appear to have equally inspired the **dissemination** of new knowledge and skills by YCoP beneficiaries. A CMM beneficiary from Mosul who incorporated new information into his regular trainings on women's rights and minority rights conducted 9-10 of these trainings between January and June 2020, thereby disseminating this information to around 200 participants [10]. A beneficiary from Hamdaniya who integrated content from the CMM training into a 10-episode cartoon series has secured funding and the promise of publication from UNDP, which will ensure the dissemination of this information to a wide virtual audience [11]. An ARM beneficiary from Mosul has developed a plan to bring together a group of local social media activists for an online training on rumor management and combating fake news [7], while three ARM beneficiaries from Sinjar are planning a small workshop on the role of media in post-conflict settings for new activists and journalists in their area [8]. Each of these projects demonstrates interest and initiative on the part of YCoP beneficiaries to share their new knowledge and amplify its potential impact.

The findings of this Outcome Harvest indicate that the YCoP project was successful in building the capacity of project beneficiaries by supporting the acquisition, application, integration, and dissemination of their *knowledge* and *skills*. Additionally, as 5 of the 12 applicable outcomes¹² (42%) were either initiated after the conclusion of programmatic activities or have lasted since, a reasonable degree of retention can be assumed among project beneficiaries. This is a positive indication of the durability of change in YCoP beneficiaries and could, therefore, be considered as evidence of sustainability in the YCoP's capacity-building component.

It is important to note, however, that substantiating an increase in the skills and knowledge of youth beneficiaries only answers part of this evaluation question. There are two additional facets of this question that cannot be substantiated by available data.

¹¹ [4, 5, 6, 12]

¹² [7, 8, 10, 11, 12]

First, the YCoP project aimed to build the capacity of *youth groups and CSOs*. While it is clear that this project enhanced the capacity of individual youth, and sometimes dramatically so, available outcomes do not substantiate its success in building the capacity of youth groups and CSOs as collective entities. Individual and organizational capacity-building are separate processes. Without capacity-building efforts at the organizational level, the YCoP's progress toward this objective is dependent on the personal initiative and influence of individual youth beneficiaries. Of course, it is possible that the YCoP project indirectly contributed to the capacity of youth-led groups and organizations by improving the capacities of youth who may be affiliated, either formally or informally, with these entities. However, no data emerged on organizational changes arising from the efforts of individual YCoP beneficiaries, and establishing the plausibility of this scenario is outside the scope of this evaluation.

Second, the YCoP project aimed to increase the capacity of youth groups and CSOs to *collaboratively* address local conflict. However, of the 12 outcomes that correspond to this evaluation question, 8 register at the purely individual level,¹³ reflecting personal changes in capacity and action. Outcomes that appear to entail some sort of collaborative component are limited. Of the 4 that could be considered to fall within this category,¹⁴ 3 occurred within the YCoP project's parameters or under its direct sponsorship. Only one outcome [8] demonstrates collaboration between individual YCoP beneficiaries on an activity that is completely independent of the YCoP program, and all three of the involved beneficiaries are Yazidis from Sinjar. This outcome spread calls into question whether the YCoP project was ultimately successful in facilitating the type of robust, cross-communal collaboration that would foster reconciliation, social cohesion, and sustainable peace. Given the conflict context in Ninewa, the prevalence of individual outcomes emerging from the YCoP project may indicate that more needs to be done to formalize or institutionalize relationships that could support strategic collaborations with a longer-term time horizon.

2. To what extent has the YCoP project empowered the active engagement of youth in local peacebuilding activities?

While the first evaluation question sought to assess the skills and knowledge gleaned by youth beneficiaries of the YCoP project, the second evaluation question is designed to explore the degree to which youth beneficiaries were *empowered to engage* in local peacebuilding activities.

In service to this objective, the YCoP project sponsored the development and implementation of youth sub-grant initiatives designed to address conflict and promote social cohesion in 5 target districts across Ninewa. This programmatic component was delivered in partnership with local organization Al-Tahreer Association for Development (TAD), which provided dedicated coordinators in each district to support the implementation of these initiatives. A total of 20 youth sub-grant initiatives were developed over the course of the YCoP project. Due to restrictions arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, however, only 7 of these initiatives were completed in time for this Outcome Harvest.

As the youth sub-grant initiatives constituted a funded project activity, the initiatives themselves cannot be recorded or analyzed as outcomes under the Outcome Harvesting methodology. Nevertheless, out of 15 total outcomes, harvesters were able to identify 13 outcomes¹⁵ from across project activities that we believe can be utilized to answer this evaluation question.

¹³ [1, 2, -3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12]

¹⁴ [4, 5, 8, 9]

¹⁵ [1, 2, -3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15]

Empowerment, in this context, is understood as the precursor or precondition of effective *engagement*. Available outcomes indicate that the YCoP project provided youth beneficiaries with several empowering elements that could facilitate their active engagement in peacebuilding activities, including: exposure, experience, and an enabling environment.

