YPS Evaluation Report

Furthering the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda in Yemen

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Executive summary

This report presents the findings of the final evaluation of "Furthering the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda in Yemen" project. The report is divided into five main sections: introduction, methodology, findings, project performance, and conclusions and recommendations. The introduction provides background information on the humanitarian situation in Yemen, the relation between traditional Yemeni society and women as well as youth, the project overview, its objectives, links to other peacebuilding programs in Yemen, and a table of indicators with the information collected to evaluate them during the evaluation. The methodology section lists the evaluation objectives and explains the mixed methodology design. Primary data was collected from 17 Key Informant Interviews, 13 Focus Group Discussions and 87 Surveys. Secondary data was collected from open-source documents, project documents and all other publications and materials relevant to the topic of the project.

The Findings section presents a summary of the local perceptions of the conflict, local and international peacebuilding initiatives, and youth and women capacities and opportunities for peacebuilding local governance. The conflict has deep historical and political roots where failure to maintain a strong democracy and peaceful power transition resulted in catastrophic consequences for the entire nation. Peacebuilding initiatives were pursued at the local, national, and international levels. Yet, a détente still seems far from being achieved. The youthful population is united by a common vision of peace and peaceful coexistence among each other. This evaluation revealed that 89.7% of those who participated in the quantitative survey were aware of the UNSCR 2250, and that 8 out of ten participants were capable of engaging in local presence and community trust. However, most of the participants expressed their needs for additional information and support on how to engage the youth in peacebuilding and conflict transformation. Interesting appreciation of the potential role of women in peacebuilding and advocacy was attested in the participant. However, the social customs and the cultural restrictions being imposed on women may undermine their roles as active key players in peacebuilding.

The section on project performance reveals the findings of the project along several pillars, viz. relevance, efficiency, coherence and effectiveness, sustainability, ownership, conflict and time sensitivity, and risk tolerance and innovation. While all efforts have not been spared to achieve the five pillar of the UNSCR 2250, the participation of youth and women in peacebuilding, advocacy and lobbying needs to be materialized more concretely. Further, integration of roles and complementarity of efforts between the UN Women specifically with its experience within the feminist consensus and the UNFPA with its relations and first steps within the youth components had a positive impact on preparing the environment for active participation of women and youth in future peacebuilding and inclusive governance projects. There exists a need to reexamine the existing linkages between the local and international level peace dialogues and advocacy initiatives in Yemen, and to promote the visibility of the state actors and help them establish more links with the non-state actors. The engagement of the UN commissioner, community organizations, local networks, conflicted parties, and the international community with women and youth participants of the project had a positive effect on paving the way for sustaining the project outcomes and its strategic impact. Yet sustaining the project outcomes need more support for the participants, and above all providing a safe political environment.

Introduction summary

Background information

The humanitarian situation in Yemen kept deteriorating because of the prolonged political crisis, internal displacements, outbreaks of contagious diseases such as cholera and malaria, and the recent complications and developments of COVID-19. More than four fifths of the Yemeni population needed humanitarian aid. The afore-mentioned populations included including more than one million pregnant and lactating women, and many more suffered acute malnutrition. The situation was complicated by the fact that Yemen's public health sector was paralyzed, and it almost collapsed, especially in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic. While gender-based violence was increasing, the UNDP 2019 development report indicated that there existed systematic marginalization of certain groups which could be identified by ethnicity, language, gender, cast, and geographical location of their native habitats. Women were the largest group being disadvantaged and discriminated against. Yemen was ranked the 162nd out of 189 countries in 2018, with a slight improvement of 13 rising ranks in 2017, in terms of the world worst gender development index, scoring only 0.245 as compared to 0.535 for males. Women and young people faced cultural and social restrictions put by the traditional Yemeni society and culture, which placed them in lower ranks as compared with grown-up men and other tribal leaders. Such low positioning of women and young people increased inequality and disempowerment of women and young people. Further, women and young people in Yemen incurred additional disadvantages and vulnerability because of the rising conflict since 2015. Several parameters changed since then, including the male attitudes towards women and young people, economic status, and the social roles matrix.

In the last five years, Yemen witnessed a dramatic political change, albeit it was not peaceful. After ousting the ex-president Ali Abdullah Saleh, President Hadi took over the power. According to a report by BBC, however, President Hadi struggled to deal with several competing issues from the south and north of the country. In the south of Yemen, a separatist movement called for separating Yemen into two countries as it was before 1990. The separatist movement gained power and social buy-in, and later it became the Southern Transitional Council. In the north of Yemen, the Houthis (Ansar Allah) intensified their attacks on the government's institutions and military camps, taking over the neighboring governorates of Sa'ada one by one until they eventually took over the capital city of Sana'a on September 21st 2014. Soon after that, President Hadi attempted to establish a partnership with Ansar Allah, who eventually put President Hadi under house arrest. President Hadi managed to flee from Sana'a to Aden. Yet, the Ansar Allah, holding a strong grasp of the Yemeni army and air forces, launched an air attack on Maasheeq Palace in Aden in an attempt to murder President Hadi. In March 26th2015, Saudi Arabia, along with ten Arab countries, launched an offensive on Ansar Allah and the many regiments of the Yemeni army who declared loyalty to the Ansar Allah. After five years of offensive and complete siege on the air, sea, and land ports of the territories under Ansar Allah's control, the vast majority of the civilian victims turned out to be women and young people.

Therefore, Yemenis have reaped nothing but a complete sea, land and air blockade, an indiscriminate bombing by the Saudi led coalition, losing livelihoods and salaries, famines, and contagious disease outbreaks such as cholera and malaria. As such, informal conversations among local Yemeni

communities revealed that there existed a consensus among the Yemeni people that peaceful co-existence would emerge from the inside, i.e., when people within the communities would understand and respect the rights of others and uphold the rule of law. It was only by upholding the rule of law, the Yemeni people believed, that the situation could improve. Otherwise, the situation would witness further deterioration, and further tensions and exploitation of the historically marginalized (politically, socially, and economically) groups. This in turn could create a fertile ground for conflict due to resulting ill-feelings. The informal conversations also revealed that low awareness on the basic human rights and the rule of law among the communities was a key driver to the conflict. Another key driver to the conflict was the weak government structures, especially those in charge of law enforcement, local administration, judicial services, and provision of essential social services which are key in creating a conducive environment for respecting human rights and upholding the rule of law.

The current government institutions and structures seemed incapacitated and they have been overwhelmed by the attempts to contain the conflict. That left little or no opportunity for community engagement and interaction for promoting social cohesion. In order to raise the awareness of upholding law and increase the practices of professional and fair law enforcements, the government's institutions would need to adopt inclusion of all the stakeholders, especially women and young people, and promote social cohesiveness among the Yemeni communities.

The project:

Furthering the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda in Yemen is a project that is implemented by the Peace-Building Fund (PBF) project grant recipients comprised of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) in Yemen between January 2019 and December 2020.

The project sought to operationalize UNSCR 2250 in Yemen, through three levels of impact (individual, institutional and enabling environment), thus contributing to the overall objective of the project that, Young women and men are empowered to participate in and influence the peacebuilding process in Yemen and further the YPS (Youth Peace and Security) agenda and the overall outcome of the project at the enabling environment level. To contribute to the achievement for young women and men to participate actively and influence the peacebuilding process in Yemen, the project focused on four Outputs, for which specific activities were carried out during the inception or implementation phase have been identified. The project outputs mentioned below addressed the needs of individual young people, strengthen youth-led institutions and improve the strategic engagement of their efforts in peacebuilding. Individual-level activities are focused on strengthening the knowledge, skills, and capacities of young men and women who are active in civil society. This level utilized the TOT modality to cascade relevant skills to maximize impact and efficiently utilize funding.

Specific objectives (outputs):
- Output 1:
- Young men and women are equipped to engage and participate actively in Track II dialogues, including in online dialogues. Under this output, the project will:

(1) Contextualize existing TOT gender-sensitivity, conflict-sensitivity, advocacy, and communications, consensus building and facilitation training materials for the political engagement of Yemeni youth;

- (2) Conduct TOT on UNSCR 2250;

(3) Conduct, through the trained trainers, training for 2250 young women and men on UNSCR building their relevant skills in advocacy and communications, consensus building and facilitation skills while applying conflict-sensitive and gender-sensitive approaches;

(4) Conduct an online survey and activate dialogue fora in existing internet cafes for female-only spaces in targeted governorates for a monthly moderated discussion on YPS issues.

- Institutional and community level outputs are designed to build on assets of Yemeni civil society as a critical mechanism to mobilize and communicate with broader Yemeni society. Yemen's long history of civil interactions and cooperative activity will be utilized to further the peacebuilding to ensure inclusion of citizen needs and contribute to the sustainability of the peace process. A key failure of the NDC was a lack of communicating elements of the outcomes to the broader Yemeni population. In the earlier phases of the peace process in Switzerland, and particularly Kuwait, such communications could have used Track II and III channels to put pressure on the parties to the conflict at the negotiating table, thus contributing to more positive peace outcomes.

- Output 2:

- A national YPS dialogue structure including Government, UN, and civil society is established with clear governance mechanisms and decision-making processes. This output creates a national YPS alliance and conducting a national dialogue and develops consultation paper results from the consultation meetings and data collected in the on-line survey.

- Output 3:

- A collaboration between the national YPS dialogue process and youth-led CSOs is established to conduct joint advocacy and communications activities, engaging with additional Track II & III constituencies around inclusive peace. Under this output, the project will design advocacy and strategic communication messages and implement them while engaging with Track II & III constituencies around inclusive peace.

- Enabling environment-level activities of the project seek to go beyond earlier peace efforts in Yemen by capitalizing on lessons learned and seeking clearer and more concerted joint action to push parties to the conflict beyond cease-fire discussions into peacebuilding, relief, and recovery.

- Output 4:

A strategic framework for UNSCR 2250 in Yemen is developed, reflecting the UNSCR 1325 model to foster political, programmatic, financial, and technical support of YPS partners including government, UN agencies, and Track I, II & III actors. Under this output, this project will; (1) Develop a YPS strategic framework; (2) Establish a Youth Human Rights Commission; (3) Contribute to the Secretary-General's Progress Study Advisory Board for YPS and global partners, and follow-up feedback; (4) Establish youth- and women-led join monitoring mechanism for the implementation of the peace agreement.

Project links to specific peacebuilding initiatives in Yemen:

- The Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Security (YWP) was launched in 2015 under UN Women and in cooperation with the OSESGY. This inclusive platform of nearly 60 women leaders represents different political parties and CSOs from inside and outside Yemen and includes many young women. YWP holds consultation meetings in Yemen and outside on issues related to the overall framework of the peace process aimed to promote women's inclusion in all negotiations and associated committees. Lessons learned from the YWP project which have contributed to the design of this project include: the primary level of activity is with CSOs rather than individuals, thus strengthening the sector; clear and transparently communicated selection criteria for participation of individuals in activities and selection of organizations; and develop strong governance processes and systems to minimize conflict and maximize impact.

- YWP along with European Institute for Peace, International IDEA, and the Berghoff Foundation have been running Track II activities around the Yemen process for the past few years. These meetings bring together representatives from different constituencies to allow for a constructive and open-minded discussion on the future of Yemen.

- With the support of the UK Foreign Commonwealth Office, UNFPA implemented a 6-month project to localize UNSCR 2250 that concluded in June 2018. The project sought to increase access to knowledge of young people about UNSCR 2250 and identify ways to contribute to peacebuilding. Awareness-raising sessions reached over 1,000 youth in Sana'a City, Aden, Mareb, Hadramout (Mukalla and Seiyun), Ibb, Dhamar, and Hodeidah (www.2250yemen.com).

- Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) is supporting a pilot project to address emergency conditions inside prisons and other places of detention, to improve the resilience of women and juvenile populations in these facilities with development support. Under this initiative UN Women is supporting women inmates, the UNICEF is addressing the needs of juveniles and UNDP is improving the physical conditions in such facilities for all inmates, male and female.

- There are numerous projects and initiatives implemented by national actors including the Ministry of Youth and Sport in both the Internationally Recognized Government and Ansar Allah controlled areas, although both lack funding. Other political actors including the General People's Congress, The Peaceful Southern Movement, and The Southern Transitional Council are seeking to engage young people in their political agendas and campaigns.

- There are many initiatives led by young women and men activists at the local level on political participation, protection, prevention, and reintegration. For example, in Sana'a, one project aims at establishing a youth council for political participation. The initiative succeeded in gathering 95 young leaders after a long process of selection. It is worthy to mention that this initiative is led by a young women activist.

Objective	Indicators	Information to collect during evaluation
Overall Objective: Young women and men are empowered to participate in and influence the peace building process in Yemen and further the YPS agenda		
General outcome: The needs and priorities of young men	Number of youth and gender related provisions in draft	Evidence of integrating the 5 key pillars of the UNCSR 2250 (participation, protection,

Objective	Indicators	Information to collect during evaluation
and women and provisions for youth inclusion are articulated in the peace agreement and post-conflict stabilization, relief and recovery plans	peace agreements/ceasefires, position papers presented by YPS alliance and minutes of meetings with decision makers in various parties and government	prevention, partnerships & disengagement, and reintegration) in both formal peace agreements (in Yemen and in the governorates) and as social contracts / informal agreements among communities with varying political allegiance in the governorates and the districts.
Output 1: Young men and women are equipped to engage and participate actively in Track II dialogues, including in online dialogues.	Number of young people with increased knowledge about the YPS agenda (disaggregated by age, sex and geography)	% young people (male & female youth) with knowledge of the 5 key pillars of the UNCSR 2250 resolutions contextualized for Yemen (and specifically Taiz and Sana'a).
	Number of young people participating in monthly on-line dialogues (disaggregated by age, sex and geography).	% young people (male & female youth) reporting active participation in monthly on-line peace and security dialogues.
Output 2: A national YPS dialogue structure including Government, UN and civil society is established with clear governance mechanisms and decision-making processes.	Existence of a functional YPS structure with clear governance mechanisms and decision-making processes.	A national level YPS with a clear hierarchy and decision-making structures that actively engages youth-led CSOs and gives them space to actively contribute to decision making process engagement and contribution to decision making is in place and functional
	Number of technical proposals and/or position papers developed informing the peace process	Local level consultation peace meetings held (where youth actively participated alongside key influential YPS committee members)
Output 3: A collaboration between the national YPS dialogue process and youth-led CSOs is established to conduct joint advocacy and communications activities, engaging with additional Track II & III constituencies around inclusive peace.	Existence of a functional advocacy committee comprised of national YPS dialogue process and youth-led CSOs.	YPS actively working with selected youth-led CSOs at local (Taiz & Sana'a) and national levels to promote youth participation in peace dialogues in Yemen and drive the YPS agenda (UNCSR 2250).
	Proportion of youth-led CSOs members with positive perception on levels in youth inclusion in the peace process.	% Youth-led organization members reporting being consulted, trained & built consensus on the YPS structure and modes of operation. The youth should also report influence in driving the YPS agenda in Yemen.
Output 4: A strategic framework for UNSCR 2250 in Yemen is developed, reflecting the UNSCR 1325 model with the aim to foster political, programmatic, financial and technical support of YPS partners including government, UN agencies and Track I, II & III actors.	Existence of a Strategic Framework for UNSCR 2250 and mechanism for its implementation in Yemen	A joint peace process framework established for Yemen with all reporting requirements, committees, protocols / SOPs, and resources in place and being implemented by all concerned parties taking into consideration the 5 key pillars of the UNSCR 2250 and 1325 models, contextualized for Yemen.

Research objectives and methodology:

Evaluation objectives:

The evaluation provides an opportunity to identify and document lessons learned according to the OEDC / DAC criteria broadly looking at **Relevance** (was the program appropriate and sensitive to the local context?); **Efficiency** (how well were project resources utilized given the prevailing circumstances?); **Effectiveness** (to what extent have the intended results been achieved?); **Sustainability & ownership** (to what extent will the net benefits of the project continue, or are likely to continue?); **Coherence** (how is the project aligned or connected with other humanitarian and peacebuilding efforts in Yemen?); **Impact** (what difference or change has been or is likely to be seen as a result of the project?); and **Conflict sensitivity** (being a conflict resolution & peacebuilding project, what did the project put in place to prevent further conflicts?). Other aspects the evaluation looked at were whether the program was a catalyst (financially & pragmatically) for other peacebuilding interventions; was sensitive to the key political events related to the conflict & utilized any opportunities to further the YPS agenda in Yemen; and how pragmatic risks were factored & mitigated in programmme design & implementation.

- Broadly, the evaluation sought to answer the following key questions:
- Assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project in terms of 1) addressing key drivers of conflict and the most relevant peacebuilding issues; 2) alignment with National Peace-building Policy and national priorities of Yemen; 3) whether the project capitalized on the UN's added value in-country Yemen; and 4) the degree to which the project addressed cross-cutting issues such as conflict and gender-sensitivity in Yemen.
- Assess to what extent the PBF project has made a concrete contribution to reducing a conflict factor in Yemen. With respect to PBF's contribution, the evaluation also sought to examine whether the project helped advance the achievement of the SDGs, and in particular SDG 16.
- Evaluate the project's efficiency, including its implementation strategy, institutional arrangements as well as its management and operational systems and value for money.
- Assess whether the support provided by the PBF has promoted the Youth, Peace, and Security agenda (YPS) and the Women, Peace and Security agenda (WPS), allowed a specific focus on women's participation in peacebuilding processes, and whether it was accountable to gender equality.
- Assess whether the project has been implemented through a conflict-sensitive approach.
- Document good practices, innovations, and lessons emerging from the project.
- Provide actionable recommendations for future programming.

Evaluation methodology:

The research was designed with three main objectives: end-line survey, project evaluation; and impact assessment of the YPS project in Yemen. To broadly answer all the evaluation questions and fulfill the intended research objectives, the research was integrated to cover all the key aspects of the research and individual reports (end-line survey, project evaluation, and impact assessment) separately. The study was mainly qualitative with quantitative collected from the same participants (non-probability sampling) who had a close interaction with the project (which did not directly work with a larger number of direct participants) and thus were in a better position to provide the right information required to answer the key research questions. However, mixed methodologies were

used for triangulation purposes with the quantitative tool providing numerical scores based on the perception of the research participants. In particular, the following methods were utilized:

Literature review:

In order to get a broad understanding of the context and seeking to establish a connection between the context and the project, the end-line survey included a detailed review of existing literature from media briefings and other research papers about the Yemeni social fabric and its overall impact on the conflict. In particular, the documents reviewed were categorized as below.

Documents	Critical information to be collected
• Open source data gathering including local media reports, relevant published research, and any other publications / briefs from other actors working on or doing research about the conflict in Yemen (such as UNFPA, UN Women, UNDP, Search for Common Grounds, Human Rights Watch, e.t.c). • Project documents (proposal, progress reports, MEAL / review reports and any other project documents relevant to this study). • Any local and international agreements available to the team (through the web or given to us by the client). • Other relevant publications about the conflict in Yemen and its impact. • YPS and PBF frameworks for Yemen. • Meeting minutes for the YPS structure and action points taken. • Any documented local, national and regional peace agreements made.	• To get a top level historical understanding of the conflict in Yemen and how it has affected the gender dynamics and points of influence. • Program alignment with the local priorities for sustainable peacebuilding and conflict transformation at national, governorate, district and community levels. • To get a detailed overview of what the project put in place to promote the role of women and girls in peacebuilding and conflict transformation. • Consultation, coordination and Participation / engagement of other stakeholders during the different stages of the program. • Adapting to changing dynamics and Integration of lessons learnt from stakeholders' feedback and internationally developing events (in relation to the Yemen peace process).

Key Informant Interviews (KII):

Key informants were selected based on their understanding and interaction with the project/program and their technical area of focus relevant to the Program. The final list of key informants was agreed in consultation with UNFPA, UN Women, and implementing partners where the following (17, out of the initially planned 20) key informants were selected.

| Key Informant	Category	Location / level
AWAM Foundation	Grant recipient	National, Sana'a
FAF	Grant recipient	National, Sana'a
UNFPA	Grant recipient	National, Sana'a
UN Women	Grant recipient	National, Sana'a
YLDF	Grant recipient	National, Sana'a
YWOB	Grant recipient	National, Sana'a
Community leaders (2 in Taiz & 2 in Aden).	Religious leaders	Community (Taiz & Aden).
Committee heads & elders (7 leaders in Taiz & Aden)	Community leaders	Community (Taiz & Aden).
Total key informants		17

Focus group discussions:

The Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) will seek to get perceptions from members of grass-root CSOs (youth and women-led) that have been actively participating and interacting with project activities. In particular, the FGDs will seek to consolidate similar and divergent opinions from the different population segments that have interacted with the program and potential program participants in the future. Given the cultural context where men dominate in discussions and decision making, male and female FGDs were held separately to allow both groups to freely express themselves during the discussions as well as for comparative purposes between male and female unless the intended participants were actively engaged in women and youth empowerment initiatives. In total, the research employed 13 FGDs across the different villages with different participants.

FGD Participants	# of participants	District / Village covered.
Youth & Peace Alliance members	8 (3 females)	Sana'a, Taiz, Dhamar, Aden
Consultative meeting participants	7 (3 females)	Taiz
Consultative meeting participants	7 (3 females)	Marib (Medina, Jubah), Hadramout (Mukalla, Sayoun), Sana'a (Al Amanah)
Training of trainers	6 (2 females)	Taiz, Aden, Sana'a
Dual training	8 (3 females)	Taiz, Marib, Sana'a
Youth & Peace Alliance members	8 (4 females)	Aden, Hadramout, Sana'a, Dhamar
Consultative meetings	8 (6 females)	Sana'a, Hadramout, Aden,
Youth conference	8 (4 females)	Sana'a, Taiz, Aden
Consultative meetings	6 (1 female)	Marib, Hadramout, Sana'a
Training of Trainers	7 (3 females)	Taiz (Al Turbah), Aden, Hadramout
Training	8 (3 females)	Dhamar, Taiz
Cascade training	7 (2 females)	Taiz, Sana'a
FGD 13	6 (3 females)	Taiz
Total Number of FGD participants	94	

Quantitative approach:

The individual survey was administered as part of the field research to all key informants (except for grant recipients) and FGD participants who were identified and interviewed during the research. In total, 87 (out of the planned 100) respondents were interviewed after their respective discussions. The quantitative approach did not use the conventional of randomly selecting respondents because of the nature of information being collected which focuses largely on knowledge and perceptions of individuals and institutions targeted by the project as direct participants or people of interest to the conflict and the outcome of the peacebuilding process. The distribution of the 100 respondents (according to sex and age category is given in the table below.

