



**Search for  
Common Ground**  
Trust, Collaboration, Breakthroughs



# **BASELINE REPORT**

**“Supporting Post-Election  
Dialogue and Reconciliation in  
Zanzibar” Project**

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

This study was done by Agency for Peacebuilding who contracted by Search for Common Ground as consultants.

The research team was composed by Bernardo Venturi and Hashim Pondeza.

Bernardo Venturi, PhD, is Co-Founder and Director of AP. He has over 16 years of experience in research, training, project management and advocacy specifically focusing on peacebuilding, conflict transformation and development. Bernardo is also an Associate Research Fellow for the Italian think-tank International Affairs Institute (IAI). He consults for international organizations and NGOs and he lectures in several universities and training programmes.

Hashim Pondeza has over 10 years of experience working in social, economic and political aspects of Tanzania, with a long professional record in Zanzibar specifically. He is a founder of the Center for Youth Dialogue (CYD), a youth championing non-profit organization. Previously, Hashim worked as the Zanzibar Coordinator with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and consulted for an UNODC's CVE project in East Africa. Hashim holds a Master's degree in Public Administration from the Bowling Green State University (BGSU) in Ohio, USA. [www.peaceagency.org](http://www.peaceagency.org)

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# ABBREVIATIONS

AP	Agency for Peacebuilding
ACT	Alliance for Change and Transparency
AP	Agency for Peacebuilding
CCM	Chama Cha Mapinduzi
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
CUF	Civic United Front
CYD	Center for Youth Dialogue
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GNU	Government of National Unity
JUMAZA	Association of Muslim Leaders
JUWAUZA	Jumuiya ya Wanawake wenye Ulemavu Zanzibar
KII	Key Informative Interview
MOZ	Mufti Office in Zanzibar
Search	Search for Common Ground
UAMSHO	The Association for Islamic Mobilisation and Propagation
VE	Violent Extremism
VP	Vice President
ZAC	Zanzibar Aid Commission
ZAFAYCO	Zanzibar Fighting Against Youth Challenges Organization
ZEC	Zanzibar Electoral Commission
ZLSC	Zanzibar Legal Services Centre

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite Zanzibar having experienced severe political tensions, in particular related to elections, recent political developments in both the Tanzania Federal Government and the Administration in Zanzibar have opened the room for greater collaboration among political parties and for increased involvement of civil society.

In this rapidly changing context, the project “*Uchaguzi Bila Zogo* – Supporting Post-Election Dialogue and Reconciliation in Zanzibar” aims at strengthening inclusive post-election dialogue and reconciliation efforts in Zanzibar. Specifically, the project, which is led by Search for Common Ground (Search) and will last two years (from October 2021 to April 2023), wants to improve the integration of high-level political actors into community-level post-election dialogue and reconciliation efforts.

The baseline assessment was conducted by the Agency for Peacebuilding (AP) between December 2021 and February 2022. It had the following objectives: (i) to assess the validity of the theory of change, the general objective and the expected results of the project; (ii) to collect the baseline values of the project indicators; (iii) to conduct a risk analysis related to *Do No Harm* and conflict sensitivity; and (iv) to provide recommendations for the project execution strategy. This assessment used a mixed approach that combined qualitative and quantitative data collection methods and integrated recent findings from a conflict snapshot and baseline study conducted as part of another project being implemented by Search in Tanzania, entitled “Strengthening Community Peace Mechanisms in Zanzibar project”. This study was delivered by the same team of consultants in June 2021.

Overall, the data collected shows several opportunities for collaboration and positive interaction between the national government and Zanzibari communities.

The first finding is that there is a general need for more dialogue between policy-makers and their communities. A second opportunity for more collaboration is represented by the possibility of politicians to send positive messages, as represented by President Mwinyi’s invitation to have more dialogue at the grassroots level. Vertical dialogue can be also supported by the use of technology, as it happens, for example, with the online application *Sema na Rais*. The improvement of the justice system is also another factor that has the potential to strengthen social cohesion and peaceful coexistence in Zanzibar.

Another significant opportunity is represented by improving civic awareness among policy-makers, *shehias* (the government administrative structure at the community level) and communities. Lastly, a crucial opportunity is also given by the role that youth and women can play in dialogue with policy-makers.

Furthermore, the baseline study highlights challenges and risks that should be carefully considered, especially related to conflict sensitivity and *Do No Harm*.

Firstly, it should be considered that some key figures play a significant role in blocking conversations between higher and lower levels. Secondly, the collaboration between the two parties can create the image of a marriage of convenience.

Thirdly, vertical dialogue presents some risks, especially on controversial topics. The project activities should be also informed by the fact that the social and economic gaps in Zanzibar remain very high and these could hinder the participation of some people or organizations, such as people with limited economic possibilities. Furthermore, history remains a divisive factor more than an element of unity. Moreover, the Tanzanian government does not publicly report or entertain discussions surrounding violent extremism.

Finally, from a gender perspective, it seems that some women or women's groups could be excluded if they do not have a safe space (e.g. activities for women only) to participate.

Against this backdrop, the baseline study provides the following recommendations:

- Dialogue should be run in a structured setting. Higher and Lower political and social actors are working under fragile settings, therefore, at least in the project's early stages, dialogue should run in structured environments.
- Vertical dialogue should include all political parties. The GNU is composed of the two main political parties, but the project should try to engage with all parties, also small ones.
- Start dialogue in less tense constituencies. This inclusive approach can provide an opportunity to rectify possible obstacles in dialogue before entering more sensitive places.
- Involve female members of the House of Representatives in planning some activities. Special seats for women at the Parliament represent an important public space for political participation.
- Support the use of the application *Sema na Rais* (SNR). The application is a channel of vertical exchange already in place and can be used also for concrete evidence and advice for the peaceful resolution of tensions and conflicts.
- Be aware of the risks in involving intermediaries in dialogue. Some key figures play a significant role in blocking conversation between high and lower levels (i.e. *shehias*).
- Refrain from engaging international experts to facilitate, or participate in, dialogue at the grassroots level. Involving local experts and stakeholders will help to reduce wrong perceptions regarding project objectives and will contribute to legitimate the project's activities.

