

Final Outcome Harvesting Report

Project Title: Empowering Women Civil Society Leaders as Peacebuilders (UN PBF)

Implementing Agency: Search for Common Ground (Search)

Reporting Period: February 2025 – April 2026

Geographic Focus: Kassala

Date of Report: 10 May 2026

1. Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of an Outcome Harvesting exercise conducted for the UN PBF-funded project “Empowering Women Civil Society Leaders as Peacebuilders” in eastern Sudan. Due to ongoing conflict, access restrictions, and a No-Cost Extension (NCE), traditional evaluation methods were not feasible. This exercise in its place captured and assessed project results through a participatory, complexity-aware approach covering the period (February 2025 – February 2026).

A total of 18 notable changes categorised into 5 thematic outcome statements were harvested from staff, local partners, and direct beneficiaries via google form, a workshop session, and key informant interviews. The analysis reveals that 100% of changes were positive, demonstrating the project’s effectiveness in a fragile context. Notably, 61% were intended while 39% were unintended changes , indicating a high degree of emergent, positive change beyond original project plans. Changes were documented across multiple domains: knowledge (14 mentions), behavior (9), policy/systems (7), and relationships (6).

Key achievements include efforts to formalize women’s networks in the state through official registration, despite ongoing concerns from the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) regarding the registration process and renewal procedures. Additional progress has been observed in the extension of operating hours for training centers supported and the emergence of locally driven peace initiatives. All harvested outcomes were validated as “important” by participants, with strong evidence including testimonies, and observed behavioral shifts. The report concludes with recommendations for scaling the Common Ground methodology, institutionalizing support for coffee sessions and community dialogues, and providing follow-up funding for newly formed women’s networks.

2. Background & Context

Search for Common Ground implemented a PBF-funded project to strengthen women's leadership for inclusive, locally-led peacebuilding in Sudan. The effects of the evolving conflict, including internet blackouts, access restrictions, and partner capacity changes, necessitated a 12-month No-Cost Extension (February 2025 – February 2026) through which the endline evaluation shifted to an Outcome Harvesting methodology. This report focuses on activities and outcomes in **Kassala and Al Qadarif states**, to where the project re-programmed following access restrictions in the initial target areas of South Kordofan, West Kordofan, Blue Nile and Khartoum. Key activities reflected upon include Peace Academies, psychosocial support, women's centers, coalition-building forums, community dialogues, participatory theatre, and livelihood initiatives.

3. Methodology

The Search team employed a participatory Outcome Harvesting approach. Due to time, security and access constraints, the methodology built on the following:

- **Document Review:** Project reports, monitoring data, and activity records from the NCE period.
- **Facilitated sessions:** with Search staff, local partners (Gadron), and selected women leaders.
- **Google Form:** 18 outcome statements were collected from staff, partners, and direct beneficiaries.
- **Outcome Validation:** Draft findings were triangulated and validated through a virtual meeting with participants.
- **Analysis & Reporting:** Synthesis of outcomes, contribution analysis, and lessons learned, following the TOR's required structure.

Sampling strategy

Participants were purposely selected based on their active engagement in key project activities to ensure the relevance and depth of insights. The sample included:

- Project participants: 17 women and 3 men engaged in peacebuilding and economic initiatives
- Partners: 2 staff from the implementing partner organization (Gadron)
- Search: 3 Staff

The sample included individuals representing diverse gender, age groups, and community roles, with deliberate inclusion of stakeholders involved in both peacebuilding and livelihood

components. Representative sampling reflected across different targets while maintaining a manageable sample size for in-depth qualitative analysis. The total number of participants is 25.



Male 24% & female 76%

The high proportion of female participants (84%) reflects both the project's intentional focus on empowering women and the demographic composition of key project activities.

Ethical & Safety Protocols: The exercise adhered strictly to Do No Harm principles, informed consent, confidentiality, gender-sensitive facilitation, and Search's Safeguarding policies. All participant names in this report are used with explicit consent.

4. Harvested Outcomes with Evidence

The main outcomes and project contributions identified by participants engaged in outcome Harvesting include the following:

Outcome #1: Strengthened institutional capacity and organizational systems of the Rural Women's Voice Network, Peace Makers Network, and Centre of Women Development Network.

What changed?