There is reason to believe that the YCoP capacity-building trainings empowered youth beneficiaries to engage in peacebuilding by increasing their **exposure**. As has been explored at some length in the answer to the first evaluation question, beneficiaries of the CMM and ARM trainings were exposed to content on a number of salient peacebuilding topics, including: identity, types of conflict, active listening, effective communication, mediation, countering violent extremism, rumor management, combating fake news, and the role of media in post conflict settings [1-12]. In a context like Ninewa, where there is little institutional support for youth inclusion in peacebuilding and a communal resistance to non-traditional methods of conflict resolution, these trainings offered many youth beneficiaries exposure to new information ([1-3]; YCoP Needs Assessment; YCoP Training Reports). On the 6th day of the CMM trainings, youth beneficiaries were also exposed to the fundamental principles of project design (YCoP Training Reports). Outside of curricular content, the CMM and ARM trainings also exposed participants to members of other ethnic, sectarian, and gender identity groups [4, 5, 9] and their diverse perspectives, narratives, and ideas [4, 5, 6]. Familiarity with conflict resolution theory and practice, as well as an awareness of the diverse or divergent perspectives at play in a given community, are critical to effective engagement in local peacebuilding.

The **experience** offered to youth beneficiaries through the YCoP capacity-building trainings could also be considered a contribution to their empowerment. The Conflict Mitigation & Mediation trainings, specifically, provided youth participants with practical experience in resolving conflict [4, 6, 12]; navigating cross-communal dynamics and collaborating across identity groups [4, 5, 9]; and designing jointly-owned projects with diverse stakeholders [4, 9]. In the context of these trainings, female beneficiaries from closed and conservative communities also gained valuable experience in participation and leadership [5, 15]. It is likely that the process of implementing the YCoP sub-grant initiatives offered youth beneficiaries additional experience in each of these areas, although that cannot be substantiated within this Outcome Harvest.

Finally, the YCoP project appears to have contributed to the empowerment of youth beneficiaries by creating a safe and supportive **enabling environment**. This is particularly evident in outcome descriptions populated by the YCoP capacity-building trainings. Available outcomes suggest that the Conflict Mitigation & Mediation facilitators engaged with youth participants in an active and attentive manner; offered guidance and support; and, when necessary, intervened to prevent conflicts from escalating ([4, 5, 6]; KIIs:2020). The Advanced Rumor Management & Peacebuilding trainer was reportedly receptive to the ideas of trainees, responsive to their inquiries after the training, willing to offer ongoing advice and support, and agreeable to future collaborations ([7-8]; KIIs:2020). It is reasonable to assume that the YCoP project also sought to foster an enabling environment by providing youth beneficiaries with the necessary tools, resources, and dedicated coordinators to facilitate the implementation of their sub-grant initiatives. The success of those efforts, however, cannot be substantiated due to the limited outcome yield from the youth sub-grant initiatives.

The vast majority of youth *engagement* in local peacebuilding likely occurred within project parameters as part of the YCoP sub-grant initiatives. However, as these initiatives were funded by the YCoP project and listed among its activities, they cannot be counted as outcomes. Consequently, participation in the sub-grant initiatives themselves cannot be presented as evidence of youth engagement in peacebuilding.

Nevertheless, there are 4 outcomes¹⁶ that suggest progress toward this objective. After the Advanced Rumor Management & Media for Peacebuilding training in March 2020, a prominent social media activist in Mosul developed a plan to organize an online training on rumor management and combating fake news for other social media figures and managers of public Facebook pages in Mosul [7]. After the same ARM training, two media professionals and a civil activist in Sinjar developed a plan to organize a workshop for new journalists and activists in Sinjar, exploring the role of media in post conflict settings [8]. All were beneficiaries of the YCoP project who demonstrated an interest in disseminating critical peacebuilding skills among their local communities. Between April and June 2020, following his attendance at a Conflict Mitigation & Mediation training, a youth beneficiary from Hamdaniya created a 10-episode cartoon series for publication on UNDP's website [11]. This series explores topics like conflict, dialogue, activism, and volunteering, and demonstrates engagement in disseminating peace messages to a wide virtual audience. Lastly, between January and June 2020, a social researcher from Mosul chose to adjust the content of his regular trainings on women's rights and minority rights in light of information he gleaned during a Conflict Mitigation & Mediation training [10]. While this outcome does not indicate new engagement in local peacebuilding, it does reflect an amended approach to ongoing engagement.

It should be noted that these are predominantly individual outcomes, rather than outcomes at the organizational, communal, or institutional level. Thus, while these outcomes do demonstrate the engagement of some youth in local peacebuilding activities, the longevity and impact of that change is entirely dependent on individual motivation, capacity, and resources. This is important because the overall goal of the YCoP project is to *empower youth groups and youth-led organizations to work in concert to promote sustainable peace in Iraq*. Moreover, the YCoP's theory of change (TOC) assumes that, as a result of project activities, youth will *build synergies* and *amplify interventions* to improve the effectiveness of peacebuilding and stabilization programs in their local communities. While the data emerging from this Outcome Harvest does suggest that youth beneficiaries may be engaging in episodic and individualized peacebuilding initiatives, it does not substantiate their collaborative involvement in peacebuilding and stabilization programs more broadly.