- Make use of local influential figures to support horizontal and vertical dialogue.
- Avoid making reconciliation the central focus of the project. Dialogue should not necessarily be structured as reconciliation, but, instead, focus on concrete issues affecting the daily life of Zanzibaris, especially those who are usually not included in political processes and who have limited opportunities due to social and economic constraints.
- Continue to give a central role to youth and women. This attention is fully necessary to implement this project. Women need support both to safely engage in public spaces and to be trained on social and large-scale conflict transformation. Youth need to be fully part of the current political changes and to engage with local and national political authorities.

## CONTEXT BACKGROUND

Tanzania is historically regarded as politically stable. In the last five years, however, the country has experienced an increase in violent extremist activities. This increased level has been linked to various political, social and economic grievances.<sup>1</sup> Yet, recent development related to both the Federal Government and the Administration in Zanzibar opens the room to increasing collaboration among political parties and a larger involvement of civil society components.

This is particularly true in the semi-autonomous archipelago of Zanzibar, which holds ambitions for increased autonomy and frequently chafes at the control exerted by the mainland government. Significantly, in December 2020, the political party ACT Wazalendo joined the Government of National Unity (GNU) in Zanzibar<sup>2</sup>, a move that could serve to heal the wounds in the wake of a disputed election in which dozens of people were killed.<sup>3</sup> The current continuation of CCT and ACT Wazalendo political party in the GNU to a large extent reflects both political maturity around making the interests of Zanzibaris on peace and development a top priority. The President of Zanzibar, Vice Presidents, Ministers and various other levels of administrative leaders are currently working towards improving public service delivery to Zanzibar society. The common challenge is to move beyond the tensions and violence of the last years.

It should also be mentioned that Zanzibar already experienced a GNU from 2010 to 2015. In fact, since 2010 the Constitution of Zanzibar foresees the obligation to form a GNU if the second party, in terms of votes, obtains more than 10% of the votes. This constitutional reform was the result of the Maridhiano Agreement, the reconciliation arrangement entered into before the election in 2010. Therefore, the GNU in Zanzibar represents a power-sharing agreement aimed at managing Zanzibar's electoral and political crises.<sup>4</sup> Some scholars argue that the initial success of the GNU in Zanzibar was due to the fact that the GNU was grounded in the Tanzanian concept of *ujamaa*, a socialist-led nation-building process.<sup>5</sup> Yet, more prosaically, other analyses argue that the power sharing was characterized not by consensus, but

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<sup>1</sup> Sarota, Anthony. Totoro, Alessandro, *Katika Usalama Tunategemeana and Pamoja!*, Search Projects evaluation, February 2019.

<sup>2</sup> ACT-Wazalendo achieved more than 10% of the vote and thus was included into the Government of National Unity according to the Zanzibar constitution.

<sup>3</sup> Anadolu Agency. "Zanzibar's opposition party joins unity government", December 2020, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/zanzibars-opposition-party-joins-unity-govt/2067552>

<sup>4</sup> Nicodemus Minde, Sterling Roop, Kjetil Tronvoll, "The rise and fall of the government of national unity in Zanzibar: a critical analysis of the 2015 elections", *Journal of African Elections*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Nassor, A.S. & J. Jose, 2014. "Power-sharing in Zanzibar: from zero-sum politics to democratic consensus?", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 40



rather a hybrid of the politics of continuity and collusion.<sup>6</sup> The result was an external image of unity, but a sustained mistrust and real power sharing.

Overall, Zanzibar has experienced severe political tensions, in particular related to elections. As a matter of fact, Zanzibar elections have been fraught with violence and accusations of rigging and manipulation since the return to multiparty politics in 1995.<sup>7</sup> In the last decade, the revocation of the 2015 election results have led to increased distrust of elections bodies and the ruling government.<sup>8</sup> On the islands, the election was annulled after the opposition party Civic United Front (CUF)<sup>9</sup> claimed victory for their presidential candidate before the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) announced the results. After the cancellation of the election, ZEC called a re-run in March 2016, which however was boycotted by CUF. This fiasco led to the end of the *de facto* reconciliation and unity government, which was viewed as a road map for peace and unity among Zanzibaris after years of political enmity.<sup>10</sup> According to some scholars, the start of the constitutional review process in Tanzania contributed to the withering of the GNU. Despite its undeniably noble agenda, the constitutional review process resuscitated in fact old enmities between CCM and the CUF.<sup>11</sup>

Regardless of numerous calls for increased transparency in the electoral process and meaningful reforms, the ruling party has made little effort to address these issues in time for the October 2020 elections. This has resulted in increased tensions between the ruling party and the opposition.

Zanzibar's October 2020 election recalled the violence that followed the 2015 election, as well as the continued lack of reforms or transparency. It was specifically challenging as for the first time it was held on two consecutive days. Many people were reluctant with that decision, but ZEC insisted that it followed the law as stated in Act number 4 of 2018. That decision led to supporters of the main opposition party's clashing with Zanzibar and Tanzania security forces.<sup>12</sup>

Despite this turbulent background, the current GNU is preparing to move beyond these tensions and open a new page for Zanzibar. On November 5, 2021, the President of Tanzania, Hon. Samia Suluhu Hassan, officiated the event to celebrate the life of the late Maalim Seif Shariff Hamad. The event was also

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<sup>6</sup> Nicodemus Minde, Sterling Roop, Kjetil Tronvoll, 2018, cit.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Yussuf, Mohammad and Hussein Sengu. "Conflict Analysis Paper" April, 2020.

