Empowering Yemeni youth towards peace
Ensuring access to information and participation
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Executive summary
Since 2014, Yemen has been facing a tragic and extended political crisis that has severely impacted the country’s future. According to the United Nations, following six years of war, the country is going through the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. In December 2018, parties involved in the conflict agreed on a series of confidence-building measures known as the “Stockholm Agreement”, under the coordination of the UN Special Envoy for Yemen. One of the most striking observations of these talks was the lack of participation of Yemeni youth who represent 70% of the population.

Youth in Yemen struggle to find reliable sources of information on the peacebuilding process, which includes the ongoing negotiations in a context where independent media is under attack. They also lack spaces to freely share their perspectives on the kind of society they aspire to live in. Opportunities for exchange, participation, and dialogues on peace among the youth and decision-makers are minimal.

In December 2019, UNESCO started implementing a project funded by the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (UNPBF) titled “Empowering Yemeni youth towards peace: ensuring access to information and participation.” The project aimed to reconnect the Yemeni youth with the peacebuilding process, raise their voices, make peacebuilding more inclusive and participatory, foster the free flow of information, and arrange two-way communication between the main stakeholders and decision-makers. The project, targeting five governorates in Yemen (Aden, Hadhramaut, Hodeida, Sanaa and Taiz), sought to strengthen youth engagement through the use of media, communication and technology. This has been done with the objective to achieve two primary targeted outcomes:

1. Improve access to information for youth on the peacebuilding process, in order to increase their knowledge and make informed decisions.

2. Provide Yemeni youth with safe spaces of dialogue, which includes the use of social media, online surveys, youth debates, and radio programmes, to enable them to voice their needs and opinions with decision-makers and duty bearers.

UNESCO partnered with RNW Media in implementing this intervention. RNW Media is a Netherland-based international non-governmental organisation focusing on inclusion and empowerment of youth through digital communities.

UNESCO and RNW Media have a long-standing presence in Yemen, based on a network built over the years through activities and project implementation. Their engagement with Yemeni youth is based on regular feedback and interaction with more than 200,000 young online users who follow RNW Media’s Manasati30 platform. Manasati30 platform has its own website and is present on different social media platforms, it manages the sixth-largest Facebook page in Yemen, providing space of free expression for the youth in Yemen and amplifying their voices and opinions.
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Budget: USD 1.5 M
Duration: 24 Months
Location: Sana’a, Aden, Taiz, Hudeydah and Hadhramout
Primary beneficiaries: Yemeni youth, men and women, 18 to 30 years old

OUTCOMES

01 Improving access to information

UNESCO strived to improve access to information for Yemeni youth through building capacities of young Yemeni journalists to produce content that ensures balanced coverage of the peacebuilding process. The produced content necessitated the development of an information platform to disseminate messages to the youth. In addition, the intervention supported youth-led peacebuilding initiatives through the “My Solution” activity, further promoting content creation for the youth and by the youth.

02 Creating safe places of dialogue

In order for the Yemeni Youth to be able to express themselves freely and in a secure and welcoming environment, UNESCO and its partners worked around different platforms, either physical or online, to provide them with safe places to exchange. Whether through online surveys (Yemeni Youth Barometer), debates, community radio programmes, or through their participation in international platforms, Yemeni youth were given the opportunity to share among themselves but also with decision-makers their views and opinions.
IMPROVING ACCESS TO INFORMATION

UNESCO organised a series of training targeting young Yemeni journalists to reinforce their capacities and ensure a balanced and unbiased coverage of the situation in Yemen. Young journalists were trained on professional peacebuilding reporting, conflict-sensitive coverage and fact-checked content. Trainings followed a participatory and inclusive methodology that delivered knowledge, emphasised skill development and focused on forming attitudes.

A Training of Trainers on Peace Journalism, facilitated by Media Association for Peace (MAP), was organized with the aim to create a pool of well-trained journalists able to share the knowledge acquired with their peers. The top trainees were invited to lead on the ground training coordinated by RNW Media to broaden the reach of this activity.

Based on the results of this first capacity building activity, five additional training courses were organized corresponding to the needs expressed by young Yemeni journalists. MAP organized an additional training on International Humanitarian Law and Human rights, while Al Jazeera Media Institute (AJMI) facilitated four training events on Digital Journalism, Media Outlet Management, Safety of Journalists and Reporting on Gender-based Violence.

The project trained 135 journalists, half of them women, who were able to create content and be published on various platforms during the project.

The intervention supported the development of a dedicated webpage titled “Road to Peace”, hosted and managed by the Manasati30 website. The page is dedicated to sharing peacebuilding content in Yemen and works to amplify youth voices and opinions. The platform and its social media outlets currently have over 260,000 followers, and their creative content has over 4.8 million views on Facebook.

Over 158 pieces of diverse and high-quality content are published by 108 young journalists supported by the project on the Manasati30’s Facebook page and “Road to Peace website” (more than 65,000 page views). According to a survey led on the Manasati30 website, 92% of the participants confirmed that their understanding of the peacebuilding process has improved, demonstrating that the published material is supporting communication of information about the peace-building in Yemen and contributing to better inform the youth.

Through “My Solution”, the project supported and showcased success stories of young Yemeni peacebuilders who engaged local communities in peacebuilding activities. This called on applicants to provide their solution to peacebuilding problems in Yemen to win the Peacebuilders Award. Selected winners were supported for three months to launch their activity, document results, create a video, and promote their activities through the Manasati30 platform website and social media channels.

In total, 14 initiatives were selected, representing five governorates of Yemen covered by the project. During this activity and with the support of the project, they were able to broaden their outreach and deepen their work, by organizing specific activities in relation with their area of interest. While some peacebuilders organized awareness raising campaigns, others focused on training, live events, debates, the creation of social experiments or the production of films and motion graphics videos. Successful online campaigns were led through social media, engaging thousands of people. Each solution had the opportunity to be showcased through a dedicated video presenting their work, produced by Manasati30. Videos produced under this activity recorded more than 445,000 views, inspiring many other young people to take up similar initiatives.
CREATING SAFE PLACES FOR DIALOGUE

In order for the Yemeni Youth to be able to express themselves freely and in a secure and welcoming environment, UNESCO and its partners worked around different platforms, either physical or online, to provide them with safe places to exchange. Whether through online surveys (Yemeni Youth Barometer), debates, community radio programmes, or through their participation in international platforms, Yemeni youth were given the opportunity to share among themselves but also with decision-makers their views and opinions.

Offering a first space for dialogue, the project invited the Yemeni youth to express themselves through a series of 6 online surveys related to peace in Yemen, launched on Manasati30 website.

The surveys, known as the Yemeni Youth Barometer, aimed to understand Yemeni youth priorities, needs and aspirations. They were completed by social media listening projects, providing more insight and data on each subject covered.

Survey analysis and social listening findings were shared online through Manasati30 as well as compiled into reporting booklets that were shared online and with the main stakeholders and decision makers, amplifying the youth voice and supporting them in sharing further their opinions and discussing alternatives.

Debates provide a formidable platform for discussion and exchange in an open minded and tolerant environment, providing the debaters with the ability to express themselves in an argumentative way and confront their ideas to new ones, allowing them to develop and enrich their thoughts.

This tool was used in the project as a way for young Yemenis to discuss and confront their vision about peace building in Yemen. One national and four regional debates were organized throughout the project, engaging over 650 Yemeni young men and women. The presence of local decision-makers in those public debates, designed and organised by youth-led organisations, contributed to foster intellectual dialogue and two-way communication.

To prepare the participants and give them the keys to present, explain and argue their position, a debate toolkit was developed through a workgroup led by a regional expert, and trainings were organized to introduce and build the skills of the youth on the art of debating.

After online survey and debates, community radio provides a very good platform to access information with a broad local reach and a good engagement.

UNESCO cooperated with Community Media Network (CMN) to oversee the implementation and broadcasting of 210 Radio programmes by five local radio stations in Aden, Hadramout, Mahrah, Mareb, and Shabwa governorates to empower community radio stations in Yemen to produce and broadcast content related to the peacebuilding process for the youth and by the youth. Each radio paid a particular attention to women and youth inclusion in their programs to ensure representation.