In order to transform the individual efforts of youth into robust, collaborative engagement with local peacebuilding programs, it is likely that strategic relationship-building would be required at multiple levels. However, outside of an implicit partnership with local implementing organization Al-Tahreer Association for Development, this Outcome Harvest found no evidence of symbiotic relations developing between youth beneficiaries and the CSOs, NGOs, and government institutions at work in the peacebuilding and stabilization sectors. In the absence of such partnerships, sustainable and synergistic youth engagement in broader peacebuilding efforts may be unlikely.

3. What do these outcomes indicate about how the Youth Community of Practice projects should be designed in the future?

Considered as a whole, available outcomes substantiate that the YCoP project was successful in improving the *capacity* and *engagement* of individual youth beneficiaries. While this Outcome Harvest was not able to equally assess all programmatic components of the YCoP project, the final outcome spread, as analyzed within the first two evaluation questions, suggests that the Conflict Mitigation & Mediation trainings were particularly impactful and effective in generating progress toward these objectives. This reflects well on the potential relevance of this training to Ninewa's conflict context and the needs of youth beneficiaries. Future iterations of the YCoP project might consider building upon this area of programmatic strength by

¹⁶ [7, 8, 10, 11]

delivering this training to more youth cohorts or, alternatively, creating a linear process flow through the inclusion of an Advanced Conflict Mitigation & Mediation training rather than an Advanced Rumor Management training. In the latter scenario, rumor management and media for peacebuilding modules could be integrated within both trainings.

Bolstering the capacity of youth beneficiaries forms the cornerstone and first component of the YCoP project's theory of change. Thus, the YCoP project's success in this venture can be understood as an essential step toward realizing the ultimate goal of the project, or 'peace writ large.' The second component of the YCoP theory of change entails convening youth organizations and informal youth groups into a Youth Community of Practice in Peacebuilding. Definitionally, communities of practice (CoP) are groups of people united by a shared concern or passion who contribute to mutual learning through regular, ongoing interaction. They are generally organic, self-organized, and independent, with a voluntary membership comprised of professionals or practitioners. Communities of practice do not typically coalesce around specific projects or deliverables, and their existence is therefore not bounded by any particular task or mission beyond collaborative learning. It would be difficult, therefore, to argue that youth beneficiaries, convened for the purpose of the YCoP project and under its auspices, meet the criteria for a true community of practice. No evidence emerged from the Outcome Harvest to indicate that this collective is a self-sustaining social structure that will continue to exist outside of project parameters. Future iterations of this project might be better served by adopting an alternative modality, such as a community of interest. Alternatively, YCoP staff should consider providing structures to support and sustain a community of practice model that outlives the length of the project and successfully divests ownership to the youth themselves. In the interim, in the absence of a clear and full delivery of this Youth Community of Practice component, the remainder of the YCoP theory of change cannot be tested.

Classification of Outcome Harvest data by **level** reveals that over half of all project outcomes¹⁷ registered at the individual level. Out of 5 group outcomes¹⁸, all but 1 occurred within YCoP project parameters or under its direct sponsorship. No outcomes emerged at the organizational level. This is notable, particularly since the overall goal and specific objectives of the YCoP project make it clear that youth *groups* and youth-led *organizations* were the ultimate target of this intervention. The activities of the YCoP project were delivered to individual youth beneficiaries or "representatives" of these collective entities, buttressed by an implicit assumption that changes at the individual level would accrue to increase capacity and engagement at the organizational level. The findings of this Outcome Harvest do not support the validity of such an assumption, however. Individual and organizational change models tend to differ, as do strategies for building individual and organizational capacity. Therefore, it may be advisable to streamline the scope of future YCoP projects to ensure greater congruence between project objectives and activities.

Outcomes by Level	
Individual	8
Group	5
Organizational	0
Communal	2
Institutional	0
Total	15

¹⁷ [1, 2, -3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12]

¹⁸ [4, 5, 8, 9, 15]

An analysis of Outcome Harvest data by **gender** offers further implications for program design. The classification of available outcomes by gender of the social actor revealed relatively balanced results. Of the 15 total outcome descriptions, 4 captured changes in male beneficiaries,¹⁹ 3 in female beneficiaries,²⁰ and 8 in mixed or unspecified groups.²¹ Given the patriarchal context in Ninewa, this outcome spread would seem to indicate considerable effort on the part of the YCoP project staff and Search for Common Ground's gender advisor to ensure gender parity in the selection of both project beneficiaries and the research participants who contributed to this Outcome Harvest. It also suggests that the YCoP project, as a whole, was successful in achieving a reasonable degree of inclusivity.