Respondent's sex	15 – 18 years.	19 – 29 years.	30 – 34 years.	35 – 45 years.	Total
Female- أنثى	0	26	7	4	37
Male- ذكر	1	29	15	5	50
Total	1	55	22	9	87
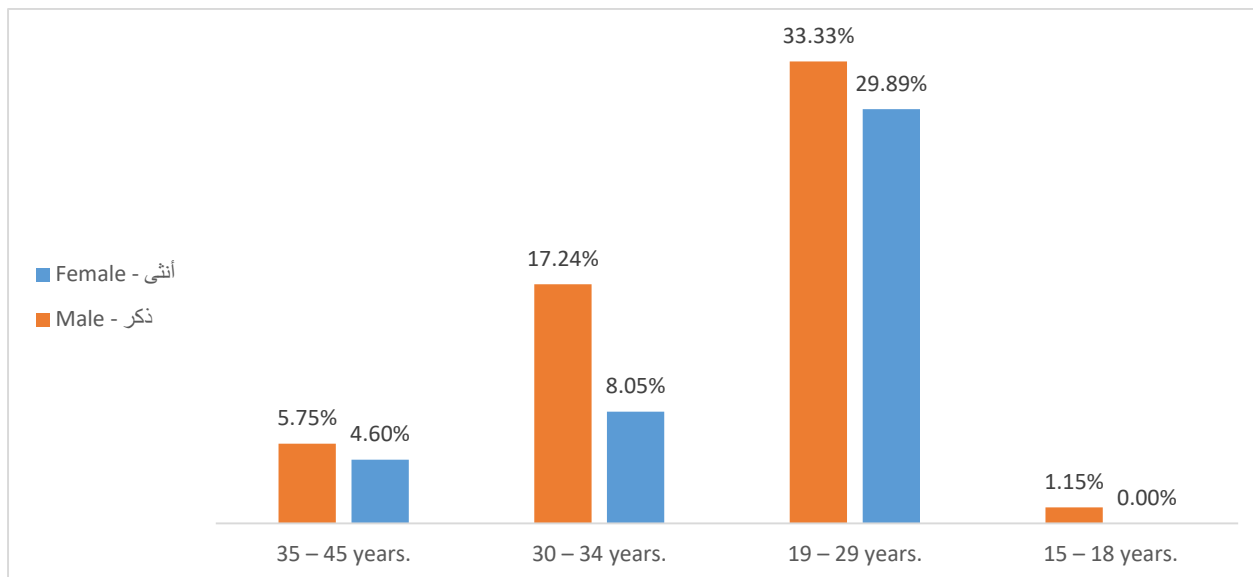
Research limitations

Based on our understanding of the context and the task at hand, ISC has identified the following risk factors/limitations and proposed recommendations for smooth execution of the process.

Risk factor	Mitigation
Accessibility constraints leading to not getting information from the ground	ISC has presence in all field locations and thus access to local stakeholders and at the community, district and governorate level.
Coordination and engagement with UNFPA, UN Women and other partners / stakeholders in Sanaá and Taiz.	ISC's lead consultant in Sanaá was in constant communication and interaction with UNFPA team and all the grant recipients to follow up on intended research participants and timely availing of project documents.
Evaluation process is generally interactive, potentially aid the spread of COVID-19.	ISC has a database of research assistants in the field who have previously conducted evaluations in similar circumstances and will replicate the same during this evaluation. ISC will work with UNFPA to provide a framework that will consider WHO / health cluster recommendations in minimizing the spread of COVID – 19 and adjust the methodologies accordingly.
Non-cooperating research respondents, especially for KIIs in Aden.	This was particularly visible among key informants in Aden where the research team could not establish whether it was out of fear or just unwillingness to participate in the research. This challenge was addressed by targeting national level respondents (mainly grant recipients) and through online FGDs that were held with respondents from multiple locations.

Presentation and discussion of research findings:

Brief overview of the conflict – local perceptions

The Yemeni conflict is perceived to be rooted around historic failed political processes as a result of overlooking the traditionally known cultures and political systems which were focusing mainly on consultation and inclusion, popularly known as *Shura*. This was the main driver to exclusion and political dominance by a few individuals experienced over time which lead to the national uprising witnessed in 2011 (which also happened in other countries within the MENA region, popularly known as the Arab spring). Poor Social and economic performance, unfavorable political environment, ignorance of culture & consultative governance, and tribal dynamics took a center stage as the key catalyst to the uprising which contributed to wakening the systems of governance at national and governorate levels. This was partly articulated by one religious leader in Birbasha who said *"The conflict in general, whether local or international, we as Arabs, have not worked out a solution for power and the solution is the Shura (community consultation), and elections today are considered a means of consultation. When there is no awareness in the culture of who governs, these practices occurred and what happened is the accumulation of years of tyranny, if there was a solution to the power through the Shura Council, we would not have reached this point"*. This was particularly summed by a neighborhood leader in Aden (Crator / Suni unit) who said *"It is a division of power between political parties, that exploit people"*.

The then state of affairs provided a fertile ground for vested interests locally, nationally, and internationally (with visible interests from regional actors within the Middle East) who were using their different points & tools of influence to further their different interests and political agendas, which was locally seen as exploitation to the people's ignorance or low level of awareness on the traditionally known systems of local governance *(Shura)*.

According to a published report by Nadwa Al-Dawsari (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, published in April 2012[1]), the power-sharing deal signed by Yemen's President Ali Abdullah Saleh in November 2011 mentioned presidential elections, the formation of a national unity government, and a military commission to reform the armed forces. Which was considered as the first step in Yemen's recovery from the protracted turmoil and instability that wracked the country for months (during the political uprising). During the transition period, which was also characterized by uncertainty, as the then-new government was struggling to establish legitimacy and address its most pressing issues, tribal law and traditions were expected to play an important role in restoring a degree of stability because government capacity was extremely limited. This was particularly true given increasing conflicts and emerging sectarian and political divisions in the country. State and rule of law institutions were not only weak and ineffective outside of the main cities but also widely untrusted.

Yemenis had relied on indigenous tribal traditions to regulate conflict and establish justice for centuries, if not millennia. Tribal law had effectively handled conflicts between various tribes, between tribes and extractive companies, and between tribes and the government. It had successfully prevented and resolved conflicts over resources, development services, and land, and had sometimes managed to contain complex revenge-killing cases. Nationally, tribal mediators had played an important role in promoting political dialogue and building consensus among political groups. During the past year, where government forces withdrew, tribes took responsibility and

managed to provide a reasonable level of security within their territories and along the main roads that connect tribal governorates.
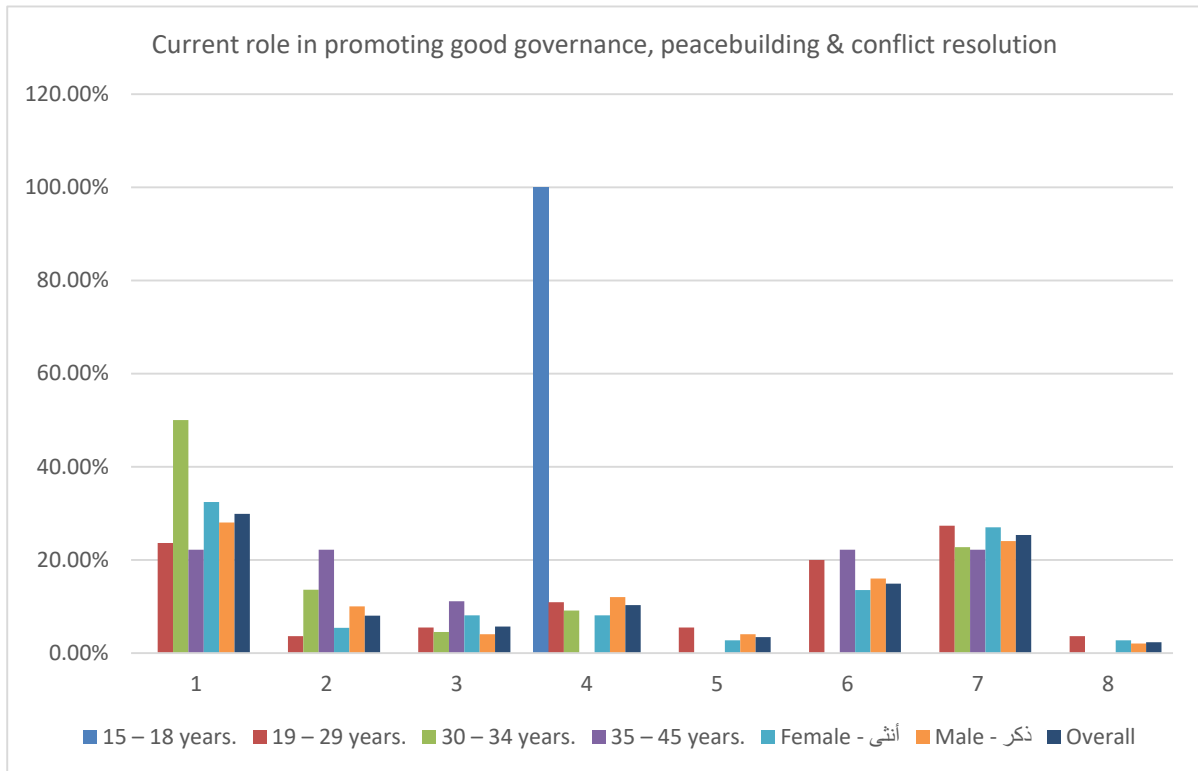
Most Western observers and urban Yemenis believed then that tribes and the tribal system have been an impediment to state-building and development in Yemen. And, indeed, there have been tribal leaders who traded the needs of their people for political influence and who were part of the corrupt patronage network that undermined the state. The locally experienced political tensions led to gradual and further escalation of the deteriorating situation into a full conflict in March 2015 after the legitimate and internationally recognized government headed by Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi was overthrown on January 22 of the same year, and this was followed by a military campaign from about 10 countries led by Saudi Arabia. The situation began to deteriorate gradually since the beginning of the conflict and the Saudi air force intervened to bomb the Houthi group, which overthrew the legitimate government. It is also acknowledged locally that there are a lot of national and international negotiations with the Geneva talks in Kuwait where many countries were involved to find a resolution being used as an example. However, there is a feeling that these talks have not yet borne any fruits. According to another community leader in Taiz (Taiz- Traffic – Jawwal), there are many vested interests and roots (such as weapons, ignorance, racism, just to name a few) for the conflict in Yemen as reported by the direct quote *"I need a lot of time to talk about conflict in Yemen until now. It has a lot of reasons such as weapons, ignorance racism and etc, what causes a war between the government and Al Huthi fighting group. This war has caused comprehensive destruction, poverty, murder, starvation, and other consequences what led many Yemenis to enter the KSA border to find money to live, but we didn't find security due to the consistent conflict between parties"*.

Notable to the distraction of war is the visible abuse of human rights by both warring parties, massive displacements, weak systems of governance, and a protracted humanitarian crisis resulting in a lack of basic services. *"The war led to the destruction of infrastructure, the killing of children and women, the displacement of citizens, the campaign of arrests, the increase of prices, the lack of food status, an acute shortage of medicines and medical supplies, and damage medical facilities"*, a religious leader in Taiz.

Brief overview of the youth perceptions

The youthful population is united by a common vision of peace and peaceful coexistence among each other, a dream shared by the wider Yemeni population, including women.

In addition, the youth envision to see a Yemen where they can engage in meaningful productive activities and prosper, just like in other peaceful nations. They would wish to see an environment that is enhancing youth capabilities with several community awareness sessions for youth on the importance of peace, an initiative in which they feel participation of women is very important as it will help them to know their rights. They were very passionate about educating the wider community about their rights and good citizenship, which is a gap they have identified among their peers "We want to continue educating the community about their rights because most of the youth do not know their rights", one of the participants of the FGDs from Taiz mentioned. From the quantitative study, most organizations largely focus on addressing marginalization & discrimination and promoting local dialogues with different stakeholders in efforts to promote good governance, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution as shown in the graph below.