<sup>9</sup> Since 2019, ACT-Wazalendo gained strength after the Civic United Front (CUF), formerly a powerful group in Zanzibar since the re-introduction of multiparty politics in 1992. CUF experienced an internal conflict that resulted in its split. CUF has remained a small party, while the splinter group joined ACT-Wazalendo.

<sup>10</sup> Sarota, Anthony, Alessandro Totoro, 2019, cit.

<sup>11</sup> Nicodemus Minde, Sterling Roop, Kjetil Tronvoll, 2018, cit.

<sup>12</sup> Crisis 24, *Tanzania: Clashes reported as early voting begins in Zanzibar*, 27 October 2020, <https://www.garda.com/crisis24/news-alerts/393576/tanzania-clashes-reported-as-early-voting-begins-in-zanzibar-october-27>

attended by the President of Zanzibar, Hon. Hussein Mwinyi, the First Vice President of Zanzibar (from the main opposition party) and other political leaders. Both Presidents Samia and Hussein praised the great political skills and capacities of Maalim Seif<sup>13</sup>, who helped Zanzibar to be in peace after the recent 2020 general elections as well as during previous election periods. The event had elements that contributed to improving the image of the GNU.

Furthermore, the recently formed political parties task force, which was built to deal with a number of politically conflicting issues in Tanzania, is an example of collaboration that Zanzibar needs to take into account as a helpful mechanism to deal with issues emerged during the electoral periods.”<sup>14</sup> A similar task force meeting was held in Zanzibar on January 10 and 11, 2022, something that lent importance to the Union as well as to the meaningful political roles on both sides of the country.

Generally, there is a need for continued collaboration under the spirit of GNU, especially at the national level. Political analysts are widely communicating that more work needs to be done at the grassroots level in order to mainstream GNU practices, as currently there is a degree of resentment and anger due to political grievances caused by many factors that include political activities, local security actions, as well as a perceived economic imbalance among citizens.

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<sup>13</sup> Seif Sharif Hamad was a Tanzanian politician who served as the First Vice President of Zanzibar and as Party Chairman of ACT Wazalendo. He was the secretary-general of CUF and First Vice President of Zanzibar until March 2019 when he announced his resignation from CUF and joined ACT. He died on the 17 of February 2021 due to COVID-19.

<sup>14</sup> Kabwe, Zitto, “Dodoma Resolutions on Democracy Are First Steps for Tanzania to Return to Its Democratic Path”, *The Chanzo Initiative*, 20 December 2021, <https://thechanzo.com/2021/12/20/dodoma-resolutions-on-democracy-are-first-steps-for-tanzania-to-return-to-its-democratic-path/>

# PROJECT BACKGROUND

The overall goal of this project “Uchaguzi Bila Zogo – Supporting Post-Election Dialogue and Reconciliation in Zanzibar” (October 2021 - April 2023) is to strengthen inclusive post-election dialogue and reconciliation efforts in Zanzibar. This goal is supported by the project’s objective to improve the integration of high-level political actors into community-level post-election dialogue and reconciliation efforts as well as three expected results.

This project has one objective and three expected results, as outlined in the table below.

Objective 1: Improve integration of high-level political actors into community-level post-election dialogue and reconciliation efforts		
Expected Results		
1.1. High-level political actors and local civil society are better equipped to constructively engage among and with each other on post-election-related issues	1.2. Horizontal coordination among local civil society and religious actors to identify election conflict drivers and inclusive approaches to address them is improved	1.3 Opportunities for vertical dialogue and collaborative action to address election grievances are increased

The project is also informed by the following theory of change:

*IF* political and civil society actors have increased capacity and tools to constructively engage among and between them, and *IF* opportunities are created for collaboration and positive interaction between the national government and Zanzibari communities on election grievances and conflicts, *THEN* there will be more effective reconciliation and reforms to address election grievances *because* there will be more inclusive avenues for dialogue and increased trust at all levels.

# METHODOLOGY

## Objectives and Research Questions

The baseline assessment was guided by four objectives and a series of specific research questions, all of which are reported below.

### **Objective 1 - To assess the validity of the theory of change, the general objective and the expected results of the project**

- Is the theory of change relevant to the current context in Zanzibar (i.e. post-election dialogue and reconciliation efforts)?
- Can opportunities for collaboration and positive interaction between national government and Zanzibari communities on election grievances and conflicts bring more effective reconciliation and reforms to address election grievances?

### **Objective 2 - To collect the baseline values of the project results indicators**

- What are the baseline values of the project indicators?
- How can high-level political actors and local civil society be better equipped to constructively engage among and with each other on post election-related issues?
- What factors hinder constructive dialogue between high-level political actors and local civil society and how can they be positively transformed?
- What opportunities for vertical dialogue and collaboration exist and how can they be strengthened?
- Has the relationship between political parties in Zanzibar improved in the last six months?
- Were conflict transformation or similar non-violent strategies utilized to address post-election related issues?
- Do high-level political actors see any value in collaboration to address issues emerging during the electoral period?
- Do high-level political actors demonstrate increased engagement in dialogue and collaboration with high-level stakeholders from other groups in an effort to address election grievances?