Outcomes by Gender of Social Actor	
Males	4
Females	3
Mixed/unspecified	8
Total	15

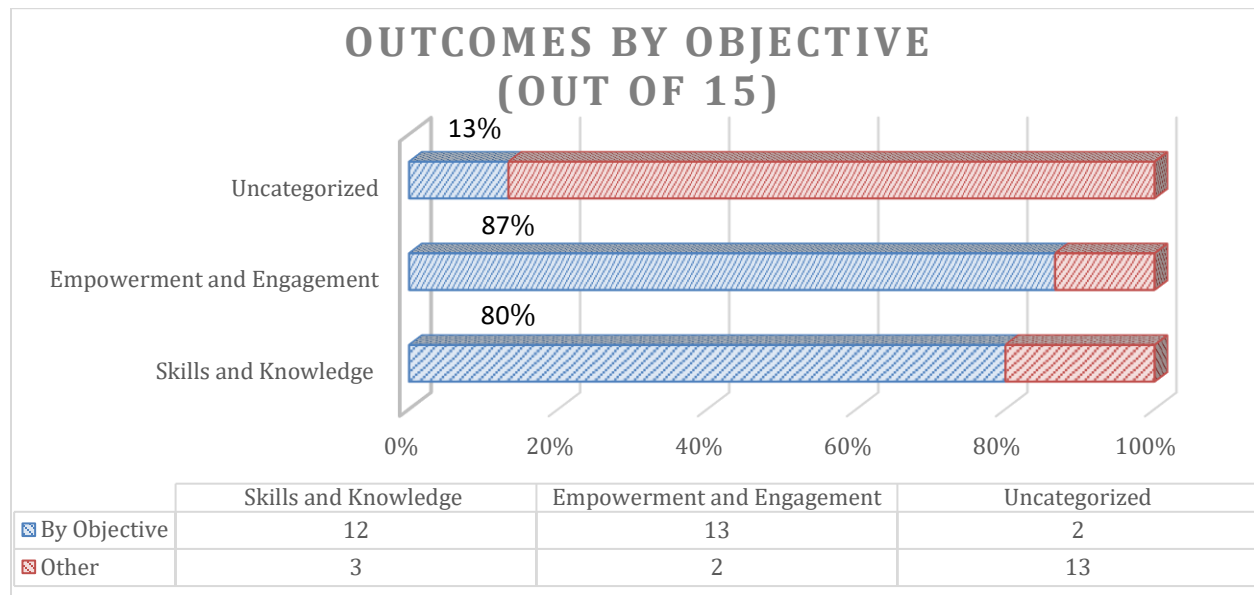
However, of the 3 outcomes populated in the female social actor category, 2 centered around barriers to women's access and meaningful participation. One outcome [15] reveals that, prior to the Inception Workshop, only one female applicant from Tal Afar had confirmed her ability to participate in the YCoP project. The YCoP Needs Assessment identified Tal Afar as a conservative area where females are typically house-bound, and a January 2020 correspondence between TAD, Search, and GIZ confirmed the difficulty of including women in the *Youth Community of Practice in Peacebuilding* due to the community environment in Tal Afar. Concerted, creative effort by the YCoP project staff was required to successfully recruit an additional 7 female beneficiaries from this area [15]. Another outcome [5] reveals that, at the outset of the Conflict Mitigation & Mediation trainings in Erbil, gender dynamics inhibited the participation of female beneficiaries from Tal Afar and Sinjar. While participation did improve over the course of the training, the trainer observed that female beneficiaries had to overcome fear, cultural precedent, and resistance from male beneficiaries in order to engage meaningfully in project activities ([5]; KII:2020). According to program documents, these barriers were evident in other trainings as well (Trainer Report). Such outcomes, reflective of the local context in Ninewa, may highlight the need for greater gender responsiveness in the YCoP project design, including the integration of gender-specific programming and additional modalities to support safe access and participation for women from conservative communities.

An analysis of Outcome Harvest data by **objective** also proved to be illuminating. Available outcomes were classified by their relevance to two distinct project objectives noted in the logical framework: increasing the capacity (i.e. skills and knowledge) of youth; and empowering the engagement of youth in peacebuilding. A remarkably equitable outcome spread was observed across these two categories, indicating commensurate – albeit partial – progress toward each objective.

¹⁹ [6, 7, 10, 11]

²⁰ [5, 12, 15]

²¹ [1, 2, -3, 4, 8, 9, 13, 14]



However, 2 of the 15 outcomes²² gleaned during this Outcome Harvest did not directly correspond to either objective, as they captured changes in community members rather than youth beneficiaries. This reveals a technical issue in the design of the YCoP project. The first two objectives under the YCoP log-frame include no formal mechanisms or indicators for assessing the impact of project activities where youth are not the final beneficiaries. However, under the second objective, the final beneficiaries of the YCoP youth sub-grant initiatives are not youth participants themselves, but members of their local, national, or global communities (Initiatives Tracker). Since these initiatives comprise one of the YCoP project’s primary activities (i.e. *Activity 2.3 on the YCoP Log-Frame*), a formalized process for assessing their endline impact may be advisable.