344 young people (47% women) participated in the radio programmes. To enhance a two way communication, decision-makers and government officials were invited as guests in some programmes. To broaden the reach of the different programs and ensure access to information, the content was uploaded on online platforms such as SoundCloud or YouTube.

The project supported online participation of young Yemeni voices in UNESCO led events, such as the Media and Information Literacy Arab Regional Conference and the Regional Arab Panel, part of the global World Press Freedom Day celebration hosted in Namibia in May 2021.

Those events offered a venue for young Yemenis to be speakers in international panels, discussing hate speech, media freedom and the information disorder during COVID 19. While raising awareness about the situation of Yemen, it allowed the Yemeni youth to raise their concern and made their voice heard at a global level.
1. The project topic, peacebuilding, is inherently sensitive in a country where war has been raging for seven years, and media and public opinions are polarised. The project adopted a neutral, balanced and fact-checked approach, focusing on the needs and aspirations of youth and women, which worked well in the Yemen context.

2. With the onset of COVID-19, a certain number of on-the-ground activities were threatened and had to be modified to ensure health and safety. The project could adapt quickly to the new conditions by moving some implementation to online modalities.

3. While online modalities have proven successful, they were generally more time-consuming. Future interventions can benefit from providing time and resources for users to get familiar with the technology. Mitigation measures are needed to tackle the slow internet services in Yemen.

4. Some of the significant challenges as informed by project experience:
   a. Proper planning is critical to the success of interactive, multistakeholder and multi-activity programmes.
   b. Additional time and resources are needed to maintain communication, coordination and follow-up with various stakeholders. The use of online mobile applications to communicate, rather than official email channels, has proven to be very efficient in the case of Yemen, where internet access is not always stable.
   c. Local authorities and community leaders must be included in the initiative and take part in the discussion channels to contribute to project implementation success.

5. The use of social media to engage youth in this project and reconnect them with the peacebuilding process has proven to be successful and critical to the initiative's success. Social media offered a new platform for young people's freedom of expression.

6. Developing a youth-focused and gender-sensitive content strategy to support the discussion was essential to ensure participation and representation.
Future intervention can explicitly include other marginalised groups as target groups, such as internally displaced persons, youth with disabilities, women and others, to broaden inclusion and further expand on themes of cooperation and social cohesion.

Future interventions might include other independent platforms beyond Manasati30 to further build an alternative narrative.

A network of trained journalists should be created to further support the creation of a neutral peacebuilding narrative.

Youth need more education and skill development to engage online and take up initiatives. Online training is becoming a sound alternative for project implementation, team collaboration and dissemination of information, which should be exploited, also in the area of peacebuilding.

At the same time, much work needs to be done to improve these online platforms. New technologies can be further leveraged to create more opportunities and play a significant role in shaping future interventions.

The online modality requires a lot of communication with more meetings to create links and connections and maximise the information-sharing potential. Online activities have to be given more commitment and further engagement to ensure the inclusion and participation of all.
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THE WAY FORWARD:
EXIT STRATEGY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The intervention has been a catalyst for youth and women to engage and become agents of change for a better, safe and peaceful Yemen. This project has introduced new narratives for peace among Yemeni youth. After the intervention implemented its activities and achieved its outputs with positive results that exceeded set targets, the overall objectives can be assessed as achieved. Project outcomes have been reached when youth and women can engage in peacebuilding. The intervention has come to an end, but the youth’s new competencies, programmes, initiatives and ideas will remain in the future.

“...This project represented a timely opportunity to ensure that young people in Yemen are given a platform and the necessary support to be informed, actively participate, understand, reflect and contribute to the promotion of dialogue and peace in Yemen.”

Anna Paolini, UNESCO Representative for GCC and Yemen

The following project results are expected to persist:

1. Trained journalists now have the knowledge and skills to create balanced media content.
2. The Road to Peace page will continue to be a source of information for the Yemeni youth to learn about the peace process. Manasati30 has benefited from this intervention, and the platform will continue to focus on youth inclusion and gender equality.
3. Barometer and survey findings, social media engagement and analysis remain essential documentation for future research and peacebuilding efforts.
4. Based on the project’s success, “Mansatk Talk” debates, a new programme under Manasati30, devised protocols of debates and will establish a debating programme with standard guidelines. It will continue to give a space for the Yemeni youth to voice their aspirations and continue to express themselves.
5. My Solution Peacebuilder Awardees are grassroots civil society organisations with online and offline communities advocating for peace and prosperity. They are raising awareness, calling for inclusion, engagement, and equality. Some initiatives have already signed cooperation agreements to create more content for peace, such as the Dakkah initiative.
6. At least one radio station, Tawasool Radio, has already decided to continue broadcasting the programme after the end of the project. The management found the programme valuable to the public, while listeners found it attractive.
7. Trainees of the project have gained knowledge and skills that will continue to be used in their future endeavours. Many young people have benefited from engagement with the project, with results including values of professional journalism, peacebuilding, inclusion and equality.
Background

Yemen Context

After seven years of war, Yemen is facing a devastating economic crisis marked by the lack of public services, livelihood opportunities and increasing costs of living. The country, which is dependent on oil revenues and depends on import for 90% of its food, was shocked by a protracted armed conflict that has led to the suspension of public salaries, unemployment and shortages of food, water and medical supplies. The war impeded access to critical services such as education, health and energy. Before the crisis, the already failed state faced security and stability challenges exacerbated by a health care crisis and COVID-19. UN reports highlight that 80% of the population needs urgent humanitarian assistance and is at the edge of famine.

The social sphere reflects the political division with increased inequality, displacement and violence. Yemen’s media landscape has been further polarized, representing the views of different conflicting parties and with very few independent information platforms.

Peace-building Effort

The UN Special Envoy leads the peacebuilding effort in Yemen, supported by the international community, with a series of peace talks working on reaching a positive conclusion to the conflict. Following the Stockholm and Riyadh agreements between Yemen’s conflicting parties, considerable reduction of airstrikes and de-escalation initiatives combined with military drawdown and back-channel negotiations opened hope for further peacebuilding efforts. The current peacebuilding effort at the local level is supported by the European Union, UN Women, UNESCO, UNFPA, GIZ, among others. Implemented projects leverage participatory and inclusive approaches to support dialogue, coexistence and inclusion. Efforts include consultations, surveys and research, interactive data visualisation, social media engagement, support to civil society organisations, youth initiatives, gender inclusion, media and research institutions.
Project Needs

In December 2018, parties involved in the conflict agreed on a series of confidence-building measures known as the “Stockholm Agreement”, under the coordination of the UN Special Envoy for Yemen. One of the most striking observations of these talks was the lack of participation of Yemeni youth who represent 70% of the population. For a successful recovery, youth need peer support, collaboration and empowerment to foster mutual understanding and collaboration. Unfortunately, young people with the energy to shape their future lack the skills, resources and opportunities to engage in peacebuilding.

The project was needed to provide youth with the skills and resources to engage in positive collaboration, acceptance and inclusion, teamwork and negotiation, responsibility and accountability.

The youth in Yemen struggle to find reliable sources of information on the peacebuilding process, including the ongoing negotiations in a context where independent media are under attack. They also lack spaces to freely share their perspectives on the kind of society they aspire to live in. Opportunities for youth to exchange views and participate in a dialogue with decision-makers about the political landscape and the peacebuilding process are minimal.

Social Engagement

Social media is an important social engagement tool for youth exchange and inclusion. This project sought to build a narrative to engage youth on issues that support the peacebuilding process. The project created quality content for youth to engage with the peacebuilding process, provided reliable information based on unbiased facts for valid discussions and allowed for free expression of opinions to be properly analysed and presented.
Project description and overall performance
The following sections describe the project alignment with Government and UN Strategic frameworks, as well as the effective partnerships with RNW Media and Manasati30 platform and the participatory project design process, that were the main factors contributing to the success of the project.