Current role in promoting good governance, peacebuilding & conflict resolution

Legend: 15 – 18 years. | 19 – 29 years. | 30 – 34 years. | 35 – 45 years. | Female - أنثى | Male - ذكر | Overall

1	Addressing marginalization & discrimination
2	Civic education on rights and responsibilities of responsible citizens
3	Civilian protection
4	Promoting government visibility
5	Promoting inclusive governance at local and / or sub-national levels
6	Promoting links between authorities / leaders & local citizens
7	Promoting local dialogues with different stakeholders
8	Others (specify)

Another key observation (as earlier reported) was that all stakeholders, especially males had a positive opinion and attitude towards engaging women and youth in peacebuilding and decision making. This was particularly visible through local leaders and particularly a religious leader in Birbasha, Taiz governorate who were passionate about empowering women (economically and socially) and engaging women and youth in community empowerment initiatives and building sustainable peace & peaceful coexistence in the local communities.

> "
> Moving young people towards work, of course, there are youth unemployment and the exclusion of women. We reject this exclusion, and we want to push young people towards work, and bring them into the framework of voluntary community work or mini projects that generate profit for them and fight poverty.
>
> A religious leader in Birbasha – Taiz governorate

Project performance:

Relevance:

The project was relevant to the Yemeni context which has been severely affected by the war since 2015. However, several peacebuilding initiatives and dialogues took place to mitigate the situation. Reports from field key informants indicated that important dialogues and negotiations have taken place at national and international levels/platforms which included the international negotiations spearheaded by the UN envoy, Jamal bin Omar, who in his turn tried to reach a peaceful solution between the conflicting parties. However, the negotiations and dialogues have not yielded any meaningful fruits (as far as the locals are concerned) and this is largely blamed on the vested political interest of international and regional actors.

Ismail Weld Sheikh Ahmed was appointed as a special envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen and the war escalated. Then he announced a road-map that included a practical vision for ending the conflict, but in the end, he affirmed that all Yemeni parties were responsible for not reaching a solution in one way or another. At the end of 2018, Martin Griffith was appointed as an envoy to Yemen, but he did not reach any solution between the Yemeni parties up to date. The only thing that Martin could do during these consultations was the release of prisoners of both parties of the conflict.

In addition to these efforts, the communities also recognized the Geneva conferences, Al Riyad agreement, and other efforts by external parties within the Middle East region who were perceived to be neutral such as Kuwait and Oman. However, no lasting solution has been achieved to end the conflict which has had negative ramifications on the local populations.

Within the local communities, different community leaders acknowledged their roles and influence as an opportunity to spread awareness and culture in the circles of society and push them towards peacebuilding and preserving the social fabric, social cohesion, and communicating with the private entities or bodies who have interest in the outcome of the conflict. This was particularly evident through a religious leader in Taiz who said *"The opportunities before us are so many that come through awareness, counseling, guidance, and conflict resolution between people, as well as through meeting with young people in schools, forums, mosques, and centers for memorizing the Holy Qur'an, as well as what some institutions and bodies create today towards educating young people, exploiting their energies and moving them towards raising awareness of peace and create an environment that welcomes and accepts others".*

The project design was such that it was intentional in creating linkages with already existing peacebuilding and conflict resolution initiatives within Yemen. In particular, the project was intentional in linking and coordinating with:

- The Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Security (YWP) was launched in 2015 under UN Women and in cooperation with the OSESGY. This inclusive platform of nearly 60 women leaders represents different political parties and CSOs from inside and outside Yemen and includes many young women.

- YWP along with European Institute for Peace, International IDEA, and the Berghoff Foundation have been running Track II activities around the Yemen process for the past few years.

- The project was also a buildup of a 6-month UK Foreign Commonwealth office project implemented by UNFPA which sought to increase access to knowledge on UNSCR 2250 among young people as a means to identify ways to meaningful contribute to peacebuilding.

- With the support of the UK Foreign Commonwealth Office, UNFPA implemented a 6-month project to localize UNSCR 2250 that concluded in June 2018. The project sought to increase access to knowledge of young people about UNSCR 2250 and identify ways to contribute to peacebuilding.

- Other locally-led peacebuilding and conflict transformation initiatives by both state and non-state actors including Peace Building Office, UNICEF, and local movements led by women and youth in Yemen.

According to the different key informants, especially grant recipients, the project design was aligned to both international efforts/declarations and local visions and aspirations of women and youth to build capacities and create space for women and youth to meaningfully participate in peacebuilding and conflict transformation at local levels. The project was partly aligned with the Track II peace-making process and mainly focused on training, dialogue, public peace education, and joint initiatives. All these were largely in sync with the earlier reported strategies used locally for peacebuilding and conflict transformation with community engagement & public education accounting for 63.5% while building networks, which is the same as joint initiatives, only accounting for only 35.6% which was the same rating given for online peace dialogues. Round table discussions/peace dialogues were also rated lower at 36.8%. However, some of these key informants reported mixed feelings about the timing of the project citing that it was being implemented during a war/conflict environment as clearly reported by a representative of FAF (one of the national NGOs who were among the grant recipients).

> We worked in 2018 on 2250 resolution. This experience was difficult because of the current situation, the local authority and the community think that it is not the right time to conduct such projects because it is a war. We raise the awareness in social media and meetings.
>
> A representative of FAF

During project inception, UNFPA, UN Women, and the national NGOs who were grant recipients all participated in the design of the project by building on previous peacebuilding projects and in-cooperating lessons learned in this project. A case example was during contextualizing the key UN resolution (UNSCR 2250) as directly reported by a representative of YLDF (one of the national NGOs who was a grant recipient) was that *"We raised awareness on the resolution 2250 through implementing different debates, training, and FGDs, to build a community platform and to raise the awareness of the targeted group (youth) that they have a resolution of their own that they have to participate in and enhance its pillars. We conducted a group of consultation meetings in Amanat Al Asimah, Hadramout, Lahj, Taiz, along with the UN Women we concluded a group of recommendations for both conflicted parties, UN commissioner, Organizations, local networks, international community. There were meetings and consultations among the GROUP 9 and outside it".*

Similarly, information coming from the field-based research participants, i.e. key informants and FGD participants, pointed to the widely common desire for peace and stability in Yemen with many of them acknowledging the importance of working with women and youth in promoting peace and conflict transformation among local community members. The initial priority is eliminating existing hatred and creating an environment that will promote re-conciliatory efforts lead by local platforms and individuals within the local communities. The project sought to complement local mechanisms where local leaders and local councils were resolving conflicts (mainly family or resource-based conflict) locally through different local forums and avenues. The youth population (especially the TOT participants) acknowledged the importance of bringing everyone on board in peacebuilding and conflict transformation. Project activities aimed at creating local awareness on UNSCR 2250 have generally boosted local awareness on local peacebuilding processes but that just ends at that **"AWARENESS"** with some of them reporting *"Actual practice in the right to participation in peace and security, many organizations have worked to raise awareness for young people in Resolution 2250 and Resolution 1326 in the field of training and qualification, but all as media only, and there is no real participation and just rehabilitation and training. There is no real decision-making and real participation of youth or women in peacebuilding."* which is an acknowledgment and appreciation of the knowledge and information received but space or forums to promote their participation is either not visible or simply does not exist.

Further emphasizing the observations made from the youthful population, a critical area in peacebuilding is around good governance and strong government visibility. As reported earlier, however, the conflict is rooted in politics and local ignorance (on basic human rights and the rule of law) which require some investments in good governance programming. Political influencing, especially around policy change was a key outcome for this project but unfortunately, only 23.0% of the research participants reported political lobbying (which is usually the role of grass-root CSOs and NSA) as their strategies used for peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

To summarize the observations, the project design was particularly relevant by working with all possible stakeholders (especially women and youth) in addressing the systemic social impediments to women and Youth participation in matters affecting them and their communities (including peacebuilding and conflict transformation) by promoting awareness of the UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 2250 which the participants demonstrated a reasonably high level of awareness and appreciation (as demonstrated in earlier presented observations). Besides, there was a generally high opinion and interest to involve women and youth in peacebuilding and conflict resolution due to their numerical strength and their enthusiasm to drive the peacebuilding agenda in Yemen. In addition to this, working with the local structures (both formal and especially the informal structures) was found to be an effective way to promote sustainable peaceful coexistence among the local communities which is a vision and aspiration cutting across the local social segments. This was particularly observed through an FGD in Dhamar (with Youth and Peace Alliance group).

> I believe that CSOs, as informal structures, have a great role to play, as they are the ones that promote peaceful coexistence among community members as well as youth initiatives. There are also youth components that have emerged recently that work significantly in building peace and coexistence
>
> An FGD Participant in Dhamar

Efficiency:

The design and operational planning of the project were such that all parties had a role to play in the delivery of the project and the UN Women specifically with its experience within the feminist consensus and the UNFPA with its relations and first steps within the youth components had a role through the consultative meetings implemented before the project. Working within the feminist consensus, but mainly the youth and youth institutions who have been targeted at the second level, and the consultative meetings greatly contributed to the third level of the project (creating the possible environment for women and youth to actively participate in future peacebuilding and inclusive governance project) that will determine the work of the next phase and the communication with the United Nations Office abroad and the Youth Committee, as the main work is in the third level that is enriched by the first level (individuals), the second level (institutions) and the valuable information they provide. This was particularly summed up by a UNFPA representative who said "The number of those targeted in the project is not large compared to the humanitarian projects, but most of the project activities are formulated in such a way that there is a large knowledge production that serves the youth component and all relevant stakeholders within a minimum of two years to arrange their agenda in the political process for two years, as the project provided a training manual, consultative papers, policies, reports, resolution strategies and a tool to monitor the implementation of conventions and treaties in Yemen and integrate youth and women in this monitoring. All of the initiatives, organizations, individuals, alliances, and other youth and feminist components that we have targeted have contributed to the failure or success of the project through the recommendations and problems that they raised, which directed the knowledge production that is the output of this project."

According to implementation progress reports, efficiency was enhanced through the innovative design of the project which sought to bring together 2 key elements to influence Track I processes for Yemen. These 2 key elements were: using Track II dialogues and engaging women and youth in peace processes.

To further enhance this, the participatory approaches were used. In recognizing the available opportunities for peacebuilding and increasing the profile of youth and youth in the Yemen Peace process, the leaders, particularly, have worked with other local actors and foundations in different campaigns, seminars, and through the use of social media. A recent example was a campaign that was aimed at promoting women's participation in governance. As reported through the quantitative tool, it emerged that community engagement and education is the widely used approach, and rightly so, in driving the YPS agenda in Yemen. Of interest to note is the low proportion in the use of social media which has a potential for wider coverage as well as the low proportion of political lobbying, given the acknowledged high political influence of the conflict.