A brief discussion of these two outcomes, which capture community responses to youth sub-grant initiatives, is relevant here. Like the “Peace Corner” initiative in Tal Kaif [9], which earned grateful acknowledgement and praise from the mayor, the “We Care About You” workshop in Mosul [13] reportedly succeeded in creating benefit for the community by raising public awareness about the negative impacts of narcotics and contributing to the arrest of three local drug dealers. Conversations with youth participants of the “We Care About You” initiative revealed great pride in this accomplishment (KIIs:2020). The tree-planting activity in Sinjar [14], by contrast, was met with critical community responses after a number of saplings withered in the heat or were eaten by cattle. When photos of the dead saplings began circulating on social media, youth participants were put in the position of attempting to defend this initiative or sharing their frustrations with its limitations, which allegedly included poorly allocated funding, a lack of protective fencing, and insufficient watering (KIIs:2020). Youth participants overall were not satisfied with the quality of this project, which was carried out as a substitute activity when their original initiatives could not be implemented due to Covid-19 restrictions (KIIs:2020). The poor planning, implementation, and follow-through on this activity reportedly soured the feelings of youth beneficiaries toward the entities perceived to be responsible for its failure, which included the local municipality office, TAD, and, by extension, Search for Common Ground (KIIs: 2020). Taken as case studies, these two diametrically opposed outcomes elucidate the importance of effective management, risk mitigation, collective ownership, and participatory approaches in the implementation of youth sub-grant initiatives. The success or failure of these initiatives may have an impact on youth empowerment and

²² [13, 14]

engagement outside of the YCoP project, as well as implications for the sustainability of YCoP project partnerships.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The *Youth Community of Practice in Peacebuilding* project produced a significant yield of useable outcomes. Given the short duration of the project and the limited time allocated for the Outcome Harvesting process, the number and variety of harvested outcomes surpassed expectations. The majority of outcomes collected indicate progress toward *increasing the capacity of youth* to address conflict and *empowering their engagement* in peacebuilding. In this way, the outcome harvest is consistent with the intended substance of the project. Additionally, available outcomes registered relatively equitably across genders and across each of the YCoP's 5 target districts in Ninewa, in line with the intended scope of the project.

As is true of any project, some programmatic components of the *Youth Community of Practice in Peacebuilding* appear to have been more successful than others. The overwhelming majority (80%) of the outcomes harvested during this evaluation emerged from the YCoP's capacity-building trainings for youth beneficiaries. Of these, the biggest "change-making" activity appears to have been the 7-day Conflict Mitigation & Mediation trainings (i.e. *Activity 1.5*), which, at 53%, populated the single largest outcome yield of any programmatic category. The CMM's modules on identity and effective communication seem to have been especially impactful, as specific references to these modules appeared in 5 of the CMM's 8 outcomes²³. The Advanced Rumor Management & Media for Peacebuilding training (i.e. *Activity 1.6*) claimed the second largest number of outcomes, but tendered a mixed yield that included one negative outcome.

The exceptional outcome yield and collective impact of the YCoP's capacity-building trainings, in contrast to the small and inconclusive yield of the youth sub-grant initiatives (i.e. *Activity 2.3*), may be due – at least in part – to the full completion of these activities and the length of time that has elapsed since their implementation. However, it also mirrors the importance and centrality of the YCoP project's first objective, which focuses on capacity-building in youth beneficiaries. Capacity-building is the cornerstone and linchpin of the YCoP theory of change; it forms the foundation upon which all other assumptions embedded in the TOC are predicated. Success in creating this foundation, therefore, represents some degree of essential progress toward the ultimate goal of the YCoP project.

This Outcome Harvest provides sufficient evidence to substantiate that the YCoP trainings succeeded, as intended, in building the capacity of youth beneficiaries. Together, the CMM and ARM trainings also contributed to 6 positive but unplanned outcomes²⁴ which demonstrate personal ownership of new knowledge and skills among participants and indicate that the impact of these trainings may extend beyond the life cycle of the YCoP project. However, given the high prevalence of individual outcomes in this harvest overall, the critical question is whether these outcomes are isolated examples or are indicative of broader change in the status quo.

²³ [4, 5, 6, 10, 12]

²⁴ [6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12]

Outcome No.	Positive	Negative	Planned	Unplanned	Direct	Indirect
1	●		●		●	
2	●		●		●	
3		●		●	●	
4	●		●		●	
5	●		●		●	
6	●			●	●	
7	●			●	●	
8	●			●	●	
9	●		●		●	
10	●			●	●	
11	●			●	●	
12	●			●	●	
13	●		●		●	
14		●		●	●	
15	●		●		●	

When analyzing outcomes for implications and lessons learned, it is important to remember that the aim of outcome harvesting is to understand the process of change. With that in mind, the following recommendations are offered for further consideration.