The project aimed to build up on the momentum created when confidence-building measures were agreed upon at the Yemen peace talks in December 2018. The project was timely and needed to reconnect young Yemenis with the peacebuilding process by raising young people's voices and fostering free flow of information and two-way communication. The project empowered youth with the skills, knowledge and tools to create content and dialogue to support peacebuilding. It combined online access to information and media development to become Yemen's first youth-led and youth-focused peacebuilding initiative. The project provided a space for present-day opinions and concerns of youth on peacebuilding. That space amplified freedom of expression and young people's opinions, visions and aspirations were shared with decision-makers, duty bearers and peace brokers.
The Stockholm agreement insisted on building youth engagement in peacebuilding.

The project is also aligned with the UN Strategic Framework for Yemen 2017-2019, which recognises that “Peace and security in Yemen are strengthened with an emphasis on the effective leadership, participation and engagement of women, youth and civil society.”

The project is aligned with SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, SDG 5: Gender Equality, SDG 10: Reduced Inequality, SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals.

The project contributed to several recommendations made during the 2019 cycle of the Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights for Yemen.

The proposed methodology is in line with the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists, and the Issue of Impunity, spearheaded by UNESCO.

This intervention also supports UN Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security. The resolution recognises that “young people play an important and positive role in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security”. Youth in Yemen are expected to play a positive role, and this intervention has supported this effort.

If youth living in conflict zones have no say in the promotion of peace, disillusion is a naked threat. Instead of becoming courageous heroes who aid peacebuilding and help societies recover from conflict, young people are reduced to victims of a conflict that destroys the best part of their life and casts a shadow also over their future prospects to enjoy the full use of their abilities. In the worst of scenarios, youth being deprived of opportunities in conflicts can turn to criminals who thrive from the chaos or become military entrepreneurs in war zones.
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However, young people’s role in peacebuilding efforts is not only about contributions to signing the agreements that can stop violence, but also involves engagement in social change to build a society based on trust that precludes new outbreaks of violence. It is crucially important in Yemen that the protracted armed conflict is not inherited by the generation in turn to take over the country. Shaping the peacebuilding process in Yemen based on young people’s lived experiences and grassroots-level insights may be the best chance the country has to forge a lasting peace agreement.

The project is relevant in response to Yemen’s current crisis and political conflict. Project activities responded to local contexts and addressed a vital population segment. Implementation focused on gender equality and youth inclusion. Implementation of activities was effective, with results-based evaluation and clear indicators. The project leveraged local NGOs and supported community initiatives with high outreach and engagement.

The project success can be attributed to two main strategies used to achieve the objectives set.

Firstly, effective partnerships with RNW Media and Manasati30 engaged youth in a neutral space advocating for young people’s needs and opportunities.

Secondly, the project design was developed through consultations with key stakeholders. Workshops outcomes suggested interventions and initiatives that informed project design.

UNESCO has partnered with RNW Media for the implementation of the project. RNW Media is the former Radio Netherlands Worldwide, which was founded as the Dutch international public broadcaster. RNW is now a multimedia organisation promoting free speech in countries where freedom of expression is restricted. RNW Media has a long standing presence in Yemen, implementing projects with media development organization and youth NGOs. The Netherlands based organization supported the development of Manasati30, former Yemen Youth Platform, which was founded as a free space for youth to engage online. Being now independent with its own website and social media channels, Manasati30 beneficiaries from a broad reach in Yemen, being the sixth-largest Facebook page in the country with over 260,000 followers.

Peacebuilding and media interventions required a careful project design to achieve objectives, while prioritising the do-no-harm principle. This project leveraged past events, consultations, meetings, and workshops to design its activities.

An early consultation with CSO and journalists was conducted to inform the content development and barometer components. The research investigated participants’ (a) knowledge and sources of information related to the peacebuilding process and peace talks, (b) needs in terms of information supply, (c) aspirations and visions. The online research engaged 47 journalists (38 surveys and nine semi-structured interviews) and 113 young Yemenis (93 surveys and 20 semi-structured interviews) to ensure full inclusion of the target in all five governorates and overcome internet challenges.

RNW Media held design workshops in April 2019 with a diverse group of Yemeni youth and civil society organisations from the North and the South of Yemen to discuss priority areas to strengthen inclusion and participation of youth in the peacebuilding process. Youth and civil society organisations developed a problem tree and a solution tree. Increased access to information, awareness-raising on young people’s political rights, capacity-building on political leadership and more opportunities for dialogue with decision-makers to shape the peacebuilding process in Yemen were some of the urgent needs listed. As an outcome of these workshops, a project concept was developed to design activities and plans.
The design workshops were also an opportunity for youth and civil society organisations to map potential project implementation risks. They discussed how the gaps and weaknesses of the ongoing peacebuilding projects could be tackled and addressed through this new project.

In December 2018, UNESCO set up a newsroom during the peace negotiations in Sweden to support young Yemeni journalists in providing balanced coverage of the negotiations to the audience back home. The newsroom was a success, with over 5,000 followers from Yemen within a week and 80,000 views within a month. The newsroom covered multiple faces and voices of the peacebuilding process. Journalists were able to report on topics such as women inclusion in peacebuilding, prisoner exchange, the safety of journalists, reconciliation measures, and justice for victims of torture. The newsroom had access to high-level decision-makers, advisers and diplomats. The newsroom generated intense interest levels in Yemen and opened perspectives not usually reported in traditional media. The event highlighted relevant activities to support sustainable peace.

As a follow-up, UNESCO asked journalists to evaluate their experience and identify areas where improvement was needed. Among the recommendations was the need to diversify contents distributed on social media, improve engagement with audiences and integrate new journalists from marginalized media into the newsroom. UNESCO also reviewed feedbacks from audiences, who commended the journalists’ work. Several followers urged the newsroom to continue to operate as it represents a rare opportunity for Yemenis to follow the negotiations live and voice their needs and opinions with journalists. These recommendations were considered and incorporated as a project component related to access to information.

While attending the peace talks, UNESCO and RNW Media shared the results of the youth surveys on peacebuilding with decision-makers from the opposite parties of the conflict and duty bearers. Their responses were very positive, and discussions with Yemeni NGOs, advisers to the Special Envoy, government representatives and foreign ambassadors were held to formulate project ideas to strengthen youth engagement in the peacebuilding process.

In September 2019, UNESCO organised a consultation meeting between the UN Special Envoy for Yemen and a group of young Yemeni journalists, filmmakers and photographers from across the country, including Taiz, Aden, Hodeida, Hadramout, Socotra, Ibb, Mareb and Sana’a. The discussion enabled an open and critical dialogue on the status of the peacebuilding process. Participating youth felt empowered to share their aspirations with the Special Envoy to Yemen directly. In response, the Special Envoy acknowledged that youth were marginalized and marked it as one of his priorities in the coming months, starting with this type of consultation meeting. He also stressed the importance of young people’s inclusion. He welcomed UNESCO’s role in opening communication channels with Yemeni youth. Young people’s key recommendations and discussion points with the Special Envoy informed this project’s approach and design.
Firstly, in a context where independent media is under attack, young Yemeni women and men struggle to find reliable, fact-checked and duly-sourced information on the peacebuilding process, including ongoing peace negotiations. Polarised information, and too often disinformation and misinformation, means youth cannot keep abreast of developments and need to rely on political messages from either side of the conflict to understand the status of negotiations. The media landscape in Yemen has historically been captured and manipulated by political agendas, as political parties own most of the outlets. The ongoing conflict has exacerbated this characteristic, with increased unfactual, biased political messages and hate speech appearing in the media.

This situation, in turn, has created an overall communication vacuum that needs to be tackled to empower youth in Yemen. Young people need to feel a sense of urgency and ownership over the peacebuilding process. This lack of information is significant for young women who, due to cultural sensitivities around the use of technology, face more challenges than men in accessing information. In a digital age, it is important to ensure that key discussions about the future of Yemen are explained to young women and men so that they may understand their rights and contribute as potential solution providers.