Women in the Women's Voice Network, Peace Makers Network, and Central Women Development Network strengthened their institutional capacity through improved proposal writing, financial management, accounting practices, and organizational systems. Women leaders, CSOs, and network members gained practical skills in proposal development, QuickBooks, financial reporting, and resource management, enabling them to access funding opportunities and manage resources more transparently and effectively. The project "Empowering Women Civil Society Leaders as Peacebuilders" strategically invested in the establishment and strengthening of women-led networks as a core mechanism for achieving its objectives related to women's participation, leadership, and peacebuilding. The formation of the Women's Voice Network and the Women Peace Makers Network was directly linked to the project's broader goal of creating sustainable and locally owned platforms through which women could organize, collaborate, and actively engage in peace and civic processes within their communities. One of the participants in the proposal writing workshop, Ms. Alaa Taj Al-Sir from the "the central women Development network" stated that she greatly benefited from the workshop in developing her skills and capacities in preparing and writing project proposals for the network.

She also explained that the workshop practically trained her in preparing a proposal, which was later used as an official model for submission and funding requests. She reflected on strengthening her ability to communicate with donors and pursue future funding opportunities.

The Entrepreneurship Center, which works on building women's capacities in handicrafts, women's clothing design, plaster and beadwork, and henna painting, benefited from support provided in the form of a display screen and a split air conditioner. This significantly improved the working environment within the center. *Ms Amal Fadalla mentioned that "before this support, the center's activities were limited to morning hours only due to high temperatures and the inability of some women to attend at different times. However, the provision of the air conditioner helped create a more suitable and stable training environment, which led to an increase in the center's operating hours from 3 hours per day to 8 hours."*

This improvement enabled a larger number of women to participate in training sessions and benefit from them. It also supported some participants in starting their own small businesses, which had a positive impact on improving their income and the livelihood conditions of their families.

The last example demonstrated by Madam Amna Hassan Omer is a member of the Women for Peace group in Kassala, the group supported by 18,907,500 SDG which is equivalent to \$ 7500 as start up livelihood initiatives. Through selling kitchen equipment, the group received training on customer relations, business management, and market analysis. As a result of this support, the initiative was successfully implemented and began generating revenue. The women developed a business plan for the Ramadan Occasion, which contributed to increased sales and steady progress of the initiative. The group also introduced an installment payment system to support vulnerable women in accessing products and services more easily. The initiative has strengthened women's economic participation and created a positive source of income for the members. This outcome is highly relevant to the peacebuilding focus of the project because it demonstrates how women's economic empowerment can contribute directly to social stability, community cohesion, and resilience in conflict-affected settings such as Kassala

How did the project contribute?

The project contributed to these changes through targeted training, mentoring, technical support, and the provision of operational resources such as Starlink internet, printers, and infrastructure support for training centers.

Why is it significant?

As a result, the networks improved their organizational credibility, accountability, communication, and sustainability, while enhancing women-led organizations' ability to secure

funding, strengthen networking and collaboration, and expand access to services, training, and livelihood opportunities. This outcome demonstrates that investing in the institutional capacity of women-led organizations is not only a development intervention, but also a strategic contribution to sustainable and inclusive peacebuilding.

Outcome #2: Increased Women's Leadership roles through Networking, Safe Spaces and Collective Action

What changed?

Women strengthened their leadership roles through increased participation and collective engagement in community events facilitated by networks, initiatives, and safe spaces for dialogue. Women in Al Qadarif and Kassala established and actively utilized WhatsApp groups and dialogue platforms to exchange ideas, address shared challenges, and strengthen peer support and collaboration. A tangible example of this progress was demonstrated by Ms. Mosliha Abdalla and 20 members of the Peace Makers Network, who led an initiative promoting peaceful coexistence and combating hate speech. The group successfully disseminated their messages and advocacy campaigns through community radio broadcasts and public endorsement signatures, increasing community awareness and engagement around social cohesion and peacebuilding.

How did the project contribute?

The project contributed to these changes through networking opportunities, leadership development activities, dialogue sessions, mentoring, and organizational support. As mentioned before, the project invested in the establishment and strengthening of women-led networks as a core mechanism for achieving its objectives related to women's participation, leadership, and peacebuilding. The formation of the Women's Voice Network and the Women Peace Makers Network was directly linked to the project's broader goal of creating sustainable and locally owned platforms through which women could organize, collaborate, and actively engage in peace and civic processes within their communities.

Why is it significant?

These outcomes are significant because they strengthened women's collective voice, increased their influence in local decision-making processes, and fostered sustainable alliances that support peacebuilding, social cohesion, and community development.

Outcome # 3: Improved Social Cohesion, Peacebuilding, and Community Dialogue

What changed?