- **Extend the YCoP project timeline.** At 6 months, the intended duration of the YCoP project was relatively short. Strengthening the capacity of beneficiaries and convening them into a stable, resilient, and effective Community of Practice is likely to require a significant investment of time, resources, and relationship-building. Extending the project timeline might better enable project beneficiaries to build robust, sustainable patterns of collaboration that can be maintained outside of the sponsorship and direction of the YCoP project.
- **Allow ample time for outcomes to emerge prior to evaluation.** Donor restrictions and an inflexible final deadline for the YCoP project necessitated that this Outcome Harvest be initiated prior to the conclusion of programmatic activities. This arrangement not only compromised the validity of this study as an endline evaluation, but also precluded certain programmatic components from consideration and likely short-changed the number of available outcomes in others.
- **Amend programmatic strategy to more closely align with the overall goal and objectives of the YCoP project.** The overall goal and specific objectives delineated in project documents make it clear that youth *groups* and youth-led *organizations* were the ultimate target of this intervention. However, the activities of the YCoP project were delivered to individual youth beneficiaries or “representatives” of these larger social structures. As the efficacy and sustainability of the individual change model can break down in bigger and more diverse groups, consider including interventions at scale, such as an organizational capacity-building component for youth-led CSOs, to bridge the current gap between project intentions and activities.

- **Apply a systems approach to future iterations of the YCoP project.** The YCoP theory of change makes it clear that the desired outcome of the project was for youth beneficiaries to improve the efficacy of peacebuilding and stabilization programs in their respective communities. However, the YCoP project appeared to lack robust strategies for facilitating the integration of youth beneficiaries into peacebuilding and stabilization efforts more broadly. Applying a systems approach in future project design might prove beneficial in elucidating additional mechanisms for securing this outcome. Such mechanisms might include: exposing youth beneficiaries to the work of broader change-making systems in Ninewa, including the Coexistence and Communal Peace Committee, Reconstruction Fund, and other local and international organizations; facilitating connections with these entities so that youth beneficiaries might explore opportunities for mentorship and volunteerism in the future; encouraging collaborative partnerships with other organizations in the implementation of youth sub-grant initiatives; and building sustainable and symbiotic relationships with CSOs, NGOs, local government authorities, and community leaders. Such strategies may better secure local buy-in, facilitate systemic integration, and enhance the overall scalability of the YCoP project.
- **Incorporate additional mechanisms to enhance the sustainability of the Youth Community of Practice.** The prevalence of individual outcomes in this Outcome Harvest calls into question the durability of the Youth Community of Practice modality. Consider utilizing creative approaches to amplify opportunities for regular or semi-regular interaction among youth beneficiaries until their ability to convene independently is fully developed. This could include liaising with local authorities and other relevant entities to secure a physical space for periodic YCoP gatherings after the conclusion of the project. Alternatively, the YCoP project could facilitate the development of a youth-led virtual Alumni Platform where beneficiaries can disseminate ongoing opportunities, foster collaboration, showcase stories of success, and share lessons learned. Additionally, adopting an activity-based or staggered funding model for YCoP project implementation, with reduced levels of disbursement during phaseout activities, could enable project sponsorship of reunions or other follow-up events in 3 and 6-month intervals. Creative approaches to building sustainability are especially critical in short-term projects.
- **Shift from gender sensitivity to gender responsiveness in the YCoP project design.** Given the cultural context in Ninewa, gender dynamics can serve as a barrier to women’s mobility, access, and robust participation in programs like the YCoP project. Unless creatively and proactively addressed, these dynamics can diminish the benefit female beneficiaries are able to derive from these programs, as well as impede their sustainable involvement in peacebuilding more broadly. Consider building on the YCoP’s commendable focus on inclusivity and gender parity by incorporating gender-responsive elements in the project design, such as: gender-specific programming; the inclusion of curricular modules on gender awareness and equality; the provision of resources for preventing domestic violence; and other modalities to support the safe participation and return of female applicants, so as to “do no harm” in soliciting their involvement.
- **Consider redesigning the Advanced Rumor Management & Media for Peacebuilding training.** Given the notably lower rates of knowledge acquisition among the beneficiaries of the ARM training, some amendments in the design of this particular component may be necessary to ensure optimal efficacy in the future. Consider the relative benefit of delivering separate trainings to youth and media professional cohorts; limiting the number of beneficiaries in a combined training; or extending the length of the training. A broader examination of this particular component, including a critical analysis of the curriculum and the trainer’s style of facilitation, may also be warranted. Finally, this programmatic component could also be substituted with an Advanced Conflict Mitigation & Mediation training to enhance the linear flow of the YCoP project as a whole.