Secondly, Yemeni youth lack spaces to freely share their perspectives on the kind of society they aspire to live in. Opportunities for exchange, participation and dialogues on peace among youth and between youth and decision-makers are minimal. Following the crackdown on NGOs and independent voices after the escalation of violence in 2015, and the subsequent collapse of the National Dialogue Conference, civic space for debates shrunk considerably. With no seat at the negotiation table and despite repeated calls to ensure a 20% quota for youth in all government bodies, youth remain largely isolated from political dialogues.

In a digital age and with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, social media has proven to be a very compelling tool to stimulate youth discussions online and circumvent some of the existing restrictions and security threats of offline youth activism and advocacy. Without jobs but with the possibility of earning both a living and status with armed groups, young people often see little option but to enlist in them. To address these issues and reach out to at least 200,000 youth in Yemen, the project attempted to better integrate the voices of Yemeni youth into the ongoing peace negotiations and empower them as actors of positive change in the peacebuilding process through the use of media, communication and technology.
Youth inclusion and Gender Equality Approach
Youth and women inclusion were the central themes of this project and were realised throughout its conception and design as well as throughout the different phases of implementation.

The project approach to youth inclusion and gender equality is found at the core design of the intervention, starting with the logical framework, its indicators and the results-based structure.

The project risk mitigation plans focused on youth and women. The project results highlighted impact around engagement and participation of youth and gender equality.

The project's logical framework focused on youth inclusion and gender equality. All project outcomes and outputs were carefully analysed to address those two components of the population. Project indicators were disaggregated by gender, and many activities were only open to youth applicants.
Inclusion and equality were demonstrated in all activities. All project activities targeted applicants in the age group 18 to 30 years. The Manasati30 platform reflected the target youth population. All training attempted to have 50/50 male and female participants. Generated contents and videos were gender-balanced and created by youth and targeted youth of both genders. Surveys highlighted gender inclusion and equality. Radio programmes targeted youth, and programme interviews included young males and females. Debates and other initiatives were organised at high-level peacebuilding dialogue, emphasising the role of youth and demonstrating gender equality. The various content components, such as the Road to Peace page, were entirely produced by young Yemenis. The project empowered young people to build on their needs and interests.

The project also created personas, fictional characters representing different users to better understand users’ needs, characteristics, and behaviours. This allowed for the creation of content catering to the needs of the different types of audiences. The page covered peacebuilding topics, raised awareness about the political landscape and peace negotiation and provided an open platform for participation and engagement. Many reports created were mainly gender-focused, featuring female activists, peacebuilders, workers, prisoners, displaced and marginalized women. The exceptional rate of women stories in the Road to Peace page is a natural consequence of targeting women writers and journalists.

Moreover, the My Solution activity which encouraged civil society activists, both women and men, to develop peacebuilding activities and expand their initiatives, has showed high participation of women-led initiatives (9 women-led out of 14). Giving space for women to reflect on their community needs led to gender-focused activities, such as Humans of Taiz campaign which brought women success stories in peacebuilding to spotlight.

The intervention rules of engagement and risk mitigation continued to watch engagement rates. Additional efforts were made to ensure and encourage women’s participation on social media platforms. The project used SMART targeting, moderation and audience segmentation to solely target women in several ads, hoping to increase outreach to and engagement of women.

Women’s engagement on project social media channels stabilised at 18% by the end of this project, which is a good percentage level given the low percentage of female social media users in Yemen (15%) as per Facebook. The project highlighted leading women and represented future female political influencers. Female political science students, female social media activists, and young women were allowed to build up their public speaking skills in an environment with minimal opportunities for women to be politically influential.

The online surveys, social listening research, and online conversations continuously fed the project team with insights into young people’s needs. The content team considered the findings when developing new media stories and visuals. They were shared with decision-makers and key stakeholders. This user-centred strategy ensured that all the implemented activities demonstratively met young people’s needs.
05 Project implementation
The following section is presenting the project activities according to the project’s logical framework. The project is organised around two primary outcomes:

**Outcome 1:**
With improved access to information, Yemeni youth better understand the peacebuilding process and their role within this framework.

**Outcome 2:**
Safe places of dialogue are created to ensure that young Yemeni’s priorities for the peacebuilding process are shared with decision-makers and duty bearers.

The first outcome focuses on access to peacebuilding process information. Under this outcome, there are three main outputs: the “Road to Peace” web page, capacity building training for young Yemeni journalists, and “My Solution” call for peace activities led by youth.

The second outcome created safe spaces for youth to engage with decision-makers to support peacebuilding and dialogue. Under this outcome, four main outputs included online surveys, debates, the development of community radio programmes, and strategic outreach events.
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Activities
Outcome 1: With improved access to information, Yemeni youth better understand the peacebuilding process and their role within this framework

Output 1.1: Information platform developed for youth to find information on the peacebuilding process
- Youth and gender-sensitive content strategy focused on peacebuilding developed
- Optimisation of Manasati30 website with a new page dedicated to project
- Production of gender and youth-sensitive Arabic multimedia materials focused on peacebuilding
- Distribution of online multimedia content on peacebuilding for youth via social media

Output 1.2: Skills of young journalists developed to provide balanced coverage of the peacebuilding process for youth
- Training of trainers for young journalists on reporting on the peacebuilding process
- Series of training by local trainers on reporting on the peacebuilding process
- Young journalists produce content pieces for youth on peacebuilding via information platform
- Partnership with traditional media outlets in Yemen to share content produced by young journalists

Output 1.3: My solution video series launched to showcase success stories of young Yemeni peacebuilders
- Open call for submission of the best youth-led solution supporting peacebuilding
- Selection of best youth-led solution by jury members
- Filming and production of “My Solution” video series
- Distribution of “My Solution” video series through social media
Activities

Outcome 2: Safe places of dialogue are created to ensure that young Yemeni’s priorities for the peacebuilding process are shared with decision-makers and duty bearers

Output 2.1: Yemeni Youth Barometer’ survey is launched to inform decision-makers of youth priorities on the peacebuilding process

- Consultation with partners and stakeholders to identify survey themes
- Launch of online surveys and social listening projects to understand youth priorities and narratives on peacebuilding
- Analyse data and publish survey reports summarising findings
- Convert data into multimedia content for further youth engagement via online and local media

Output 2.2: Opportunities for dialogue developed through youth debates

- Series of training for youth on debating, political leadership, conflict mediation, and critical thinking
- Debating toolkit, including code of conduct, developed
- Consultation workshop with youth and local NGOs to identify themes of debates
- Organise youth debates in the presence of decision-makers and duty bearers and broadcast debates online to ensure larger participation

Output 2.3: Weekly programmes on a network of community radios for young people to voice their opinions on the peacebuilding process

- Training for community radios on youth engagement
- Radio programmes produced every two weeks
- Reports summarising key discussions on community radios prepared

Output 2.4: Strategic outreach initiatives organised for Yemeni youth to convey their messages to the international community and decision-makers

- Side-event on Yemeni youth voices during World Press Freedom Day 2020
- Panel organised at high-level peacebuilding dialogue emphasising the role of youth
Challenges and mitigation strategies

The project was launched as the COVID-19 pandemic erupted. The project had to take several mitigation strategies, including work from home and moving activities online. Some activities were conducted offline with adherence to COVID-19 protocols.

The shift to online modalities ensured the principle of no-harm for staff and beneficiaries. While online modalities have proven successful in mitigating COVID-19 and political sensitivity challenges, they were generally more time-consuming. Internet connectivity was challenging in Yemen for both beneficiaries and the project team. The project implemented the result-based framework with an additional no-cost six months extension granted and fully achieved expected results.

COVID-19 Response

While COVID-19 was a threat and a challenge, the project was able to adapt and take the opportunity to further showcase youth initiatives in response to the crisis and their essential and positive impact on society. The project featured youth-positive stories responding to the pandemic. One example is the success story of a 25-year-old engineer from Hadramout who invented a hand-held watch that he hopes can be used to prevent the further spread of COVID-19. He named it “Corona cleaned”.