### **Objective 3 - To conduct a risk analysis related to Do No Harm and conflict sensitivity**

- What are potential risks related to do no harm and conflict sensitivity?
- Which activities or approaches can generate tensions between political parties or other groups?
- What social and political risks can affect the project activities and its proper implementation?

### **Objective 4 - To provide recommendations for the project execution strategy regarding intended and project results**

- Are there recommendations for adaptations of the current project logic and results chain to improve the potential impact of the project?
- How can the complementarity of this project and “Dumisha Amani Zanzibar - Strengthening Community Peace Mechanisms in Zanzibar” project be leveraged?

## Data Collection and analysis

AP carried out data collection with the support of Search's Tanzania team. The study used a mixed approach that combined qualitative and quantitative data collection methods and integrated recent findings from the conflict snapshot and baseline study conducted as part of Search's project “Strengthening Community Peace Mechanisms in Zanzibar project”—a study that was delivered by AP in June 2021. In particular, the previous exercise provided quantitative analysis and some qualitative data. Due to the explicit focus of this project on vertical collaboration and dialogue, new key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with decision-makers to complement previous findings.

In terms of qualitative data, the team conducted 15 interviews between December 2021 and January 2022 (13 men and 2 women), both in Pemba and Unguja, with policy-makers and other local leaders in Zanzibar and the mainland. Quantitative data were also provided from the previous study, where two surveys were conducted: the first among local communities (419 respondents) and the second with local stakeholders and government representatives (51 respondents). The respondents to the latter came from different groups relevant for public policies. Below are the respondents disaggregated by age, sex and geographic coverage. This survey allowed some quantitative analysis as necessary to complete the measurement of relevant indicators.

Table 1: Stakeholder Survey Sample						
Gender	Age			Location		
	18-29	30-49	Above 50	Pemba	Unguja	Total
Female	41,38%	25,00%	20,00%	27,78%	36,36%	33,33%
Male	58,62%	75,00%	80,00%	72,22%	63,64%	66,67%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

Finally, the project's theory of change was validated through a specific workshop with key staff from Search, which took place in January 2022.

## Challenges and limitations

Due to the excellent support of Search's team in Zanzibar and in the whole Swahili Coast region, the recent data collection has not encountered significant challenges or limitations.

# FINDINGS

The key findings of the study are organized into three sections. The first one collects data concerning the opportunities for collaboration and positive interaction between the national government and Zanzibari communities. The second section presents the baseline values of the project's indicators, using those requested by the study. Finally, the last part focuses on potential risks related to conflict sensitivity.

## Opportunities for Collaboration and Positive Interaction

The data collected shows several opportunities for collaboration and positive interaction between the national government and Zanzibari communities.

The first finding under this heading shows a general need for more dialogue between policymakers and their communities.

For instance, several interviewees presented how politicians are not in direct dialogue with their communities. As stated by a member of ACT Wazalendo, the lack of dialogue is also based on the assumption that “common people” have not much to say in politics:

“People have been highly impacted by non-democratic cultures, those who are down believe that only top figures are intelligent, those on top think lower citizens cannot think or make any meaningful decision.”

This approach brings government leaders to stay in their office without reaching out to the grassroots level:

“We (leaders) don't often go down to the grassroots, we only do it as a public relation gestures, meanwhile, community dialogue needs continuous process, and needs to be institutionalized. There is simply no two-way communication traffic”.

Yet, the attitude of the President of Zanzibar engaged in meeting with local communities has been mentioned by different interviewees as a change-maker. For instance, a source shared that,

“We now see personal commitments such as every Friday President of Zanzibar and his two Vice Presidents meet with lower-level social and political actors in mosques and

discuss with them issues related to peace, living harmoniously and supporting each other as well as the GNU.”

Indeed, President Mwinyi saw this challenge and demanded his cabinet members to leave their offices and meet with communities. However, the practice is still limited, still not enough opportunities for dialogue between high-level political leaders and lower-level political and social actors. The overall result, as stated by a politician from an opposition party, is that the government leadership can gain more legitimacy through direct dialogue with social groups and individuals. The aspiration of gaining more legitimacy can represent an incentive for the GNU to engage more in vertical dialogue.

A second opportunity for more collaboration is represented by politicians sending positive messages, for example President Mwinyi’s invitation to have more dialogue at the grassroots level.

As highlighted during the interviews, the nature of political leaders’ speeches is highly impacting social dynamics. An example is when President Samia Suluhu Hassan mentioned that there is no need to politically use the slogan “*Mapinduzi Daima*” (*Forever Revolution*) as that is not helping the current positive collaboration in Zanzibar. Political activities can therefore play a key role in bringing people closer. As said by a representative of a youth organization,

“If leaders have goodwill, they will be sending positive messages to their respective audiences and that is very helpful like the current trend by the President and his Vice Presidents.”

Vertical dialogue can be also supported by the use of technology, as it happens, for example, with the application *Sema na Rais*.<sup>15</sup>

On February 28, 2021, President Mwinyi launched an application intended to give community members a direct channel of communication with the President. *Sema na Rais* (SNR) represents the first mobile application in Tanzania that allows citizens to submit their complaints concerning government institutions. On February 9, 2022, almost a year later, it received 7,348 complaints. Official data show that 5,566 complaints are addressed and closed. This tool, available both in English and in Kiswahili, represents a direct channel that can improve vertical communication and understanding, especially if paired with in-person meetings and activities. SNR was also mentioned during the interviews as a CSO member as a positive step for “at least acknowledging problems”, while a female NGO representative mentioned that

<sup>15</sup> Data about complains presented in this section are elaborated from SNR official website: <https://snrmwinyi.co.tz/app/home>.