- **Expand the risk assessment and mitigation protocols of the YCoP project.** Project documents suggest that the risk identification measures of the YCoP project are well-calibrated to assess external, contextual risks and their potential impact on project implementation. Consider building upon this foundation by incorporating mechanisms to detect, assess, and address internal risks, such as breakdowns in local partner relationships during the project life cycle. These risks, if unaddressed, can have negative repercussions on project implementation and evaluation, as well as undermine the long-term sustainability of project partnerships.
- **Collect constructive criticism from YCoP beneficiaries.** The YCoP project's endline survey did not appear to directly solicit critical feedback or recommendations for improvement from youth beneficiaries. Collecting these perspectives could prove beneficial in ensuring the responsiveness and relevance of future programming.

Appendix

Outcome Descriptions

OUTCOME 1:

Outcome: In January and February of 2020, 118 youth beneficiaries (98%) of the YCoP program from 5 target districts in Ninewa demonstrated an average 97.9% increase in their ability to correctly answer content questions on post-tests after the Conflict Mitigation & Mediation trainings they received in Erbil. 93% of beneficiaries answered over half the questions on the post-test correctly.

Contribution: Each of the beneficiaries that demonstrated this increase in knowledge uptake participated in one of the YCoP's 7-day Conflict Mitigation & Mediation trainings in Erbil, which supported learning on assorted peacebuilding topics.

OUTCOME 2:

Outcome: In March 2020, 69% of social media activist and media professional trainees from Ninewa demonstrated an average 44% increase in their ability to correctly answer content questions on post-tests after the Advanced Rumor Management & Media for Peacebuilding training they received in Erbil.

Contribution: Each of the 27 youth beneficiaries that demonstrated an increase in knowledge uptake participated in the YCoP's 4-day Advanced Rumor Management & Media for Peacebuilding training in Erbil, which supported learning on these topics.

OUTCOME 3:

Outcome: In March 2020, 31% of social media activist and media professional trainees from Ninewa demonstrated no improvement or a decrease in their ability to correctly answer content questions on post-tests after the Advanced Rumor Management & Media for Peacebuilding training they received in Erbil.

Contribution: Each of the 12 youth beneficiaries that demonstrated no improvement or a decrease in knowledge participated in the YCoP's 4-day Advanced Rumor Management & Media for Peacebuilding training in Erbil. This training was delivered to two distinct cohorts: youth beneficiaries of the YCoP Conflict Mitigation & Mediation trainings and media professionals from 5 target districts in Ninewa. These cohorts had differing learning capacities, needs, and content familiarity. The large size (40 trainees) and limited duration (4 days) of the training prohibited the personalized attention that would facilitate equitable mastery of the training's technical content.

OUTCOME 4:

Outcome: In February 2020, at the outset of the YCoP Conflict Mitigation & Mediation trainings in Erbil, sectarian and ethnic tensions gave rise to behaviors of bullying and blame between youth participants from Tal Afar, Tal Kaif, and Sinjar in their respective trainings. However, by the third or fourth day of each training, youth participants from different identity groups verbally expressed acceptance of each other, voluntarily collaborated on activities and the development of sub-grant initiatives, and built friendships.

Contribution: The 7-day YCoP Conflict Mitigation & Mediation trainings in Erbil encouraged collaboration and relationship-building between diverse participants through active facilitation and guidance from the

trainer; the inclusion of relevant content components, such as modules on effective communication and identity; and the implementation of ice breaking and trust-building activities.

OUTCOME 5:

Outcome: In February 2020, at the outset of the YCoP Conflict Mitigation & Mediation trainings in Erbil, gender dynamics inhibited the participation of female trainees from Sinjar and Tal Afar. However, on the 4th day of the Tal Afar training, women chose to lead group activities and were often selected for this role by other participants. By the 3rd day of the Sinjar training, women were not only engaging in activities but also translating to overcome language barriers for other participants.

Contribution: The 7-day YCoP Conflict Mitigation & Mediation trainings encouraged the participation of female attendees through active facilitation and support from the trainer and the inclusion of relevant content components. The module on identity, in particular, elucidated commonalities between participants and increased comfort levels.

OUTCOME 6:

Outcome: In February 2020, on Day 3 of a Conflict Mitigation & Mediation training in Erbil for youth participants from Tal Kaif, a conflict arising from miscommunication on a religious topic was observed between two Muslim attendees. At the end of the day, Omer Mustafa voluntarily phoned Khalid Al-Roba'ee, visited Khalid in his room, and resolved this conflict. The following day, the two conflict parties apologized to the group and stressed the importance of effective communication. They have maintained a friendship since.

Contribution: The YCoP trainer initially intervened to prevent the conflict from escalating. Additionally, the content covered on Days 2 and 3 of the Conflict Mitigation & Mediation training supported learning on effective communication, a topic which was later referenced by the conflict parties.

OUTCOME 7:

Outcome: In March 2020, Omer Mohammed Salih, owner of the Omer Alobeidi Facebook page, developed a plan to bring together a group of local social media activists in Mosul for an online training on rumor management and combating fake news. This training is slated to take place by August 2020.