The watch has a laser detector and alerts the person when attempting to shake hands with another person or trying to touch their face. The watch also has a space to store disinfectants. It discharges disinfectant to the hand at the push of a button. This invention is claimed to be the first of its kind and was registered in Hadhramaut Inventions Centre. On Manasati30 Facebook page, his story had 251,000 views, more than 15,000 direct interaction with the post, and 2,200 viewers have republished the story.

The story of Sami and Labib is also representative of the adaptability and resilience of the Youth facing this crisis. With the COVID-19 outbreak, Sami and Labib decided to open a cotton factory to support the production of face masks and later expanded their production to cotton clothing, employing over 45 women and 15 orphans. Such initiatives support the local economy, empower the youth, and provide them with income-generating sources, contributing to reducing unemployment and poverty rates.

The project also portrayed the history of Dalia, while leveraging Virtual Reality (VR) video production with 360-degree videography. Dalia is a doctor in Taiz, providing care to frontline injured as well as reaching out to patients suffering from the war in remote location. With the outburst of the pandemic, she quickly adapted to the new circumstances and dedicated her work to treat COVID-19 patients.
The overall impact of the project for peace-building in Yemen
The overall impact of the project for peacebuilding in Yemen

1. Over 120 young Yemeni journalists are equipped with new skills to provide professional, conflict-sensitive, fact-checked coverage of the peacebuilding process. Youth are promoting women and youth leadership in shaping the public narrative around peacebuilding in Yemen.

2. Through a dedicated page, “Road to Peace”, Yemeni youth have better access to information related to the peace process in Yemen. The page contains 158 multimedia content pieces with over 55,000 page views.

3. 14 Youth-led peacebuilder initiatives have designed and launched their own “solutions” to the Yemeni crisis. These “My solution” grassroots projects, designed by youth across Yemen, have empowered men and women to concretely promote peacebuilding actions in their local communities.

4. Over 8,000 Yemeni youth were surveyed on their needs, aspirations, opinions and visions on the future Yemen they want.

5. Young women are effectively engaged in forming the narrative of youth in Yemen, speaking up to decision-makers and creating real change in their community.

6. Over 650 Yemeni youth and local decision-makers engaged in public debates designed and organised by youth-led organisations to foster two-way communication between Yemeni youth and decision-makers on peacebuilding topics.

7. Over 210 radio episodes designed by youth for youth were aired by five local radio stations, promoting local ownership and participation in the national peace efforts.
1.1 Capacity Building Activities

The intervention led by UNESCO organised a series of training targeting youth. The training topics were selected based on needs assessment. These workshops supported the project’s objectives in helping Yemeni youth access unbiased information on the peacebuilding process. Young journalists were trained on professional peacebuilding reporting, conflict-sensitive coverage, and fact-checked content. Training followed a participatory and inclusive methodology that delivered knowledge, emphasised skill development and formed positive attitudes.

In partnership with Media Association for Peace (MAP), UNESCO first organised a 5-day training of trainers (ToT) on peace journalism in Yemen to enhance the skills of young journalists in reporting on the peacebuilding process. The ToT developed the skills and capacities of 10 young journalists (5 women/5 men) by equipping them with the tools and knowledge needed to deliver the training courses themselves on peace journalism, journalists’ role in the coverage of conflicts, and ethics and standards of journalism.

I am happy and proud that now ten new Yemeni journalists are knowledgeable and skilful in Peace Journalism, as well as training methods and techniques, they are truly ready and able to contribute to building peace in the torn Yemen.

PEACE JOURNALISM TRAINER

RNW Media relied on the best qualified, trained journalists to deliver five on-the-ground training sessions following this initial training. The activities invited young women and men journalists to participate in hands-on sessions and produce journalistic content later posted on Manasati30’s platform. The participants acquired skills and knowledge on peace reporting to better understand conflict sensitivities and ensure balanced coverage of the peacebuilding process. This training aimed to increase Yemeni youth access to reliable information, build a sense of trust and ownership, and empower the youth in playing a constructive role in the peace process.

The training will help me very much in my work as a journalist, on how to cover news neutrally and professionally through following standards and ethics.

PEACE JOURNALISM TRAINEE
Subsequent to the ToT and training courses, UNESCO identified complementary areas to reinforce capacity building, based on the evaluation of workshops and feedbacks of the participants. To address the training needs of the participants, UNESCO partnered with MAP and Al Jazeera Media Institute (AJMI) to implement five additional training sessions. While MAP organised a training on “International Humanitarian Law and Human rights for Yemeni journalists”, AJMI organised a series of 4 sessions on the safety of journalists, digital journalism, media outlet management and reporting on gender-based violence. The project trained 135 journalists, half of them women. The intervention included the following training:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Course</th>
<th>Course Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peace Journalism Training by Media Association for Peace (MAP)</td>
<td>The training aimed to develop the skills of young journalists to provide professional, conflict-sensitive, fact-checked coverage of the peacebuilding process for youth. First, a training of trainers (ToT) followed by local training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Humanitarian Law &amp; Human Rights: Tools for Yemeni Journalists by MAP</td>
<td>The training aimed at empowering Yemeni journalists with the knowledge and tools to have a better understanding of International Humanitarian Law and Human rights, its application to journalism, as well as providing them with an in-depth understanding of the legal framework protecting them, available resources, and applied the human-rights based approach to journalism to cover the peace process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting on Gender-Based Violence by Al Jazeera Media Institute (AJMI)</td>
<td>The training aimed to provide Yemeni journalists with a better understanding of gender-based violence and how to cover it sensitively and ethically, provide them with practical advice on crucial steps in the reporting and editing process, such as assuring the sense of dignity, safety and trust with interviewees, informed consent, responsive listening, choice of location, cultural sensitivity, choice of an interpreter, interviewing children, choice of images and so forth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Outlet Management by AJMI</td>
<td>The training aimed to provide Yemeni journalists with practical management skills to establish and run their media platform in the long term and ensure financial sustainability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Journalism by AJMI</td>
<td>The training aimed to provide knowledge about global opportunities and risks created for media by switching to digital broadcasting, the growth of new media platforms as sources of news, and the convergence of traditional broadcasting with telecommunications. These changes redefine how media can operate sustainably while staying true to pluralism and diversity, transparency and accountability, editorial independence, freedom of expression and information, public service and high professional standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalism Professional Safety by AJMI</td>
<td>This training aimed to assist Yemeni journalists in identifying and tackling the threats. It also aimed to address the gender dimensions of the safety of journalists, both online and in the field.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 12 | 13 | 13 |
| 12 | 12 | 15 |
1.2 Road to Peace Platform

The intervention supported a dedicated webpage titled “Road to Peace,” hosted and managed by the Manasati30 website. The page is dedicated to applying learned knowledge and skills and sharing content on peacebuilding in Yemen to amplify youth voices and opinions. The platform and its social media outlets currently have over 260,000 followers, and their creative content has over 4.8 million views on Facebook.

Over 158 pieces of diverse and high-quality content are published by 108 supported young journalists on the Manasati30 platform (more than 65,000 page views). Published material helps the understanding of the peacebuilding process in Yemen. The platform asks visitors on every page if they found the material useful. Around 92% of participating visitors confirmed that their understanding of the peacebuilding process has improved.

By using innovative digital tools, smart online moderation, persuasive methods to create engagement, the project has contributed to creating a new narrative related to peacebuilding dialogue in the country, more inclusive of youth and women.

Training has succeeded in attracting new contributors from different regions with different cultural and political backgrounds who started to produce more objective and professional content that helps bring about peace. Above all, this opportunity has given the space for those journalists to voice their opinions and concerns as young people.