“since responses are slowly taken care of, community members believes that those who helps President to manage the app, probably manoeuvres its contents as responses are not as rapid as expected by the Zanzibar community”. This quote highlights how this tool has positive potential if used properly and transparently. Otherwise, it can create counterproductive mechanisms.

The improvement of the justice system is also another factor that has the potential to strengthen social cohesion and peaceful coexistence in Zanzibar.

The connection between reconciliation and justice emerged several times, especially among CSO representatives and ACT-Wazalendo members. For example, a local politician mentioned that court bonds should be well analysed with regard to both laws of the country and social reality at the grassroots level. Cases should be processed in a timelier manner, and proceedings should be fair, especially to the victims and their families. This is particularly true for the 2020 post-electoral violence. The demands of justice from those who have suffered violence are still unfilled.

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*“The key factor for strengthened social cohesion and peaceful coexistence in Zanzibar is the assurance of justice.”*

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*Key informant (member of a political party)*

Another significant opportunity is represented by improving civic awareness among policy-makers, shehias and communities.

During the interviews, different voices have highlighted the need of improving civil awareness, both among politicians and communities. For instance, a member of ACT Wazalendo stated,

“Both leaders and followers have less or no proper civic awareness, that is why there is no accountability by leaders and no lower-level pressures to make leaders answerable in their leadership styles.”

Similarly, a local analyst explained,

“The solution is to provide proper awareness interventions on patriotism, the need to put Zanzibar first. Because of the lack of proper knowledge, people see each other as enemies instead of complementing social actors. Civic education will open the minds of those in power hence dialogue may start at all levels”.

A crucial opportunity is played by the role that youth and women can play in dialogue with policy-makers.

All the interviewees shared that youth have a central role to play. Some of them also highlighted that some youths are already involved in relevant positions within the political institutions such as the Zanzibar Youth Councils (ZYC) from national to *shehia* level. ZYC are youth platforms that may be useful for running constructive peace dialogues. As stated by a female civil servant,

“Youth are the centre of either peace or violence in any country; the existence of the ZYC provided a unique opportunity for vertical dialogue and collaboration between high-level political actors and lower-level political and social actors.”

However, she also recommended that all ZYC platforms should be run with high-level of neutrality to provide the impression that ZYC are for all kinds of youth regardless of their political affiliations, race and places of origin.

When it comes to the role of women, qualitative data collected during this study and the previous conflict snapshot showed the main tendency to present the role of women in the domestic space and with “maternity” capacity to deal with conflicts. Women's role for peace is recognized by all, but often relegated to “bringing up the children into good behaviours and morals”, or, as shared by a respondent, “women play a big role, for instance, in informing husbands on consequences for wrongly engaging in protesting the early voting exercise.” Overall, women's space has improved in the last year, but traditional constraints remain for a public engagement in the public space. As a respondent said during a focus group: “women have the power to keep and maintain peace in our country, but they are not given a chance.”

Against this backdrop, the special seats for women at the Parliament represent an important public space for political participation. The career of the current Tanzanian President also benefited from this opportunity. Women represent almost one-third of the Zanzibar House of Representatives and can support women organizations and individuals in vertical dialogue.

The final point represents opportunities related to cultural, religious and social aspects of Zanzibar that are not connected to recent dynamics.

In fact, the data collected show that religion and culture play a key role in strengthening social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.

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*“Segregation undermines core values of our religion, culture and the GNU principles.”*

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*Key informant (member of a political party)*

Many interviewees underlined the role played by religion as a social bond and religious authorities are considered by many as potential mediators. For example, a religious leader highlighted the social dimension of religion:

“Muslim leaders, meet with community members five times every day, when one person is missing for a couple of days, community will look for him/her, that’s one among factor for cohesion among community members in Zanzibar.”

At the same time, if well utilized, religious platforms are very strong tools for possible dialogues between high and lower levels. Yet, if they are politicized, they can create divisions, as stated by a civil servant:

“I recently visited Pemba, I witnessed mosques branded as “this is for CCM and that is for ACT members. And that it’s a sad reality especially now that we live under GNU.”

Similarly, Zanzibar was also described as a melting point of races and racial diversity is among the key factors for strengthening social cohesion and peaceful coexistence in Zanzibar. According to some sources, this has historically been a factor that helps Zanzibaris to peacefully live together. Yet, as a flip side, as mentioned by a member of ACT Wazalendo, segregation by political affiliations, places of origin, colour, race, etc. are highly impacting social cohesion in Zanzibar.

Finally, it was highlighted that Zanzibar presents several “collective systems” that create a sense of bond and unity. For instance, a religious leader shared that

“Our economy is highly made based on collective systems. For example fishermen, clove plantations and seaweed farming all bring groups of community members together for exchanging goods and services with other groups.”

Overall, the current social and political scenario in Zanzibar provides several opportunities for collaboration and positive interactions. Many stakeholders shared that this project comes at a good time and can contribute to preventing future conflicts.

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*“It’s like a time bomb, two-years or one year before elections, political actors often take community members back to polarized politics...the current situation is calm, but has timely reactions like a dormant volcano.”*

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*Key informant (civil servant)*

## Baseline Value of Project Indicators

The project has identified five indicators, which are elaborated below. As presented in the methodology, quantitative data have been obtained from the previous baseline study, for the project “Strengthening Community Peace Mechanisms in Zanzibar”. Those data are triangulated with the qualitative data collected during this exercise to produce accurate measurements.