Contribution: Omer attended YCoP's 4-day Advanced Rumor Management and Media for Peacebuilding training in Erbil in early March 2020, which inspired this idea and supported learning on strategies for combating fake news and managing rumor. Following the YCoP training, the consultant trainer remained responsive to requests from Omer for additional advice and support.

OUTCOME 8:

Outcome: In March 2020, media professionals Barakat Morad and Tahseen Hajy, along with civil activist Muna Naif Maro, developed a plan to organize a small workshop for new activists and journalists in Sinjar, exploring the role of media in post-conflict settings. This workshop is slated to take place when current Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

Contribution: All three Yazidis from Sinjar attended the YCoP's 4-day Advanced Rumor Management & Media for Peacebuilding training in March 2020, which included a module on understanding the role of media in post-conflict settings and inspired them to organize the workshop. Following the YCoP training, the consultant trainer remained responsive to requests for additional advice and support, and agreed to facilitate this workshop.

OUTCOME 9:

Outcome: In April 2020, 9 Muslim youth voluntarily collaborated across ethnic, sect, and gender identity groups to design a service project for a local Christian community in Tal Kaif. The resultant initiative, called "Peace Corner," was implemented in June 2020, and entailed the complete renovation of the main hall of Heart of Jesus Christ Church.

Contribution: Each of these youth attended a 7-day YCoP Conflict Mitigation & Mediation training in February 2020, which facilitated collaboration and relationship-building between diverse participants from Tal Kaif through practical content components and the implementation of ice breaking and trust-building activities. The YCoP program also encouraged the development of youth-led projects that focused on social cohesion and sponsored the implementation of those initiatives.

OUTCOME 10:

Outcome: In January 2020, Mohammed Lazim, a social researcher in Mosul, changed his work practice by adjusting current content and incorporating new material on CVE into his regular trainings on women's rights and minority rights. Between January and June 2020, Mohammed conducted 9-10 of these trainings, benefitting around 200 participants.

Contribution: Mohammed attended the 7-day YCoP Conflict Mitigation & Mediation training in Erbil in January 2020, which supported learning on identity, CVE, and rumor management.

OUTCOME 11:

Outcome: Between April and June 2020, Frans Jameel, a resident of Hamdaniya, created a 10-episode cartoon series dealing with topics that include, among others: conflict and tension, dialogue, activism, and volunteering. This UNDP funded project will be published on UNDP's website.

Contribution: Frans attended the 7-day YCoP Conflict Mitigation & Mediation training in Erbil in January 2020, which provided information and thematic material Frans utilized in the creation of his cartoon series.

OUTCOME 12:

Outcome: In May 2020, Lana Samir Boutrs, a youth beneficiary of the YCoP project, mediated a conflict at her workplace in Al Qosh between two colleagues with different religious identities.

Contribution: Lana attended a 7-day YCoP Conflict Mitigation & Mediation training for youth beneficiaries from Tal Kaif in February 2020. This training supported learning on the various types of conflict and facilitated the development of conflict resolution, mediation, active listening, and effective communication skills through relevant thematic material and practical skills-building activities.

OUTCOME 13:

Outcome: In Mosul, community members from Al Qahra, Sumar, and Al Karama informed the authorities on three drug dealers who were apprehended by police on March 15th and April 22nd, 2020.

Contribution: The YCoP project sponsored and supported the development of a youth sub-grant initiative in Mosul called "We Care About You," which included a workshop designed to raise awareness about the negative impacts of narcotics. This workshop was delivered to 30 community members from Al Qahra, Sumar, Al Karama, and Intisar on March 8th, 2020, and it included information on the procedures for reporting drug dealers.

OUTCOME 14:

Outcome: In late May 2020, community members in Sinjar took photos of dead and eaten saplings along a median in Sinjar city center and posted them on Facebook, criticizing a YCoP tree-planting initiative as being unsuccessful. These photos were then circulated across social media.

Contribution: The YCoP project sponsored and supported the development and implementation of youth sub-grant initiatives in Sinjar. Due to restrictions arising from Covid-19, several original initiatives planned by participants from Sinjar were substituted with a tree-planting activity. Shortly after being planted, a portion of the saplings withered or were eaten due to insufficient watering and a lack of protective fencing in an area with cattle.

OUTCOME 15:

Outcome: In February 2020, 9 young women from Tal Afar attended a 7-day Conflict Mitigation & Mediation training in Erbil, comprising 45% of all youth beneficiaries in that training. This is notable, as the YCoP Needs Assessment identified Tal Afar as a conservative area where females are typically house-bound.

Contribution: In January 2020, YCoP program staff from TAD, supported by Search and GIZ, actively recruited participants from Tal Afar utilizing personal networks, local mentors, and direct communication to support and increase female representation. These efforts took place over the course of one week, between January 8th and January 15th, after only 1 female applicant from Tal Afar confirmed her ability to attend the YCoP training.