The platform gives youth a space to tell their stories, express their interests, and connect with their peers. It strengthened the youth narrative and told their side of the story. The project created personas and fictional characters representing different users to better understand users’ needs, characteristics, and behaviours.
1.3 My Solution - Peace Builders

Peacebuilders Award or “My Solution” is an activity to support and showcase success stories of young Yemeni peacebuilders (initiatives) that engage the local community in peacebuilding. The activity “My Solution” called on applicants to provide their solution to peacebuilding problems in Yemen, to win the Peacebuilders Award. Selected winners submitted their solutions to social problems with a budget breakdown needed to improve their current initiatives. They were supported for three months to launch their activities. Awardees received capacity building in digital engagement and activity organisation. Each initiative implemented offline and online activities.

14 initiatives were selected, representing five governorates of Yemen covered by the project. During this activity and with the support of the project, they were able to broaden their outreach and deepen their work, by organizing specific activities in relation with their area of interest. While some peacebuilders organized awareness raising campaigns, others focused on training, live events, debates, the creation of social experiments or the production of films and motion graphics videos. Successful online campaigns were led through social media, engaging thousands of people.

The initiatives ran successful online campaigns on Facebook and Twitter, engaging thousands of people; all initiatives used the hashtags #నాటా_సలామ and #PBs for their contents. Each solution was showcased through a dedicated video presenting their work, produced by Manasati30. Videos produced under this activity recorded more than 445,000 views, inspiring many other young people to take up similar initiatives.

Over 120 young members of these grassroots organisations have established an identity and a Facebook fan page with an average of 3,000 followers. Each page documented their first peacebuilding activities. The table below summarises the 14 initiatives with a brief description of each, along with total engagement with the produced content.

After publishing the results of our survey, one NGO approached us and promised to fund developing a study for us on hate speech and the impact of media on the peacebuilding process.” “We also got the opportunity to participate in the Human Rights Defenders Programme in Marseille 21-26 November 2021. All those opportunities we received happened at the same time as we were implementing our activities within “Peacebuilders” and launching the formal page on Facebook and boosting it as one of the activities.
EMPOWERING YEMENI YOUTH TOWARDS PEACE
ENSURING ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PARTICIPATION
Fekr initiative is a group of students from the faculty of administrative sciences in Hadramout University that created an integrated debate program, first of its kind in their university. The initiative supports the Arabic proverb that disagreement shouldn't spoil friendships. It trained 48 male and female students on the art of debates and conducted a debating competition. The competition attracted momentum, and students found it an opportunity for public speaking skills and critical thinking. Published debate videos showed a high level of organisation and professional performance. Debate topics included youth inclusion, social media, and the peace process.

Full Stride Initiative is an organization based in Taiz that aims to raise awareness in the community about the peacebuilding process and to strengthen the role of Youth and Women. The initiative calls for peace, gender equality, and coexistence. The initiative raised awareness about the peacebuilding process and participation. It launched the “Peace Story” competition. The competition matched five social media activists with 5 YouTubers to create five videos about peace. Videos were voted by social media followers. Videos had 4,000 views, 2,500 likes, 614 comments and 105 shares.

Human Voice for sustainable development is an organization based in Sana'a that seeks to contribute to the advancement of the sustainable development goals through the organization of trainings and raising awareness campaigns. Among its goals is to encourage the establishment of peaceful societies in which no one is marginalized in order to achieve an inclusive society where peace and justice prevail, free from fear and violence. The initiative introduced 15 youth (5 women) to UN Security Council Resolution 2250 via online zoom training. It also published on social media 15 awareness posts, produced four motivational videos inspired by Singapore, Rwanda and Vietnam, and a film on UN resolution 2250. Contents created 47,000 video views, 3,118 reactions, 106 comments and 95 shares.

Sameh Initiative (forgive), a women-led initiative, calls for coexistence, forgiveness, and diversity. The initiative has implemented digital and field activities that trained 20 young men and women on peacebuilding values and conflict resolution. It also produced three visual stories for young kids. The initiative received 23,000 likes, 259 comments and 104 shares.

Shabebh Aden Initiative, a women-led initiative, calls for a culture of peace, tolerance, and inclusion. Since 2015, the initiative has implemented humanitarian projects and now extended to peace. The initiative implemented an “Aden without violence” workshop attended by decision-makers, influencers, and prominent lawyers that highlighted youth roles and the culture of peace and rejection of violence in Aden. It also organised an online photography competition and published a short film, “Peace beach”, on Facebook. The initiative received 677 likes, 4,064 comments and 43 shares.

Takween Cultural Club initiative was established by six young women, headed by the activist “Shurooq al-Ramadi”, to create a safe space for cultural and artistic actors, and to promote community peace building and the principle of dialogue by introducing debate programs for the first time in the governorate, engaging influencers and content creators. Informative posts, live streaming interviews, and success stories were published to inspire youth. The initiative organised an open day (safe space) for youth. It included 150 talents and artists engaged in public discussion, theatre, music, performance, book fair, photo gallery, and drawings. The initiative received 3,566 likes, 198 comments and 42 shares.
### Initiative Highlights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative Name and Location</th>
<th>Initiative Highlights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **We Want To Live Initiative (Hodeidah)** | **We Want to Live** is an initiative launched in 2015 by youth from Sana’a and Al Hodeidah in an effort to promote peace and unity throughout Yemen and countering hate speech. It calls for ending the war, restoring peace, tolerance, coexistence and peacebuilding. It created a new identity, social media posts, visual content, tweets, and videos. Engagement reached 36,000 on Facebook hashtag #نشت تعيش.

- **Views:** 3.4k |

| **Awil initiative** | **Awil Initiative** promotes social cohesion and coexistence. The initiative highlighted five stories of 5 business owners from outside Aden and enriched the city. The initiative created the “Cup of Tea” film to highlight these businesses as the cities’ icons of peace and coexistence. It also organised an art and handicrafts exhibition to show Aden’s cultural image of peace and coexistence with different traditional dances and songs. The initiative received 68,000 video views, 1,200 reactions, 191 comments and 161 shares.

- **Views:** 3.7k |

| **Dakkah initiative** | **Dakkah** is an initiative launched under the umbrella of the Yemen Hub for Media Support, was founded in January 2021 with the aim to counter hate speech discourses in the media and society. Through its different activities, the initiative works on finding alternative discourses that restore the unity in the community. The initiative conducted two online zoom workshops on peace journalism and produced humanitarian stories, videos, surveys and posts. Initiatives captured 6,000 reactions, 253 comments, 64 shares and 35,000 video views.

- **Views:** 3k |

| **Humans of Taiz Initiative** | **Humans of Taiz**, launched in 2019 as a photography documentation project, aims to capture images of people in Yemen without prejudice to gender, race, sect or color, and to narrate their stories. Through sharing the content on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter and on their blog, the initiative aim to encourage unity within the society fragmented by the conflict, by focusing on the individuals and their stories away from politics. The initiative expanded its work to organise offline events. It produced six written success stories, six designs, two video stories and two flashes. The initiative has 3,000 reactions, 250 comments, 48 shares, 1,405 engagement and 66,300 video views.

- **Views:** 8.3k |

| **Lahtah Initiative** | **Lahtah** is a platform producing and sharing content to promote the peacebuilding in Yemen at the local level with written and visual stories on war effects on civilians as well as advocating for human rights. In the framework of the project, the produces and published peace messages, a motion graphic video about the effects of war on Hodeidha and a video story about war impact on small business. The initiative produced 15 visual peace messages that highlighted people struggle in Hodeida. Published posts reached 82,000 with 4,159 reactions, 352 comments, 133 shares and 35,000 video views.

- **Views:** 3.1k |

| **Weam Initiative** | **Weam Initiative** is a women-led initiative, that aims to integrate and involve people with special needs with the peacebuilding process. They implemented several projects related to peacebuilding and health, particularly targeting the disabled through online and offline activities. The initiative trained ten people with disabilities on UN resolution 2250. All trainees went to train others in schools and universities in Taiz. The initiative produced two flashes in sign language about UN resolution 2250 and messages of peace. The initiative captured 374 reactions, 37 comments, 37 shares and 24,000 video views.