Strategies used for peacebuilding and conflict transformation
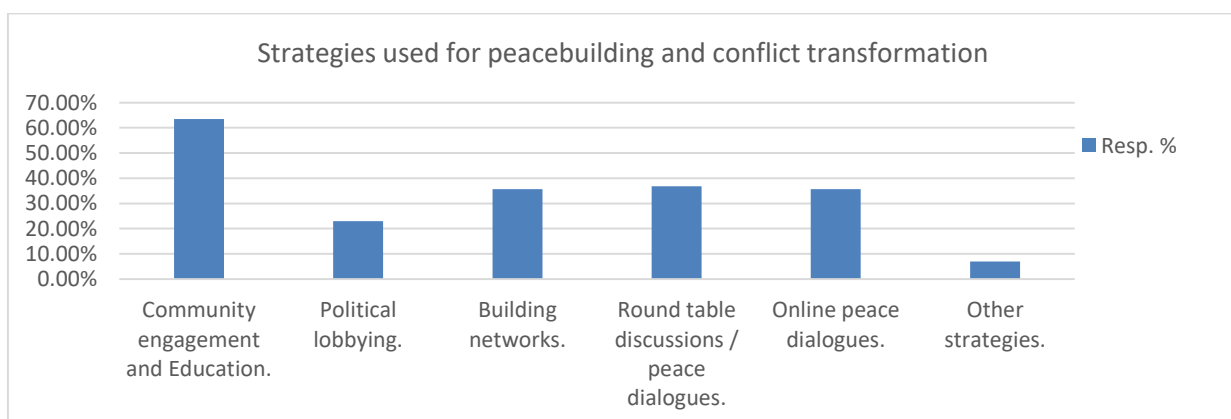
Community leaders also acknowledge and recognize the existing peacebuilding and reconciliation opportunities at their localities by working hand in hand with other community members through different initiatives and forums as given was reported by an elder in Taiz who said *"There are great efforts to build peace and resolve conflicts in Taiz governorate that are being undertaken by young people in some foundations and initiatives such as the process of releasing prisoners by forming a relationship between the parties to the conflict"*. This has been driven by the necessity to urgently resolve the prevailing conflict which has had negative ramifications in all spheres of human development in Yemen and created one of the largest humanitarian crises globally. The key to these efforts is to productively engage the youth in voluntary peacebuilding initiatives as well as trying to find localized opportunities for them to make a living, given that the rate of unemployment was further exacerbated by the prevailing conflict.

Further emphasized by the community leaders, there were different initiatives to promote the capacity and visibility of young people (both male and female) in leadership roles and peacebuilding as reported by a community leader in Bani Issa who said *"I participated in community dialogues in Jabal Habashi district in building peace with Al-Wad Development Foundation in partnership with Search for Common Ground Organization. We are working hard to build the capabilities of young people (male and female) in the region to be effective leaders in society because they are the basis in peacebuilding, we also seek to build peace by addressing the main causes of conflict and building the capacity of young people to solve conflicts peacefully. I play an important role in promoting social stability, so we focus on peacebuilding approaches that help the development and humanitarian program to ensure its contribution to social cohesion and peacebuilding"*. In these roles (especially in peacebuilding), the leaders reported to regularly network with government agencies or non-governmental organizations to work with and to support youth in peacebuilding by creating the necessary networks and relationships between stakeholders and youth.

The project used e-networking for Yemeni youth (particularly through the NDC, YPS structure, and online peace dialogue platform) which greatly contributed to key elements of Track II and provided an opportunity for a wider scope of youth to participate and contribute, to a large extent, in the peace dialogues in Yemen. Particularly, the use of technology (internet-based communications platforms such as zoom) has made it easier to coordinate program activities enabling local women and youth to express themselves and give their opinions which have reached international decision-makers and influencers. This was particularly emphasized by a representative from one of the local grant recipients (Awam Foundation) who said: *"The voices of women and youth reach international decision-makers and influencers to help these groups through many ways like, the Zoom program which make it easy to coordinate with anyone and ease of expressing all needs"*.

Other key considerations made by the project were based on the prevailing circumstances where obtaining permission from the local authorities to implement projects was becoming difficult and as such, the national NGOs combined similar activities from different projects which had a positive net effect on resource utilization in terms of time, human resource and potentially reaching a wider scope. Besides, training and capacity building of grass-root CSOs empowered them to run these initiatives in their villages and communities (mostly voluntarily) which not only reduced operational costs but largely contributed to program effectiveness (due to the existence of social trust among

local community members) as well as putting the project in the right trajectory as far as sustainability is concerned. This was also confirmed by a representative from one of the grant recipients (FAF).

> We conducted workshops and initiatives in the villages and cities. We make the women in the community work by themselves. There was a different project with UNFPA, and we have put our vision, but the project was stopped because of the current situation, but we try to connect all the projects. Because of the permits in the north.
>
> A representative of FAF

To sum this up, formation and working with different structures that were meant to facilitate dialogues, training of key stakeholders (especially youth and women), and the use of technology through the online dialogue platform were key strategies that promoted easy participation of more youth in the peace dialogues which proved to be both cost-effective and sustainable. However, the issue of inclusivity was partially realized, due to social and cultural considerations but it is a gradual process that requires the youth and women to be more demanding to fully realize the full benefits which are their full participation in governance, decision making, peacebuilding, and conflict transformation.

Catalytic, Coherence and Effectiveness:
The key project outcome was to create awareness of UNSCR 2250 and promote the necessary environment for its operationalization through the YPS agenda in Yemen. Particularly, the project sought to see an environment where women and youth have the necessary space and influence to fully participate and make a meaningful contribution in peacebuilding and inclusive governance.

In achieving this, the main strategy was to link local youth organizations, movements, associations, alliances, and different initiatives with other key stakeholders (especially those with high influence) in different peace dialogues and campaigns. Particularly, the peace dialogues (through the YPS structure, NDC, and the online peace dialogue platform) were meant to facilitate this process in addition to the different pieces of training, awareness campaigns, and direct engagement with key personalities of influence at local levels. The project thus was implemented at different levels, working with different stakeholders, particularly women and youth in advancing the YPS agenda in Yemen. This was partly articulated by a research representative from UN women who said "At the local level, the stakeholders in this project are activists, whether in women's or youth groups, and initiatives that work at the local level in any field related to the components of the resolution such as protection, partnership, or other components of the resolution. During the coming periods, the security committees will be among the stakeholders in the governorates, according to the advocacy issues that the youth consensus will work on. For example, there may be health, legal, and security bodies, depending on the issues that will be identified for advocacy".

It is highly believed that young people are the future of Yemen and they have great capacities for driving change at the local level. However, young men and women are still trying to reveal their visions and perceptions of the future of Yemen and the support they need in building national peace in order to spread the culture of coexistence and tolerance and equal access to resources, employment, and

services in an inclusive, responsible, transparent and law enforcement government to ensure the existence of a prosperous, equal and secure society in which all people live in the presence of justice and respect for human rights. This was further noted through one of the KIIs in Taiz who said "The main resources that can be exploited in building peace are youth because they are the main pillar in peacebuilding if they are educated and trained about peace and conflict resolution, even at the level of the neighborhood or the surrounding community in order to develop their skills to be able to build peace at the local or regional level if there are great efforts".

However, contextual challenges due to the outbreak of coronavirus, low government influence among its citizens, systemic marginalization of women and youth, and social and cultural considerations have been a hindrance for people to fully embrace and promote the participation of women and youth in inclusive governance, decision making, peacebuilding, and conflict transformation. A UNFPA representative who participated in the research particularly said *"Sensitivity to issues of peace and the participation of youth and women, especially in some governorates in the republic that are under the control of a specific political party affected the project in terms of the implementation period and extracting the permits which forced us to change the method of implementing the activity, it is true that the essence and the main goal did not change, but to extract the permits, we were asked to change the implementation mechanism in a certain way, therefore the permits and implementation were delayed in the first period during 2019. Corona in 2020 and its impact on holding external meetings that had to be held in order to neutralize the project and not be politicized, but they were not held due to the travel restrictions".* The issue of systemic marginalization and exclusion, specifically for the youth, was clearly articulated during the FGDs with the ToTs which was done remotely.

> Young people are looking for peace. Young people look for peace because the conflict has affected them to a large degree from every side, and some young people are starting to get frustrated and have lost confidence in many bodies that support peace because they do not see any improvement in the reality of peace. The marginalization is one of the youth's problems because they look for a real role for them to make their future, even if they only involve young people as a décor
>
> A ToT participant

In addition to the lack of employment for the youth, systemic / "cultural" challenges have continued to undermine the potential contribution of women and youth in peacebuilding and community development in general. *"The biggest challenges are unemployment. Unemployment has made young people dominated by this despair on the part of the youth. On the woman's side, the constraints and challenges are the presence of a deficient view of a wide segment of society that women are only tasked with their homes. This is a mistake. We need to intensify awareness, education, counseling, and guidance sessions. Not only the man's partner but the woman is the man's companion and she supports the man in all aspects of life"*, a religious leader in Birbasa (Taiz). On their individual rating of good governance, it came out that most of the participants were more knowledgeable (and by looking at the more information they felt they need) was largely revolving around transparency and accountability to citizens, as given in the table below.

Impact

The UNSCR 2250 is summarized into 5 key pillars:

1. **Participation:** It calls on the Member States to involve young people in conflict prevention and resolution, in violence prevention, and in the promotion of social cohesion. Member States are urged to consider ways to increase the representation of youth in decision-making at all levels.
2. **Protection:** Recalls the obligations to protect civilians, including young people, during armed conflict and in post-conflict times, and in particular protect young women and young men from all forms of sexual and gender-based violence.
3. **Prevention:** Urges the Member States and key stakeholders to facilitate an enabling environment and improve investments in socioeconomic development and quality education for young women and young men, and create mechanisms to promote a culture of peace, tolerance, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue that involve youth.
4. **Partnership:** Urges UN entities, international organizations, and civil society to actively increase political, financial, technical, and logistical support for young people's participation in peacebuilding. It also highlights the importance of partnering with youth, local communities, and non-governmental actors in countering violent extremism.
5. **Disengagement:** Support the meaningful reintegration of young women and men directly involved in armed conflict.

However, UNSCR2250 self-assessment among the individual research participants indicated a high level of awareness across the board with minor variations as observed by the descriptive statistics summarized in the table below.

Individual understanding of the UNSCR2250	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum	Mode
Overall	3.8966	0.0000	4.0000	5.0000	4.0000
15 – 18 years	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000
19 – 29 years	4.1091	0.0000	4.0000	5.0000	4.0000
30- 34 years	3.5455	0.0000	4.0000	5.0000	4.0000
35 – 45 years	3.6667	2.0000	4.0000	5.0000	3.0000
Female	3.8919	0.0000	4.0000	5.0000	4.0000
Male	3.9000	1.0000	4.0000	5.0000	4.0000

Which parts of the UNSCR 2250 do you need more awareness / sensitization on?	15 – 18 years.	19 – 29 years.	30 – 34 years.	35 – 45 years.	Female	Male	Overall
Building partnerships for technical & financial support and joint lobbying	0.0%	27.3%	27.3%	22.2%	27.0%	26.0%	26.4%
Conflict prevention through socioeconomic development	0.0%	5.5%	18.2%	11.1%	10.8%	8.0%	9.2%
How to engage youth in peace-building & conflict transformation	100.0%	30.9%	31.8%	22.2%	27.0%	34.0%	31.0%
Re-integration of young men & women directly engaged in the conflict	0.0%	25.5%	22.7%	22.2%	24.3%	24.0%	24.1%
Role of government & other players in the conflict to protect civilians	0.0%	10.9%	0.0%	22.2%	10.8%	8.0%	9.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

However, according to the stakeholders who participated in the research, it came out that most of them need more awareness or sensitization on how to engage the youth in peacebuilding & conflict transformation (31.0%) as well as re-integrating back men and women, who had participated/participating in the current conflict back to the communities.

It is critical to note that the research participants felt that they need more information and support in the area of building partnerships for technical and financial support and joint lobbying and advocacy initiatives. This directly connects with the fact that less than 10% of the respondents recalled resource mobilization as their organizational strength. This is termed as one of the challenges amid the fact that the youth's vision is developing plans for youth to be actively involved in building peace and making critical decisions through different avenues for dialogue. Their current support in driving the YPS agenda in Yemen mainly comes from international organizations, foundations, the UNFPA, the Social Fund, and other charitable initiatives. *"The support began in engaging youth, peace, and security by the United Nations Fund and its authority through the establishment of a youth consensus. Many young people attended the youth conference, and we must not forget the role of the United Nations envoy who promised to involve youth"*, one of the participants of the FGDs indicated.