It should be noted that the stakeholders involved in the survey for the previous baseline study are from different categories, but they can be considered as a “proxy” for political leaders. Furthermore, in the framework of Zanzibari political power dynamics, it is relevant to define who “political actors” are. The definition used for this study conceptualizes these actors as those who can directly influence policy-making dynamics. Therefore, not only political representatives, but also key civil servants, *shehias*, religious leaders, senior advisors and key NGOs leaders. This methodology is also in line with the sample of the KIIs conducted for this study.<sup>16</sup>

**Indicator 1: Percentage of political leaders from different political parties who acknowledged an increase in relationship between political parties in effort to avoid post-election violence and conflict in Zanzibar.**

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<sup>16</sup> Both survey and KIIs lists are available for the final evaluation.

These data highlight that 59.38% of the stakeholders engaged during the survey are already in dialogue or collaboration with people from another group. The full respondents in relation to this question can be seen in the following table. This survey includes political leaders according to the broad definition presented above.

**Table 2: Stakeholders engaging in dialogue or collaboration with people from another group<sup>17</sup>**

Answers	Gender		Age			Location		Total
	Female	Male	18-29	30-49	50+	Pemba	Unguja	
Always	27,27%	38,10%	29,17%	33,33%	100,00%	62,50%	25,00%	34,38%
Regularly	18,18%	28,57%	25,00%	33,33%	0,00%	12,50%	29,17%	25,00%
Rarely	27,27%	19,05%	20,83%	33,33%	0,00%	25,00%	20,83%	21,88%
Never	18,18%	14,29%	20,83%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	20,83%	15,63%
Not sure	9,09%	0,00%	4,17%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	4,17%	3,13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

This increase in relationships is clearly more in the public sphere than in the private one and it is notable that women are less engaged than men. It should be noted that the engagement of Pemba's stakeholders is higher than Unguja's.

This measurement is confirmed by qualitative interviews. In fact, the majority of those interviewed see an improvement in the relationship between political parties in Zanzibar, over the last six months. However, the interviews clarified some relevant points for this project. Firstly, dialogue has increased within the GNU, but minor parties still feel that they have been left out of this renewed dialogue. Secondly, vertical dialogue is still lacking, despite the good practices adopted by the President of Zanzibar. Finally, many interviewees confirmed that dialogue is not based on a justice approach, but more on a forward-looking approach without justice. As a consequence, the renewed dialogue could not be enough “to avoid post-election violence and conflict in Zanzibar”. It should be also remembered that a GNU is requested by law, as argued in the background section. As such, it represents an opportunity, but could be also perceived as necessary and to be managed without deep changes within the parties.

<sup>17</sup> In the previous baseline study, there was a question asked to political leaders, which was “Do you engage in dialogue or collaboration with people from another group?” A discrepancy between the question and the indicator should therefore be noted, specifically between the term “dialogue” and “increase in relationship”. This said, the two terms were judged to be sufficiently overlapping that data from this question could be used to measure this indicator.

**Indicator 2. Percentage of targeted high-level political actors, and local civil society stakeholders who report increasing their use of nonviolent conflict transformation strategies towards post-election related issues.**

The survey for political actors shows that 50.98% of the stakeholders engaged during the survey use conflict transformation or similar nonviolent strategies regularly. This survey includes political leaders according to the broad definition presented above. The full respondents in relation to this question can be seen in the following table.

**Table 3: Stakeholders using conflict transformation or similar non-violent strategies**

Answers	Gender		Age			Location		Total
	Female	Male	18-29	30-49	50+	Pemba	Unguja	
Always	35,29%	35,29%	17,24%	41,67%	80,00%	72,22%	15,15%	35,29%
Regularly	11,76%	17,65%	17,24%	8,33%	20,00%	11,11%	18,18%	15,69%
Rarely	23,53%	14,71%	31,03%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	27,27%	17,65%
Never	23,53%	11,76%	17,24%	25,00%	0,00%	5,56%	21,21%	15,69%
Not sure	5,88%	20,59%	17,24%	25,00%	0,00%	11,11%	18,18%	15,69%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

Here the difference between male and female respondents is minimal. Qualitative data indicate that the difference is mainly on where these strategies are applied (social/political sphere vs. domestic), as already presented for other indicators. The numbers in Pemba are higher than in Unguja, confirming the trend on the previous indicator that is clearly connected to this one.

The interviews confirmed a widespread willingness to act without the use of force or violence. Notably, a policy-maker underlined that grassroots dialogue represents a current way of working with nonviolent means. Yet, some sources mentioned that the diffuse calm does not mean that all people have a peaceful attitude: “Now political relationships are getting better, but only at top levels”. Some structural oppression and injustice in the public space are still in place and can bring to a new wave of violence. The arbitrary role played by shehias, for instance, was mentioned more times as “blockers between high-level political actors and lower-level political and social actors.”.

**Indicator 3. Percentage of targeted high-level political actors and local civil societies willing to engage among and with each other on post-election related issues**

These data highlight that 59.38% of the stakeholders engaged during the survey engage in dialogue or collaboration with people from another group (this survey includes political leaders according to the broad definition presented earlier in this section)—the data for this indicator comes from Table 2 above. The data confirm that women are less engaged in public issues, as also captured in other indicators. Qualitative data also show that women are engaged in conflict transformation mainly at the domestic level. Yet, in absolute terms, almost one female citizen out of three engaged in addressing post-electoral tensions, which represents a significant finding for the implementation of this project.

The large majority of the interviewees would like to increase engagement in dialogue and collaboration with high-level stakeholders from other groups to resolve electoral-related tensions. Still, beyond the GNU framework, little opportunities for such engagement emerged. Some CSOs and platforms were mentioned, such as the Zanzibar Interfaith Center (ZANZIC), JUMAZA and the Mufti Office.