- **Views:** 3k |
Peace Journalism initiative, a platform and recently registered NGO led by young Yemeni journalists, is aiming to enhance credible and ethical peace reporting according to high journalism standards. Part of their efforts to empower journalists, youth, women and minorities, the initiative regularly organizes workshops that discuss a range of topics related to peacebuilding and achieving social cohesion. The initiative conducted an online awareness campaign of UN envoy mediation efforts, UN resolutions 1325 and 2216 on women and youth inclusion. It also organised the “Peace Lounge” contest for content makers (photographers, cartoonists, musicians, actors, and vloggers) to produce content on peace, gender-based violence, IDPs. A video was created on the closing ceremony highlighting winners. The initiative captured 11,500 reactions, 2,500 comments, 630 shares and 7000 video views.

Yemen peace was founded in 2021 by two media college students amid the war in Al Hodayah. They promote sustainable peace and development through activities and projects. With the support of the project, they organized an online training on peace journalism for 10 journalists, an online seminar about the role of journalism, as well as launched a new platform on Facebook called “Yemeni Peace Journalists Network” focusing on peace journalism. The initiative captured 10,000 reactions, 248 comments and 106 shares.
2.1 Yemeni Youth Barometer

With the aim of creating a safe place of dialogue to ensure that young Yemenis’ priorities for the peacebuilding process are shared with decision-makers, UNESCO and RNW Media launched the Yemeni Youth Barometer, a series of surveys and social listening activities. The surveys capture youth opinions and narratives on a range of peacebuilding topics, including:

- The perspectives of the youth on an immediate nationwide ceasefire in Yemen
- The role played by the media in peacebuilding in Yemen
- Youth opinions on a way forward to ending the war in relation to peace negotiations
- The economic impact of the war on individuals and their families
- The aspirations of the youth towards peace in their country
- The type of government that the youth think is most suitable for their country

The six surveys received a total of 8,216 responses from individuals residing in different Yemeni governorates, out of which 5,589 were from youth aged 18-30 years. The responses collected were thoroughly analysed and presented in the form of informational booklets.

To contribute, support and empower the voices of the Yemeni youth, the results were publicly circulated to reach the general public, decision-makers, duty bearers, and international and regional actors. The key findings were posted on UNESCO and Manasati30 dedicated project pages and shared in a periodical newsletter and social media. The survey results posted on Manasati30’s platform were viewed over 20,000 times (82% males; 18% females)

The entire booklet editions, which present a thorough review of the results, can be found and downloaded from the UNESCO project page: [https://en.unesco.org/YemeniYouthBarometer](https://en.unesco.org/YemeniYouthBarometer)

It is worth noting that OSESGY was consulted in the design of the surveys, and the findings contributed to OSESGY efforts towards consulting the youth in Yemen. This component directly contributed to creating a digital space for expression and dialogue for young Yemenis, but also to inform decision-makers on youth priorities and aspirations.
The Barometer surveys gave at hand that 82% of youth have lost trust in conflicting parties to achieve peace. 71% of the respondents think that the parties should nominate highly competent individuals to prepare the grounds for the formal talks. Young people did not seem to agree on the type of government they prefer, but the majority seemed to support a proper distribution of power and wealth among the regions and governorates, as they think this reduces any calls for separatism. 93% indicated that a governance structure mechanism should be included in any peace agreement. 75% agree that youth, women and civil society should participate in the peacebuilding consultative sessions.

Commenting here and participating in this survey has granted me braveness, to tell the truth as a journalist about the catastrophe we live, which gets worse day by day... There needs to be found an appropriate solution to avoid what can be worst

BAROMETER SURVEY RESPONDENT
2.2 Opportunities for Dialogue - Debates

Aiming to develop opportunities for dialogue among young people and encourage youth to speak up about issues that matter to them, a series of five public debates were organised in Sana’a, Aden, Taiz, Hadramout and Hodeida. RNW Media/ Manasati30 collaborated with local partners to implement debate events. Those debates were designed to be implemented within the Manasati30 debate programme “Manasatk_Talk”.
The intervention supported youth-led debates related to peacebuilding topics in targeted governorates. A debate toolkit was formalised through a workgroup led by a regional expert. Each debate equipped 12 young people (50% women) with a five-day training to familiarise them with the art of debating, argument development and public speaking skills. Such space fostered two-way communication between Yemeni youth and decision-makers on peacebuilding topics. Debating events attracted over 650 Yemeni youth, with local decision-makers engaged in public debates designed, and organised by youth-led organisations to foster intellectual dialogue.

All four offline debates with the proposal “Youth inclusion is a key for the success of the peacebuilding process in Yemen” started with overall audience support to the proposal team, while upon conclusion, more people voted that the opposing team performed better.

It was a very heated debate. Both teams were very close to each other with regards to strengths and weaknesses. The debate was really buzzing with excitement. Training as well had a lot of rich discussions which created an exciting atmosphere among the participants.

AHLAM AL MAKALEH, DEBATE TRAINER

The fifth debate, online debate, had the proposal “The role of art is indispensable for the peacebuilding process in Yemen.” Before the debate, 63% of the 1,900 voters supported the debate proposal, and after the debate, 61% of 3,400 voters voted for the affirmative team. The live-streaming of the debate captured over 200,000 views and engaged over 1,200 comments.
2.3 Community Radio Programmes

The community radio programme aimed at empowering community radio stations in Yemen to produce and broadcast contents related to the peacebuilding process for the youth and by the youth. UNESCO contracted Community Media Network (CMN) in Jordan to oversee the implementation and broadcasting of 210 Radio programmes by five local radio stations: Lana Radio, Alamal Radio, Tawasool Radio, Alitihadia Radio, located in Aden, Hadramout, Mahrah, Mareb, and Shabwa governorates respectively. 344 young people (47% women) participated in this community radio programme component.

A ten-day online training was conducted to build the capacity of 17 radio presenters and journalists (59% male and 41% female) on radio journalism skills and production techniques. The training introduced community radio, its functions and role in society, and explained how radio talks can discuss the culture of peace and coexistence. It also provided guidelines for gender inclusion. In addition, audio techniques, podcasts, programming, project challenges and mitigation strategies were discussed.

Radio programmes discussed and advocated peacebuilding and social cohesion efforts. Discussion topics included the holistic approach to peace, current events such as the Riyadh agreement, UN envoy activities, and confidence-building measures such as prisoner exchange, opening roads and airports, and the ceasefire. Youth-focused topics included youth views on what kind of state is needed, youth engagement in peacebuilding, the impact of conflict on youth, the economy and the future.

Contents were aired bi-weekly and uploaded on Sound Cloud and YouTube for broader audience engagement. Decision-makers and government officials were invited as guests in some programmes. Radio stations broadcasted peacebuilding discussions, included more youth and women in their programmes, and some planned to continue peacebuilding themes in their programmes.

132 men and 70 women participated in the radio programme via a phone call, radio interviews in the studio and street interviews.

The engagement of youth in the component was almost twice the goal of 100 young people; among them 50% were women.

Outcomes of this component include the engagement of community radio management in topics of youth inclusion, gender equality and peacebuilding efforts. Radio staff and stakeholders were exposed to more balanced media communications and accepted a neutral approach. Radio stations improved their programming, with the training and supervision of CMN. Radio personnel found CMN capacity building and coaching very helpful to develop their radio stations and reach the audience. Tawasool Radio decided to continue the programme after the end of the intervention. Radio management found the new approach valuable and attractive to listeners.

By inviting both the youth and the decision-makers to participate in the radio discussions, we were able to raise the voices of the youth and demand quick solutions to urgent issues. We also invited experts to share accurate and credible information to educate the community and raise their awareness on pressing matters such as COVID-19.
2.4 Strategic Outreach Initiatives

With regards to the strategic outreach initiative, UNESCO supported the participation of young Yemenis in international events related to peacebuilding.