However, a critical component or consideration in peacebuilding, as has been reported earlier, revolves around following the rule of law which was not very popular among the research participants, with only 18.4% reporting knowledge or awareness on this aspect. Of interest to note was that only 41.4% felt like they needed more information about this aspect despite it coming strongly as a key component/ingredient in peaceful coexistence, alongside respect to human rights. All in all, the prioritized areas for more sensitization and awareness-raising revolve around representation, resource allocation, and participatory governance which are more constitutional parameters that might require lobbying with the legislature as opposed to responsiveness to citizens' demands and consensus-oriented decision making which can be largely attributed to local peace process and negotiations.

Promoting good governance	Knowledgeable	Need more knowledge
Accountability to citizens	44.8%	34.5%
Transparency to citizens	51.7%	33.3%
Responsiveness to citizens demands	31.0%	32.2%
Equitable & inclusive representation	27.6%	49.4%
Effective and efficient utilization of resources	23.0%	44.8%
Following the rule of law	18.4%	41.4%
Participatory governance	24.1%	56.3%
Consensus oriented decision making	34.5%	39.1%

To further lament on this observation through FGD, the perceived importance of this aspect was particularly visible especially among those who participated in consultative meetings through this project, the importance of engaging women and youth in this process was evidence as they said *"Involving youth and women in society through education through social media platforms, dialogues, and discussions, because youth and women are more influential on the rest of the groups in society"*, a participant from the FGDs highlighted. this is also largely attributed to the individual efforts required by everyone in the society (with women and youth being the population majority)

has a role to play in bringing lasting peace and stability in Yemen. This was particularly picked up by a religious leader in Aden who said *"Everyone must know that the situation can only be corrected by personal efforts of all people"* which provides an opportunity for intentional inclusion of everyone in local-level peace discussions and negotiations. As much as the current conflict is perceived to be political with origin in 2 political parties differing in ideologies, women and youth have been particularly identified as key parties to end the conflict at the local level through:

- Spreading public awareness among the community and resolve local conflicts before turning to the authorities or law enforcement organs if the situation escalates.
- Supporting in upholding the decisions and resolutions of the Supreme Council and local authorities.

From the descriptive statistics given in the table below, individual participation in peacebuilding and conflict transformation processes and dialogues, the participants rated themselves slightly above average with a median and modal score (0 minimal / no participation and 5 meaning high participation) of 3 each as summarized in the table below.

Individual participation in peace building and conflict transformation processes and dialogues	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum	Mode
Overall	3.4483	0.0000	3.0000	5.0000	3.0000
15 – 18 years	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000
19 – 29 years	3.5273	0.0000	4.0000	5.0000	3.0000
30- 34 years	3.7727	1.0000	3.0000	5.0000	3.0000
35 – 45 years	3.2222	1.0000	3.0000	5.0000	3.0000
Female	3.6486	0.0000	4.0000	5.0000	3.0000
Male	3.3000	1.0000	3.0000	5.0000	3.0000

In terms of their individual experience in peace building and conflict transformation, majority of the participants had between 1 – 5 years. To note however was that a significant 25.3% had less than 1-year experience as shown in the figures below:

Individual's experience in peace building and conflict transformation * Gender
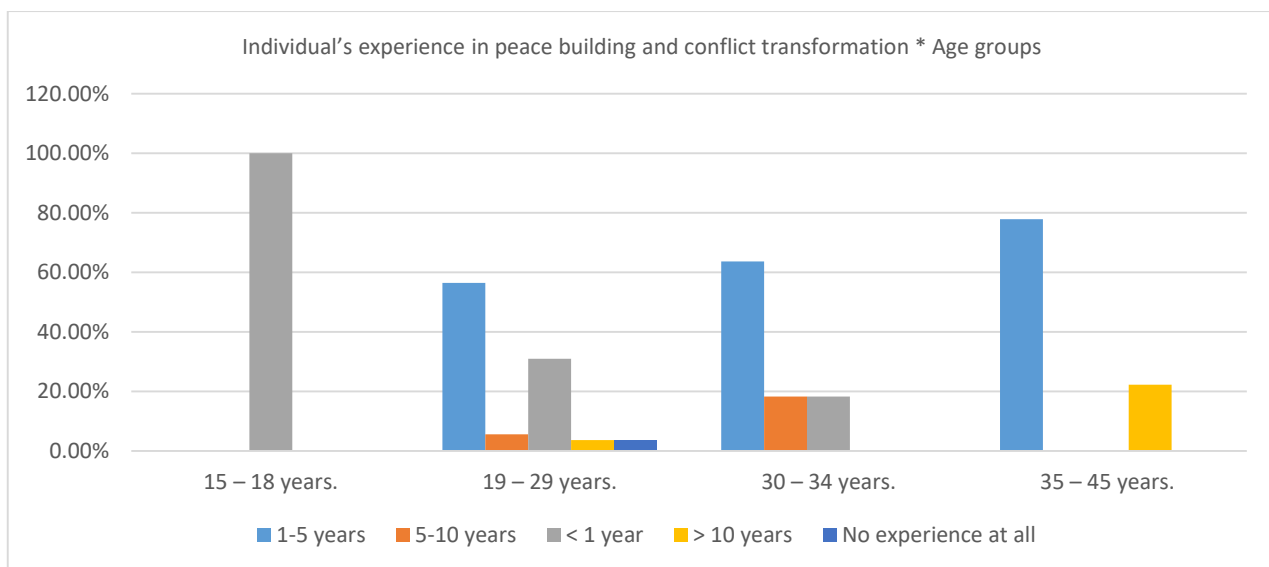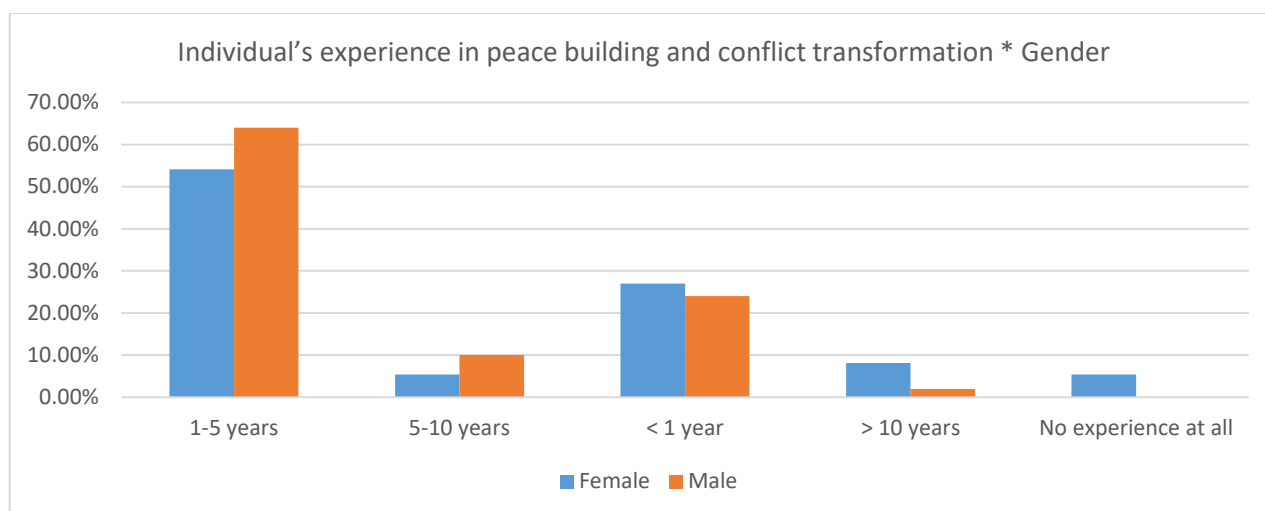
Despite their acknowledged participation in peacebuilding dialogues, most of them attend these meetings on a quarterly basis with only 26.4% (35.2% females and 20.0% males) reporting their participation on monthly basis. Those aged between 35 – 35 years were the ones who recorded monthly participation in these dialogue meetings. This summary is given in the table below.

Frequency of participating in peace-building processes and dialogues	15 – 18 years.	19 – 29 years.	30 – 34 years.	35 – 45 years.	Female- أنثى	Male- ذكر	Overall
Not participated	0.0%	9.2%	9.1%	0.0%	5.4%	10.0%	8.1%
Monthly	100.0%	25.4%	13.6%	55.6%	35.2%	20.0%	26.4%
Quarterly	0.0%	32.7%	54.6%	11.1%	37.8%	34.0%	35.6%
Semi annually	0.0%	10.9%	4.5%	0.0%	2.7%	12.0%	8.1%
Annually	0.0%	21.8%	18.2%	33.3%	18.9%	24.0%	21.8%

The evaluation also assessed the individual capacities of research participants on the UNSCR 2250 (which was the basis of YPS) by looking at % young people (male & female youth) with knowledge of the 5 key pillars of the UNCSR 2250 resolutions (with an above-average score, i.e., 3 and above) contextualized for Yemen. It emerged that 89.7% of those who participated in the quantitative survey were aware of the UNCSR 2250, which largely informed the YPS agenda, after contextualization. As a general observation from the field, selected representatives from the local youth and women CSOs and other influential personalities who participated in the research have rated their knowledge about the UNSCR 2250 at above-average but acknowledged their need for more information in: Building partnerships for technical & financial support and joint lobbying; engaging youth in peacebuilding & conflict transformation; and Re-integration of young men & women directly engaged in the conflict. The following table shows the individual capacities of the respondents in peacebuilding and conflict resolution, the individual responses according to gender and age-groups are given in the table below.

| B6: Which areas of peace building and conflict resolution are you more conversant with?	15 – 18 years.	19 – 29 years.	30 – 34 years.	35 – 45 years.	Female- الأنثى	Male- ذكر	Overall
Conflict settlement & social contracts	0.0%	16.4%	22.7%	22.2%	18.9%	18.0%	18.4%
Conflict transformation (addressing root causes of conflict)	0.0%	47.3%	27.3%	22.2%	37.8%	40.0%	39.1%
Improved relations among community members	100.0%	36.4%	50.0%	55.6%	43.2%	42.0%	42.5%
B7: Which areas of peace building and conflict resolution do you need more knowledge / information?	15 – 18 years.	19 – 29 years.	30 – 34 years.	35 – 45 years.	Female- الأنثى	Male- ذكر	Overall
Conflict settlement & social contracts	0.0%	43.6%	50.0%	22.2%	43.2%	42.0%	42.5%
Conflict transformation (addressing root causes of conflict)	0.0%	40.0%	31.8%	44.4%	37.8%	38.0%	37.9%
Improved relations among community members	100.0%	12.7%	18.2%	22.2%	13.5%	18.0%	16.1%
Others	0.0%	3.6%	0.0%	11.1%	5.4%	2.0%	3.4%

When doing a self-assessment of their capacities for peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and promoting good governance, the general observation was that most participants rated themselves above average (3 out of a possible maximum of 5) as given in the summarized scores in the table below.

individual knowledge on good governance, decision making and peace building	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum	Mode
Overall	3.0575	0.0000	3.0000	5.0000	3.0000
15 – 18 years	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
19 – 29 years	3.1818	0.0000	3.0000	5.0000	3.0000
30- 34 years	2.7727	0.0000	3.0000	4.0000	3.0000
35 – 45 years	3.3333	2.0000	3.0000	3.0000	5.0000
Female	3.0811	0.0000	3.0000	5.0000	3.0000
Male	3.0400	0.0000	3.0000	5.0000	3.0000

With so many players in the Yemen conflict, the National Dialogue Structure (NDS) emphasizes collecting the views and opinions of local CSOs in efforts trying to resolve the conflict in Yemen. It is also acknowledged that the importance of holistically supporting young people in Yemen for them to champion the peacebuilding process as reported by one of the leaders in Taiz who said *"Young people can be supported by implementing training and rehabilitation courses and providing all basic services that enable them to continue their journey towards achieving peace, whether financial, moral, and technical support"*. With this being a critical element of the UNSCR 2250 and by and large the YPS agenda in Yemen, this definitely ought to form part of the peace discussions and dialogues in Yemen. According to age dis-aggregation, respondents aged 15 – 18 years were 100%, 19 – 29 years were 67.3%, 30 – 34 years were 54.5% while 35 – 45 years were 55.6%. The descriptive statistics of the individual ratings are summarized in the table below.