Communities demonstrated stronger social cohesion and adopted more inclusive and non-violent approaches to conflict resolution following the Common Ground training and dialogue initiatives. A notable example was observed in Kadugli neighborhoods, where community members reported improved coexistence compared to the period before the Sudan war, when tensions and recurring tribal conflicts between the Nuba and Beni Amer communities were more common. Community relations became calmer, and tribal tensions were reduced as participants raised awareness and applied Common Ground approaches.

Safe spaces such as “Coffee Sessions” also encouraged open dialogue, mutual understanding, and collective community action. These engagements contributed to the emergence of peace initiatives, development associations, and community campaigns addressing social issues such as drug abuse and social fragmentation.

How did the project contribute?

The project contributed to these changes through Common Ground training, facilitated dialogue sessions, and community engagement activities focused on collaboration, trust-building, and peaceful problem-solving. Participants applied Common Ground approaches and community dialogue skills to actively address issues related to their communities. Through Common Ground approach training, facilitated community dialogue sessions, and community engagement activities, participants strengthened their capacities in collaboration, trust-building, active listening, and peaceful problem-solving. These skills enabled them to engage constructively with different community groups, promote mutual understanding, and support non-violent approaches to resolving disputes and behavioral tensions at the local

Why is it significant?

These outcomes are significant because they strengthened social trust, reduced tensions, and encouraged locally led responses to community challenges and conflict.

Outcome# 4 : Enhanced Psychosocial Support, and Gender-Based Violence Responses

What changed?

Women strengthened their capacity to support vulnerable populations and respond to gender-based violence through awareness activities, psychosocial support initiatives, and community-based protection efforts. Women participants improved their understanding of GBV, referral pathways, and response mechanisms while also creating psychological healing spaces and peer-support systems within their communities. Through training and awareness sessions, women became better equipped to provide psychosocial support, promote protection services, and support survivors of violence.

One of the participants in trauma healing recovery, who resides in a neighborhood inhabited by members from the Nuba and Beni Amer tribes—where previous tensions and conflicts had existed between the two groups—reported that “as benefited from the trauma healing and improved my understanding on the importance of psychosocial support. I dedicate myself to raising awareness and contribute to reduce stigma associated with seeking psychological treatment.”

How did the project contribute?

The project contributed by organizing GBV awareness sessions, psychosocial support training, and safe healing spaces for women.

Why is it significant?

These changes are significant because they strengthened community protection systems, increased awareness of GBV issues, improved access to support services, and enhanced community resilience during crises.

Outcome# 5 : Improvement in Policies, Attitudes and Social Norms

What changed?

Participants demonstrated positive changes in attitudes and behaviors related to women’s participation, particularly in relation to girls’ education. A strong example was observed in Kurmota, where girls’ education had previously faced social restrictions. Following community engagement activities, parents and community leaders became more supportive of girls’ right to education. Through participatory theater performances, the community was able to reflect on and critically examine existing norms, which contributed to shifting attitudes and behaviors toward girls’ education. A strong example of this normative change is the influence of Dr. Nowara Mohamed, whose leadership and public engagement inspired many families in eastern communities to reconsider traditional perceptions regarding girls’ education. Community members increasingly viewed educated women as valuable contributors to society and community development, rather than limiting women’s roles to the household sphere. At the same time, women’s involvement in leadership and public decision-making roles became increasingly accepted within communities, reflecting gradual shifts in social perceptions regarding women’s roles and contributions.

Similarly, in the Kurmota community, women and community members, through community dialogue sessions, contributed to positive behavioral changes related to hygiene and sanitation practices. This included a reduction in open defecation and increased use of latrines, which helped decrease public health risks and disease transmission.

How did the project contribute?

The project contributed to these changes through training and skills on community dialogue sessions, awareness raising through theater performances.

Why is it significant?

These outcomes are significant because they challenged restrictive social norms, improved public health and hygiene practices, expanded educational and leadership opportunities for girls and women, and contributed to longer-term social transformation and community resilience.