It should be also mentioned that several politicians mentioned risks – and also potential frustration – related to increasing dialogue. A first one shared, “we better move slowly, but in a positive way than rushing into dialogue that might create an avenue for negative politics and distort the current good social and economic situation in the country.” This perception should also be taken into account during the project’s activities. Then, a member of a political party expressed his frustration toward the main ruling party and its attitude: “Practically, we need to sit down and discuss, but whenever we speak, nothing matures as later on they turn their back on us and do whatever they want. There is no benefit of collaborating with [their party], they are always keen to see their benefits first.”

#### **Indicator 4. Percentage of targeted religious leaders and local civil society who see value in collaboration to identify election conflict drivers and inclusive approaches to address them.**

These data show that 64.28% of the stakeholders see value in collaboration to address issues emerging during the electoral period. The full respondents in relation to this question can be seen in the following table.

**Table 4: Stakeholders seeing value in collaboration to address issues emerging during elections**

Answers	Gender		Age			Location		Total
	Female	Male	18-29	30-49	50+	Pemba	Unguja	

<b>Definitely yes</b>	40,00%	33,33%	23,81%	33,33%	100,00%	72,48%	14,29%	35,71%
<b>Mostly yes</b>	40,00%	22,22%	33,33%	33,33%	0,00%	37,52%	38,10%	28,57%
<b>Mostly not</b>	0,00%	16,67%	14,29%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	14,29%	10,71%
<b>Not at all</b>	10,00%	22,22%	19,05%	33,33%	0,00%	0,00%	23,81%	17,86%
<b>Not sure</b>	10,00%	5,56%	9,52%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	9,52%	7,14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

Women (80%) are more positive than men (55.55%). In geographic terms, this indicator confirms a great openness of Pemba's stakeholders to collaborate in addressing conflicts.

The interviews confirm this availability to address *future* issues emerging during the electoral period. At the same time, they show that, after the formation of the GNU, the main ruling party does not seem available to open the Pandora's box of what happened during the 2020 elections and related violence. This approach has created frustration among ACT Wazalendo's representatives and should not be undermined to achieve reconciliation and sustainable peace.

**Indicator 5. Percentage of targeted high-level political actors, religious and local civil society who demonstrate increased engagement in dialogue and collaboration with high-level stakeholders from other groups in effort to address election grievances.**

Specific quantitative data were not collected on dialogue between community and high-level stakeholders. As previously presented, the President of Zanzibar started to visit different communities, but it is still not emulated and regular dialogue is still absent. In fact, according to the qualitative data, vertical dialogue is absent, at least in structured forms. Any form of structured dialogue can be therefore considered a significant improvement.

Overall, both the interviews conducted during the previous baseline and the more recent ones show very limited space for the communities to engage with politicians, also for the cultural and social reasons presented at the end of the previous session. As argued by a civil servant,

There is no culture of frequent interactions between high-level political actors and lower level political and social actors due to several factors that include security of the high-level political actors. The country and leadership are also influenced by the country's religious and cultural practices that mostly prioritize a high degree of respect to



leaders. This opens room for growth of separating space between high and lower-level political and social actors.

A possible solution to this constraint is for high-level leaders to practice bottom-up leadership principles by respecting and giving space for low-level social and political actors to initiate dialogue and various socio-political processes. Additionally, high-level leaders should be more accountable to the people they serve, this practice will build a bridge that unites the two separate layers.

At the same time, religious leaders present a more privileged position and had more opportunities to engage in vertical dialogue. Religious leaders have been a more credible institution that often emerges to balance between government leaders and community members, especially during political and natural hazards. They have the capacity to calm people during social and political tensions as well as influence to high social and political leaders towards harmonious situations in Zanzibar. Religion has historically been playing a key role in bringing community members together.

### **Potential risks related to conflict sensitivity and do no harm**

A peacebuilding project focused on Zanzibar has the potential for high impact, but it also presents challenges and risks that should be carefully considered, especially related to conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm.

**Firstly, it should be considered that some key figures play a significant role in blocking conversations between high and lower levels.**

This is the case of shehias, which enjoy wide discretionary power. They are also at the centre of all key sectoral issues (i.e. fishing, tourism, business, environment, etc.) and can be used to manipulate government agendas. “Blockers” between high-level political actors and lower-level political and social actors could be represented also by senior government officers who are not ready to embrace new GNU practices and could try to push back to the previous approach to government.

**Secondly, the collaboration between the two parties can create the image of a marriage of convenience.**

The sense of exclusions of some political forces and movements can support the emergence of radical movements if not properly addressed through inclusive participatory processes.

**Then, vertical dialogue presents some risks, especially on controversial topics.**

For instance, it was presented in the context that the previous GNU was in crisis discussing constitutional reforms related to power relations with Tanzania mainland. A solution is to find better ways to introduce structured dialogues for example dialogue on specific non-controversial topics, at least at the beginning process.

**The project activities should be also informed by the fact that the social and economic gaps in Zanzibar remain very high and this could hinder the participation of some people or organizations such as people with limited economic possibilities.**

**Furthermore, history remains a divisive factor more than an element of unity.**

There are different versions of perceived histories, and some have created scars to some community members who then always have a certain degree of anger and resentments against certain societal groups within Zanzibar Islands.

**Moreover, the Tanzanian government does not publicly report or entertain discussions surrounding violent extremism.**

If Search will address violent extremism directly and publicly, this move can occur in the risk of tensions with institutional authorities and to halt the activities. Search should therefore address issues from a peacebuilding perspective and terminology, avoiding direct public reference to violent extremism and recruitment.