Individual understanding of the peace building dialogue structures in Yemen	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum	Mode
Overall	2.7931	0.0000	3.0000	5.0000	3.0000
15 – 18 years	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000
19 – 29 years	2.8192	0.0000	3.0000	5.0000	3.0000
30- 34 years	2.5455	1.0000	3.0000	5.0000	3.0000
35 – 45 years	3.0000	2.0000	3.0000	5.0000	2.0000
Female	2.6757	0.0000	3.0000	5.0000	3.0000
Male	2.8800	0.0000	3.0000	5.0000	3.0000

Individual ratings indicate an average understanding (given the fact that the respondents ought to be active participants in these structures) of the peacebuilding dialogue structures in Yemen. With the average understanding of the YPS dialogue structure, it came out that 44.8% of the respondents acknowledged their need for more information in order to enhance their understanding of the overall agenda of the YPS peace dialogue structure in Yemen. There is however some level of awareness on the contribution made by the support given to women and youth in order to increase their profile, influence, and role in enhancing local capacities for peacebuilding and conflict transformation. *"The United Nations Peace Fund supported in UN resolutions. Also, the United Nations Women Commissioner. Female participation is very weak, and participation is very weak"*, FGD with local activists, local initiatives, and movements in Taiz. According to these participants, the areas where they need more information are shown in the graph below.
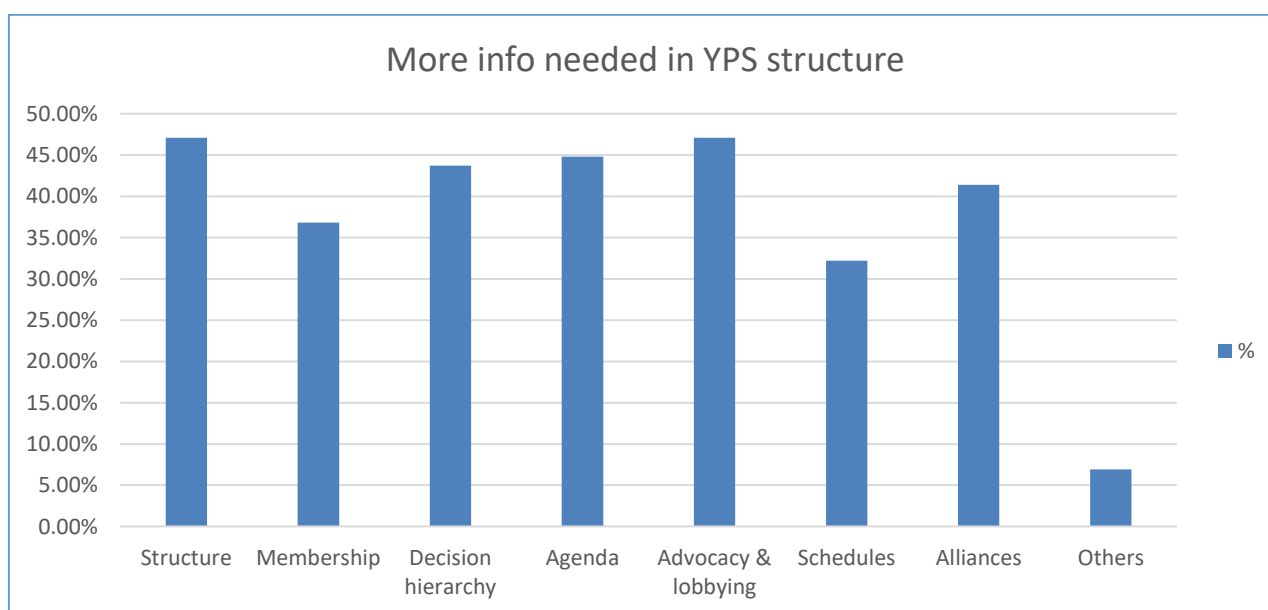
Though the above statistics reveal the existence of a functional YPS structure, it is key to note that most of these participants do not fully understand critical aspects of the YPS structure and thus moving back to the basics and create a general awareness of this structure might be helpful for them to appreciate it and possibly be active participants in the dialogues or even suggest changes that can make a lasting impact on sustainable peace dialogues, especially involving women and youth. To note also was that 47.1% (which is around half of the total number of research participants) of local youth and women CSOs need more information/sensitization on its advocacy or lobbying initiatives without overlooking the agenda (44.8%), schedules (32.2%) and existing alliances for peacebuilding and related advocacy/lobbying 41.4%). Given the acknowledged and appreciated the contribution of UN Women and UNFPA and the Peace-Building Fund in general, the UN and its local implementing

partners have a unique opportunity to continue working with women and youth (with the optimism about their contribution highly regarded by key community leaders) in driving the peacebuilding and conflict transformation agenda in Yemen. However, a critical contributor to the conflict, continued action by international and powerful actors, needs to be addressed due to the indiscriminate bombings and shelling which have potentially hindered the local efforts in building peace as reported by one of the key informants in Taiz who said *"Individual efforts were from youth initiatives to end the siege, but they didn't succeed, due to the intransigence of one of the conflicting parties"*, a neighborhood leader in Al Dhahra (Taiz governorate).

On individual rating (0 being least important and 5 being most important) using the quantitative approach, it came out (from the descriptive statistics summarized below) that males had a higher positive attitude for involving women and youth and women in peacebuilding and decision making in comparison to female respondents. Similarly, the younger population (less than 30 years) felt this was more important in comparison to their older counterparts.

Individual perceptions on involvement of women and youth in peace building and decision making	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum	Mode
Overall	4.0000	0.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000
15 – 18 years	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000
19 – 29 years	4.2182	0.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000
30- 34 years	3.7727	1.0000	4.0000	5.0000	5.0000
35 – 45 years	3.1111	0.0000	3.0000	5.0000	3.0000
Female	3.8108	0.0000	4.0000	5.0000	5.0000
Male	4.1400	0.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000

Despite the higher rating of importance among male and youthful respondents, the general observation was that there was a positive attitude towards the involvement of women and youth in decision-making and peacebuilding processes. It came out that 87.4% of the research participants had a positive attitude towards the involvement of women and youth in decision-making and peacebuilding processes. This was further affirmed through discussions with local leaders which revealed a high level of optimism with their youthful population and women have given their potential role they could play in leadership and local peacebuilding and conflict transformation. *"Women have a big role to play in building peace. Women and youth are part of decision-making and policy-making, whether at the local level or the private sector, because peace needs new faces to take control of matters in governance, and youth with women play a pivotal role in different sectors to build links between local communities and raise public awareness about peace"*, a community leader in Taiz (Bani Issa).

On rating their individual organizations' capacities (women & youth organizations, networks, and alliances) to implement good governance and peacebuilding project, the majority of the participants rated their organizations at 4 out of 5 with the mean and median scores being 3.4253 and 4.0 respectively. On further looking at the reasons behind the high rating of their individual organizations, it came out that local presence and community trust was ranked highly with 77.0% of the research participants acknowledging this. This was particularly given as a key reason for an organization to have influence where through the FGD and KIIs, it came out that actors who are close to the local population (which is a key characteristic of grass-root CSOs and national/local organizations) have a lot of influence in promoting rights-based programming looking at peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and promoting youth and women empowerment. Another key factor given was the ability of these organizations and actors to form alliances and networks with other local entities which share the same

vision and mission. It also came out in the FGDs and KIIs that different collaborative efforts are taking place in trying to create an inclusive peacebuilding process. However, critical organizational competencies such as resource mobilization, accountable use of resources, adoptive programming, and transparent leadership are areas that still need more emphasis and work in building and developing strong grass-root CSOs. This summary is further presented in the chat below.

Organization strength

Category	Percentage
Others	26.4%
External linkages	26.4%
Building local partnerships, alliances and networks	57.5%
Resource mobilization	8.0%
Accountable use of resources	21.8%
Adoptive and flexible programming	11.5%
Institutional knowledge & experience in good governance	34.5%
Transparent leadership	41.4%
Local presence and community trust	77.0%

FGDs with the youthful population of activists in Yemen revealed weak structures of governance have failed to create a conducive environment where the local populations can uphold the rule of law and respect for human rights. It was also reported that state actors particularly in law enforcement, defense, legislation, judiciary and provision of essential social services have the primary responsibility of creating an environment for peaceful co-existence among community members, working closely with other non-state actors such as the local CSOs and traditionally and locally accessible actors such as the local administration, religious leaders and community laws as reported by one participant who benefited from a ToT training who said *"To add to what colleagues said, the local authorities in the districts, tribal norms, community laws, sheikhs and Aqal (neighborhood leader) have a role in enhancing security, as in some villages according to the customs and traditions of the region"*. However, the youth also acknowledged other influential figures within the society such as those in the academic front (university professors) as well as the wider influence and coverage brought in by the local media.

What came out from these discussions however was that the popularity and influence of actors in driving the peace agenda in Yemen is their accessibility to the local populations. This has somewhat affected the popularity and influence of state actors (with the government, through its governance institutions, already struggling to establish local influence and legitimacy) who are perceived as unavailable when needed/required by the local population, particularly the youth. As such, the influence of local councils, CSOs, and international actors in Yemen has been acknowledged because of their regular interaction with the local population and the nature of their programming. "The main

actors are the leaders of the institutions, and if communication with them is required, we go to their offices, and there is no difficulty in reaching them, given that the conditions are somewhat stable for us. the controlling, ruling, and actor party is the transitional council, while the official authorities are not present and matters are somewhat complicated", one of the participants from the FGDs mentioned.

Of importance to note was organizational strategic priorities which might not produce the much-needed impact at a higher level as opposed to when these organizations were working or linking with the identified centers of power and influence such as the local authorities or working in inclusive governance which could raise the profile of the youthful population (given that these are youth-led or youth-focused organizations) and women. Given the prevailing circumstances, working with local communities on civilian protection and civic education would provide a widespread and immediate impact especially among the youthful population who are mostly at the fore-front of armed conflicts. However, this does not address the negative impact of indiscriminate bombings by the big players in the on-going conflict.

Appreciating the limited influence (and trust) and low capacity of state institutions and deterioration in delivery of critical social services, the UN Country Team (UNCT) in Yemen is spearheading a unified strategic framework focusing on peacebuilding; sustaining basic service delivery; Social Cohesion, and Protection; and resilience building. In achieving this, the UNCT has acknowledged the potential and immense contribution of women and youth (in line with UNSCR 2250 and USCR 1325) and working closely with whatever is remaining in the name of state actors (especially at governorate level downwards) and grass-root non-state actors[1]. Despite the fact that most of the interviewed have a broad understanding of the YPS dialogue and advocacy structures in place, there is still some effort required to translate this agenda to the local populations (especially among women and the youthful population who play an active role in armed conflicts) and working with them in the areas of international negotiations and lobbying, especially targeting the big players to the conflict.