5. Analysis of Project Contribution

The project contributed to these outcomes through a combination of direct capacity-building, material support, and the creation of safe, participatory spaces. The contribution analysis reveals several key patterns:

- **Direct Capacity Building (Outcome #1):** Training in proposal writing, financial management (QuickBooks), Gender sensitivity, and the Common Ground approach directly led to new skills, institutional changes (better financial reports), and successful funding applications. These were largely intended, showing effective program design.
- **Material & Technological Support (Outcomes #1):** The provision of non-material items (air condition, Starlink, printers) had disproportionately large, **unintended** effects, such as doubling operating hours of a training center and dramatically improving network communication. This highlights how small infrastructure investments can unlock significant local capacity.
- **Creation of Safe, Facilitated Spaces (Outcomes #2, #3, #4):** The project's emphasis on coffee sessions, community dialogues, and alliance-building workshops acted as a catalyst for emergent, **unintended** outcomes. These spaces allowed women to organically form new networks (Rural Women's Voice, Peace Makers), create safe spaces for psychological healing, and even address community health issues like open defecation.
- **Role Modeling & Social Proof (Outcomes #5):** The emergence of women leaders (e.g., Dr. Nawara) and participatory theatre shifted community attitudes, leading to **unintended** changes like increased support for girls' education and women taking on community committee roles. The project contributed by amplifying these models.

Contribution Story: The project did not merely deliver training; it functioned as a **platform for emergent agency**. By providing skills, basic resources, and protected dialogue spaces, the project enabled women and their communities to identify their own problems (GBV, lack of

hygiene, tribal tensions) and design their own solutions (new networks, latrines, healing circles). The high rate of unintended positive outcomes is the strongest evidence of successful, locally-led adaptation.

6. Lessons Learned

1. **In Fragile Contexts, Plan for the Unintended:** Over half (56%) of the most significant outcomes were not in the original logical framework. Rigid, pre-defined indicators would have missed these successes. Outcome Harvesting is uniquely suited to capture emergent impact in complex environments.
2. **Low-Tech, High-Contact Methods Work Best:** Virtual platforms (WhatsApp, Zoom) were essential, but the most profound outcomes came from simple, in-person “Coffee Sessions” and community dialogues. These low-cost, scalable formats build trust and unlock local solutions that formal training cannot.
3. **Material Support is a Force Multiplier:** Small material inputs (air conditioning, internet, printers) had catalytic effects on institutional capacity and reach. These should not be treated as minor logistical items but as strategic intervention tools.
4. **Psychosocial Support is a Gateway to Broader Change:** Training women to provide psychological support (#4) did not just heal individuals; it created trusted community nodes that then led to peace initiatives, anti-drug efforts, and development associations. Investing in psychosocial capacity generates compound returns.
5. **The Common Ground Methodology Transforms Relationships:** The most frequently cited driver of changed behavior and reduced tribal tensions was the Common Ground training. This conflict-resolution approach has proven transferable and effective in eastern Sudan.

7. Recommendations

For Search for Common Ground & the UN PBF:

1. **Scale the “Coffee Ceremony/Session” & Dialogue Model:** Formally integrate low-cost, facilitated coffee sessions and community dialogues as a core intervention in future peacebuilding projects. Their high-impact, low-risk profile is ideal for access-constrained environments.
2. **Create a Small Grants Window for Emergent Networks:** The newly formed bodies (Rural Women’s Voice, Peace Makers, Empowering Civil Society Women’s Leadership as Peacemakers) have demonstrated agency and developed charters. Provide small, flexible

seed funding (e.g., 1,000 –5,000) to support their sustainability and scale their self-identified priorities.

3. **Continue & Expand QuickBooks & Financial Management Training:** The transformation in organizational performance from this training (#1) is clear. This should be a standard module in all future capacity-building efforts with local CSOs.
4. **Document and Share Unintended Successes as Models:** The outcome regarding changed open defecation behavior is a powerful example of a peacebuilding project achieving a public health goal. Develop a case study and share it cross-sectorally to demonstrate the broader value of dialogue-based approaches.
5. **Maintain Outcome Harvesting in the Next Phase:** Standard logframes would have failed to capture the richness of these results. The next project phase should budget for and plan around Outcome Harvesting as the primary M&E methodology.

For Follow-Up & Sustainability (to be actioned within 3 months):

- **Network Mapping:** Assign a DME to conduct a rapid follow-up with the leaders of the “Rural Women’s Voice” and “Peace Makers” networks to understand their immediate technical support needs for future programming.
- **Champion Training:** The women trained in psychosocial support should be offered a refresher “Training of Trainers” (ToT) to enable them to formally train other women in neighboring communities, expanding reach without additional cost.

8. Annexes (Attached Separately)

- **Annex A:** Participant List (Pseudonymized for security where requested)
- **Annex B:** Data Collection Tools (Online questionnaire template & KII guide)
- **Annex C:** Workshop Summary (Notes from validation workshop, 28 April 2026)