**From a gender perspective, it seems that some women or women groups could be excluded if they do not have a safe space (e.g., for females only) to participate.**

This is due to many social factors including cultural norms that women do not speak in front of their elders, especially male ones. Therefore, if not given safe space, women could be only dragged by the interests or priorities of males. This project should design interventions that often provide ample space for women and girls to express their views, take lessons or implement their activities among themselves.

Overall, not all risks would have the same impact on the project. Hence the following table is included to provide a summary of the risks in relation to their potential impact and together with possible mitigation measures.

Table 5: Project Risks			
Potential Risk	Probability	Risk Rating	Mitigation
Shehias or other key figures blocking conversation between high and lower levels.	Medium	Medium	Avoid that intermediaries decide on involving CSOs or political groups. Double-check information about power dynamics and possible exclusion of groups.
Collaboration between the two main parties can exclude other political actors.	Medium	Low	Include all political parties and movements in project activities, also if small and not represented in political institutions.
Social and economic cleavages in the population	Low	Low	Reach out to more isolated villages and provide allowances to attend project activities.
History creates more divisions	Low	Low	Avoid dealing with the past, at least in the first part of the project if not carefully considering the risks.
Search's activities on VE are halted	Medium	High	Address issues from a peacebuilding perspective. Avoid direct public reference to violent extremism and recruitment.
Women or women groups are partially marginalized	High	Low	Design interventions that provide ample space for women and girls to express their views. Organize activities only for women.

# RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This baseline study shows that project objectives are fully in line with local needs and aspirations. In particular, dialogue between policy-makers and communities is still very weak and the project activities can address this issue. The study helps formulate a series of recommendations for Search that can contribute to not undermining principles of *Do No Harm* and to implement relevant activities that can contribute to dialogue and reconciliation in Zanzibar effectively.

- 1 **Dialogue should be run in a structured setting.** High and Lower political and social actors are working under fragile settings, therefore, at least on early-stage, dialogue should run in structured environments. Joint Initiatives, Zanzibar Peace Roundtables and similar activities should be carefully planned to be inclusive and on pertinent topics (e.g. sensitive topics should be discussed only in consolidated groups and not as a first activity).
- 2 **Vertical dialogue should include all political parties.** The GNU is composed of the two main political parties, but the project should try to engage with all parties, also small ones. This approach to inclusivity can help to counter the emerging of radical movements due to a sense of marginalization.
- 3 **Start dialogue in less tense constituencies.** This inclusive approach can provide opportunity to rectify possible obstacles in dialogue before entering more sensitive places.
- 4 **Involve female members of the House of Representatives in planning some activities.** Special seats for women at the Parliament represent an important public space for political participation. Women represent almost one third of the Zanzibar House of Representatives and can support women organizations and individuals in vertical dialogue.
- 5 **Support the use of the application *Sema na Rais (SNR)*.** The app is a channel of vertical exchange already in place and can be used also for concrete evidence and advice for peaceful resolutions. Synergies can be created with in-person meetings and activities. Search or other well-established CSOs can also strike a deal to have access to non-sensitive data about the app, so that it can monitor its effectiveness and any impact its project might have.
- 6 **Be aware of the risks in involving intermediaries in dialogue.** Some key figures play a significant role in blocking conversation between high and lower levels. This is the case of shehias that enjoy a wide discretionary power. Their involvement is certainly important, but their role should be carefully considered.

- 7 Refrain from engaging international experts** to facilitate or participate in dialogue at grassroots. Involving local experts and stakeholders will help to reduce wrong perceptions regarding project objectives and will contribute to legitimate the project's activities.
- 8 Make use of influential figures.** Horizontal and vertical dialogue can benefit from the involvement of social figures (i.e. the soccer player Feisal Salum, the musicians Sultan King and Lavalava and the comedians Kachara and Mashaka).
- 9 Avoid making reconciliation as a central focus of the project.** Dialogue should not necessarily be structured as reconciliation, but, instead, focus on concrete issues affecting the daily life of Zanzibaris, especially those who are usually not included in political processes and who have limited opportunities due to social and economic constraints.
- 10 Continue to give a central role to youth and women.** This attention is fully necessary to implement this project. Women need support both to safely engage in public space and to be trained on social and large-scale conflict transformation. Youth need to be fully part of the current political changes and to engage with local and national political authorities.

## APPENDIX 1 – INDICATOR TABLE

The following table provides a summary of measurements for each of the project's key indicators.<sup>18</sup>

Indicator	Value		
	Total	Pemba	Unguja
1. Percentage of political leaders from different political parties who acknowledged an increase in relationship between political parties in effort to avoid post-election violence and conflict in Zanzibar.	59.38%	75%	54.7%
2. Percentage of targeted high-level political actors, and local civil society stakeholders who report increasing their use of nonviolent conflict transformation strategies towards post-election related issues.	50.98%	83.33%	33.33%
3. Percentage of targeted high-level political actors and local civil societies willing to engage among and with each other on post election related issues.	41.92%	41.20%	43.35%
4. Percentage of targeted religious leaders and local civil society who see value in collaboration to identify election conflict drivers and inclusive approaches to address them.	64.28%	100%	52.39%
5. Percentage of targeted high-level political actors, religious and local civil society who demonstrate increased engagement in dialogue and collaboration with high-level stakeholders from other groups in effort to address election grievances.	Very limited	Very limited	Very limited

<sup>18</sup> As presented in the findings section, the data reported in the indicator table rely on a broader definition of “political leaders” and “high-level political actors”. The definition used for “political actors” in this study conceptualizes these actors as those who can directly influence policy-making dynamics. Therefore, not only political representatives, but also key civil servants, shehias, religious leaders, senior advisors and key NGOs leaders.



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