According to one of the implementing partners (Awam foundation), it was revealed that the partners worked with UN-Women, just before 2010, on resolution 1325 in the National Dialogue with no less than 30% of the participants coming from independent women's coalitions, such as Belqis' grand-daughter, peace partners, the Women Yemen Union and youth initiatives. These included training on capacity building, all of which fall under Track No. 3. Track number two is under the sponsorship of UN Women and international organizations such as Feminist Accord, Al Salam Company, 9 + 1 Group, Peace Path, and others. Local actors have established and implemented the 1325 Axes and established an alliance called a (Wasl) between women leaders in Yemen from most of the governorates of the Republic, even from women living in the Diaspora, to support each other, to unify their voices and to know their needs; so that young men and women can make their voices heard. So, we could have representatives in UN Women.

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1   UN Strategic Framework for Yemen2017-2019 , https://yemen.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-08/unct-ye-strategic-framework-2017-2019-doc.pdf

> The implemented meetings provided us with the opportunity to hear from youth organizations what challenges and obstacles they face in implementing Resolution 2250 and what are their priorities through their experiences, perspectives and the outputs of these consultative meetings that contributed to the drafting of consultative papers that will benefit stakeholders interested in the Resolution and Yemen as a whole so that they have knowledge about youth priorities and the stage in Yemen
>
> A UNFPA representative

However, from these same discussions, it was clear that the project has facilitated discussions and dialogues with both state and non-state actors on the YPS agenda and issues affecting women and youth. However, evidence of constitutional changes as a result of this dialogue process was not visible, especially during KIIs with grant recipients. *Young people were present even with or without the support of the local authorities. The youth had a great role, whether at the local level in resolving conflicts or building peace and advocating women's and youth issues at the level of local communities or at the governorate level, but they did not reach the national level, which is one of the priorities that we are working on*, YWOB representative. To be noted also was that in some areas, the local authorities were not very supportive of project activities as reported by a FAF representative (one of the grant recipients) who said: *"The local authorities in the south helped a lot but, in the north, the local authorities stop such projects like Sana'a and Dhamar"*.

To support the internationally recognized government in providing a conducive environment, the local organizations could pay close attention to increasing the visibility and influence of the identified government structures (defense, law enforcement, judiciary, legislation, and provision of social services) among the local communities. However, this track of programming is also not very common/popular among the local organizations. This was coming out despite the fact that the youthful population had an overall vision for peace, stability, and prosperity in Yemen as further reiterated by the youth in Retaz (Sana'a) who said that their vision was in ending the war, building peace, economic empowerment of the youth and give women space to play their roles in peacebuilding and community development. In addition to this, they also placed importance on *"Integrating youth in the volunteering initiatives in order to build the country. In addition to training youth on peacebuilding and decreasing violence. To provide job opportunities and education without discrimination. In addition to giving the women her full opportunity"*, FGD participant, Retaz (Sana'a).

To sum this up, the project and other existing initiatives have collectively contributed to creating more awareness on the importance of women and youth to participate in initiatives for the well-being of their communities (including peacebuilding and conflict transformation). Specifically, the project has been a build-up to raising more awareness on key UN resolutions (UNSCR 2250, UNSCR 1325) that have been the basis for the YPS agenda in Yemen and have acted as a catalyst, at the local level, to creating the necessary mind-shifts among key local stakeholders at centers of power on the importance of participatory and inclusive peacebuilding and reconciliation processes. However, the key consideration that needs more attention and focus is trying to integrate the positive aspects of existing tribal systems and structures (based on their social trust) and strengthening key government institutions (judiciary, local councils, and law enforcement) that have low visibility and social trust but

very critical (alongside the department of social services) in creating an enabling environment and space for women and youth to meaningfully participate in local peace processes and inclusive governance.

Sustainability, ownership and conflict sensitivity (DNH):

The project employed a sustainable implementation approach by closely setting up and working with the necessary structures that facilitated inclusive peacebuilding dialogues and advocacy. Training and empowering grass-root CSOs and incorporating national NGOs as grant recipients / implementing partners provided a conducive environment for building local capacities for peace and inclusive governance. A research participant from YLDF confirmed consultation meetings between UN Women, UNFPA, and youth networks of the YLDN popularly known as "the consultation board". The efforts to raise local awareness on UNSCR 2250 specifically through debates, training and FGDs with the targeted groups (youth) promoted their awareness and gave them a sense of responsibility to participate in enhancing its pillars. Working with and lobbying local centers of power and other influential actors to the peace dialogues in Yemen (such as UN commissioner, community organizations, local networks, conflicted parties, and the international community) raised the profile of women and youth to participate in these processes and provided the right trajectory to sustain and build on the gains realized through this project.

Besides the coordinated efforts and gains realized in terms of awareness and positive attitudes on the inclusion of women and youth in key social affairs (including peacebuilding), the situation in Yemen is still very sensitive due to the political interests vested in the conflict. This was particularly reported by a research participant from YLDF who said: *"There were a number of consultation meetings, there were different frameworks to work based on them in order to prioritize the participation of women and youth (males and females) in peacebuilding. The UNFPA worked on the strategic framework of implementing 2250 along with a group of consultants. It has been discussed and illustrated in the comprehensive conference. We work in the group on youth recommendations and consultations at the level of the governorates and the state, because we cannot work more than what we did because the situation in Yemen is very sensitive"*.

Particularly, the youth reported that a stable political environment, economic stability, and a secure environment are necessary for these gains to be sustained and realize the future vision for youth in Yemen. This particularly came out from an FGD conducted online with Youth and Peace Alliance:

> "
> The vision must include a stable political, economic and security situation, and if there is a consensus between the government authorities, then we can say that the youth have a vision because in light of the conflict there is no education, empowerment, or training for young people in accordance with their vision
>
> An FGD with YPA

To sum this up, significant work has been accomplished in building local capacities for peace. A key future consideration will be addressing the broader political dynamics of the conflict in Yemen (which is beyond the scope of this project) and incorporating key government institutions (justice and law

enforcement system, local councils), other key centers of power at the local level and positive aspects of the tribal systems to have an integrated structure (as an enhancement of the structures and platforms that were already established and supported through this project) to create a localized conducive environment that will raise the profile of women and youth in a practical sense for their full participation in the social well-being of their communities (such as inclusive governance, decision making, peacebuilding, and conflict transformation). This will in turn create a conducive environment towards the realization of SDG5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), SDG10 (Reduce inequality within and among countries), and SDG16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels) which will greatly address the key historical drivers of the political tensions and conflicts based on tribal factions in Yemen.

Time sensitivity, risk tolerance and innovation:

From a conflict resolution perspective, the timing of the project was right given the fact that the local communities (especially those who have been the primary targets of this project, i.e. youth and women) were all united by a united vision for peace and stability in Yemen. However, the local political environment that was characterized by different allegiance to the different parties to the conflict made it difficult for the project to be implemented freely due to the political sensitivity and the minimum of maintaining neutrality and impartiality, without compromising on the overall objectives of the project.

By working with key centers of power through the different structures formed and supported through this project as well as providing the required flexibility, the potential risks associated with organizational reputation and delivering the project were greatly minimized as all the implementing partners were permitted to deliver the project. The innovative approach used (as reported in the efficiency section) not only enhanced efficient delivery of project activities but greatly mitigated the identified potential risks by empowering and supporting national NGOs and local initiatives that enjoyed community acceptance and social trust, which was very key to the successful implementation of this project.

General Conclusions and recommendations:

The design of the project was participatory and inclusive as it engaged the YWP, OSESGY, Track II dialogues and activities, UN Women and UNFPA. The project objectives were **relevant** to the context and demanding needs as they thrived to increase the access to knowledge of young people about UNSCR 2250 and avenues for peacebuilding. The project attempted to build the women and youth capacity and create a space for them to pursue meaningful and effective peacebuilding initiatives and activities in Yemen. Evidence of relevance of the project included prioritizing the elimination of prevailing hatred and promoting an atmosphere for reconciliation on the various levels, starting with the family level up to the state actors and duty bearers level. While all efforts have not been spared to achieve the five pillar of the UNSCR 2250, the participation of youth and women in peacebuilding, advocacy and lobbying needs to be materialized more concretely. This is evident from the statistics which reported low participation in political lobbying and conflict resolution. Efforts should capitalize on the interest in involving women and youth in peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

Several reasons contributed to the **efficient** implementation of the project, such as the collective efforts channeled by the national NGOs to make proper utilization of the resources and widening the coverage. The women were empowered to participate in peacebuilding through workshops and initiatives which attempted to connect all the projects. Further, integration of roles and complementarity of efforts between the UN Women specifically with its experience within the feminist consensus and the UNFPA with its relations and first steps within the youth components had a positive impact on preparing the environment for active participation of women and youth in future peacebuilding and inclusive governance projects. The efficiency of the project was enhanced by the sufficient training sessions and manuals which resulted in a large-volume knowledge production to serve the participants and stakeholders for the coming two years after the project's closure. Yet issues in inclusivity were voiced, and future programing needs to take into consideration the complex social and cultural fabric of the Yemeni society, and further dive into the texture and male dominancy issues of the targeted governorates and districts.

The **coherence** of the project manifested through linking the local youth organizations, movements, associations, alliances, and different initiatives with other key stakeholders. However, the UN (through the UNCT) needs to reexamine the existing linkages between the local and international level peace dialogues and advocacy initiatives in Yemen given the visible disconnect, especially among the local populations. The visibility and influence of the existing YPS dialogue and advocacy also need to be reevaluated and promoted for youth (including the local level youth organizations) to develop an interest in this structure and proactively seek more information in terms of the existing initiatives (both locally and internationally).

Further, it is critical to promote state actors' visibility and influence by linking them and supporting them to actively engage and coordinate with other non-state actors (NSA) at local levels. A key lesson to learn from the Somalia Stabilization Fund[2] was working and partnering with local state institutions to promote government visibility among the local populations given the fact that poor and inconsistent delivery of services and economic opportunities (especially for the youthful populations)

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[2] http://stabilityfund.so/

has largely contributed to the escalation of the conflict. There is a common vision for a peaceful and prosperous Yemen shared by the different parties at the local level. However, a critical variation and point for consideration are how this vision is translated into affirmative action by these different parties and aligning these affirmative actions with the key identified drivers of the conflict (politics, economy, awareness, and governance). As such, working with both NSA and state actors in addressing these fundamental issues is critical.

The **effectiveness** of the project showed in linking the present with the future where, as voiced by a UN Women representative, potential areas for applying the outcome of the project still lie ahead. While the knowledge was rated high, the participants still needed additional information on building partnerships for technical and financial support, and joint lobbying, engaging youth in peacebuilding and conflict transformation, and re-integration of young men and women directly engaged in the conflict. As such, several components of the UNSCR 2250 need to be elaborated, viz. partnership, disengagement, and reintegration. Further support on these components may still be needed in the field implementation of the project outcomes. Other issues which reduced the effectiveness of the project included the outbreak of coronavirus, low government influence among its citizens, systemic marginalization of women and youth, lack of proper awareness (especially among the majority of the population) on basic human rights and the rule of law, and the social and cultural factors.

The engagement of the UN commissioner, community organizations, local networks, conflicted parties, and the international community with women and youth participants of the project had a positive effect on paving the way for the **sustainability** of the project outcomes and its strategic impact. The outcomes of the projects are expected to contribute to achieving the SDG5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), SDG10 (Reduce inequality within and among countries), and SDG16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels). However, the unstable political environment, economic deterioration, and a volatile security situations stand as threats to the sustainability of the project's gains.

Since the project was implemented in the Yemeni sensitive context, the loyalties to the various conflict dividends created several difficulties in front of a free project implementation, reduced the neutrality and impartiality, and compromised the overall objectives of the project. However, a key to the successful implementation of this project was empowering and supporting the national NGOs and local initiatives that enjoyed community buy-in and social acceptance.