UNESCO sought opportunities to invite young activists participating in the project to global UNESCO-led events, as was done for the regional and global celebration of the World Press Freedom Day.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the project supported the online participation of young Yemeni voices in UNESCO-led events rather than in-person events, such as the MIL Arab Regional Conference and the Regional Arab Panel, part of the global World Press Freedom Day celebration hosted in Namibia in May 2021. The theme of the World Press Freedom Day 2021 was "Promoting Information as a Public Good", serving the purpose of a call to renew global commitment to freedom of expression, press freedom and freedom of information.

Enhanced media and information literacy capacities that enable young people in Yemen to recognize and demand, value and defend journalism are vital parts of information as a public good.

Those events offered a venue for young Yemenis to be speakers in international panels, discussing hate speech, media freedom and the information disorder during COVID-19. While raising awareness about the situation of Yemen, it allowed the Yemeni youth to raise their concern and make their voice heard at a global level.
07 Synergies with other actors
Synergies with other actors

The project has leveraged several local and international organizations to achieve its objectives.

The project was implemented in partnership with RNW Media and Manasati30 platform to reach out to the youth online. It leveraged RNW media past experiences and efforts on surveys, research, and analysis as well as its on the ground presence via Manasati30. Through Manasati30, the project had access to a strong audience, the platform having over 260,000 social media followers and over 4.8 million views on Facebook.

The cooperation with local radio stations as well as Community Media Network contributed to boost the profile of media in the south by encouraging collaboration, and advocating for peacebuilding topics, as well as providing relevant expertise and quality capacity-building opportunities. Five radio stations benefited from the intervention, and some of them planned to continue their peace discussion programmes and engage youth and women in their programme.

The intervention supported 14 grassroots community organisations advocating for peacebuilding efforts across the five governorates through “My Solution” activity. The selected initiatives planned online and offline activities, including producing visual contents, organizing workshops and debates, as well as launching online campaigns and surveys. The initiatives discussed a range of peacebuilding topics such as countering hate speech and violence, heritage and peace, awareness raising on the National Security Council Resolution 2250, enhancing the role of peace journalists, empowering the youth with hearing loss. Within the project, those initiatives engaged with the youth on important peacebuilding matters and were able to increase their visibility and further raise awareness in Yemen.
Visibility
EMPOWERING YEMENI YOUTH TOWARDS PEACE
ENSURING ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PARTICIPATION

Visibility

The project produced a lot of media content and highly visible outputs, in accordance with its design and implementation strategy. Relying mainly on online information platforms and social media, most of the activities were organized or shared online, with the aim to create and enhance access to information for the Yemeni youth.

1. All training activities and call for applications were announced on Manasati30 website and social media to foster engagement and participation.
2. Each survey was disseminated online, and results were widely shared through social media platforms, Manasati30, and UNESCO websites.
3. In the framework of My Solution activity, each supported initiative was presented on Manasati30 website and social media and created its own page highlighting its work and content production. Each Peacebuilding initiative was showcased in a dedicated video shared through YouTube and relayed on social media platforms.
4. Online debates applicants and attendees connected through the Manasati30 platform.
5. Community radios aired their programmes on social media and created content uploaded online for convenient retrievals.
6. Yemeni youth participated in international events as part of the strategic outreach activities.
7. Social media campaigns such as #Enough_War were organised, resulting in broad online engagement, as illustrated below.

#Enough_War Initiative

The initiative took place in the month of September 2020 in line with two events: the International Peace Day on September 21 and news on prisoners' exchange. The initiative called on conflict parties in Yemen to reach a ceasefire agreement through amplifying and raising the voices of young people to decision-makers. The campaign was part of the peacebuilding project with UNESCO and involved a variety of online activities.

The campaign has generated compelling messages from young people who want the war to stop. Thousands of young people have participated in this raising awareness initiative, either by sharing their stories, sending or publishing content (videos or cartoons) on their profiles, changing their pictures with the campaign visual identity, sharing the produced content or taking photos with the dedicated hashtag.

The campaign has gone viral on Yemen social media, and its hashtag was widely used.
The project produced a lot of media content and highly visible outputs, in accordance with its design and implementation strategy. Relying mainly on online information platforms and social media, most of the activities were organized or shared online, with the aim to create and enhance access to information for the Yemeni youth.

**Campaign outputs**

Engaged users on Facebook: 38,000
Engagement on Manasati30 Facebook page: 48,000
Website views: 2,619
Video views: 700,000

1,685 # of people who shared campaign content
60 # of people who shared their stories
100 # of people who took a photo with the hashtag
1,056 # of survey participants

**Impressions on Twitter**

862,000

- Graduates at the School of Business at Taiz University adopted the campaign hashtag as their graduation ceremony theme. They produced a promo of themselves in a human chain resembling the hashtag.
- Survey results were republished 27 times by 23 online news websites.
- Campaign messages were documented and shared with the office of the UN Special Envoy to Yemen, for them to be shared with the conflicting parties.
- Peter-Derrek Hof, Netherlands’ Ambassador to Yemen, appreciated the videos and shared one of them on his page.
The campaign told the story of war and peace in Yemen through several videos. The campaign produced an animation video, where the Yemeni youth was represented through the story of two characters: the young Yazan (name of a Yemeni king) and the young Balqees (name of the queen of Sheba). While Yazan is thinking about what could be done to stop the war and reach peace, Balqees, in a wheelchair due to a mine explosion, wonders when she will no more hear bad news. The story shows the impact of war on society, such as preventing youth from achieving their dreams, gender-based violence, deteriorating economic conditions and psychological distress. The video ends with young men and women raising the hashtag.

In a video, titled “Why peace!”, the campaign discussed the ceasefire. The video highlights the portraits and stories of young Yemenis from different regions across Yemen, illustrating the negative consequences of war and hope for peace. The video end with a call for a ceasefire.

The campaign also featured vox pop interviews, presenting youth and influencers sending their messages to conflict parties to a ceasefire and end the war.

The campaign coincided with another peace campaign launched by Yemeni artists, called “100_days_of_art”. Artists used the same campaign's hashtag that created momentum and amplified both voices and campaign outreach. When the prisoners' release deal happened in October 2020, the team expanded the campaign to address this news.

Campaign Activities

Ceasefire survey

A survey solicited 1,056 young people inquiring about their views on motives, challenges and major players for reaching a ceasefire. The survey has also provided a space for young people to send messages to conflicting parties, as well as share their personal stories and how their lives and their close ones have been affected by war.
**Why peace video**

The video highlighted stories of the suffering of people affected by the war, shared messages from affected people, and highlighted why peace is desperately needed. The video reached more than 150,000 views and 3,400 engagements.

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**“Enough war” VOX POP**

Through this video, young people from different governorates have loudly sent their messages to conflict parties to stop the war, saying “Enough War” and showing that peace in Yemen is attainable. The video reached 255,000 views and 5,000 engagements. Around 700 people responded with their message to the conflicting parties. Many praised the video content, and one viewer commented, “This content deserves to be an ongoing trend!”

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**Cartoons**

Two cartoons were produced and published simultaneously with the survey. They illustrated women’s role in ending the war and the influence of regional players on conflict parties.

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**Online Mural**

The social media audience was asked to take a picture with the campaign hashtag and share it. Over 100 people from different governorates shared their pictures that were posted on social media. All pictures were assembled into one digital mural.
Animation video:

The video illustrates the story of imaginary young characters Yazan and Balqees who were impacted by the war. The video was watched 107,000 times, and 1,700 people have engaged with it.

“War or peace” video

This video shows two young fighters in the middle of a battlefield, when suddenly they imagine themselves playing music, using their weapons which have turned into musical instruments. While they enjoy the moment, a bomb out of nowhere hits nearby and wakes them up from their beautiful dream. The video shows the parallel between war and peace. This video made the most of the engagements among all produced content: views reached 277,000, and 6,500 reacted.

Profile frame:

A Facebook Profile Frame design was shared online. Thirty-six shared it on their profile, and 1,300 people reacted.

#Enough_War campaign call stories

What most of the stories had in common were the dreams and aspirations that had been broken and vanished because of the war. One young man shared his story saying, “Our blood was shed, our houses were demolished, and our dreams were broken. For six years, my dream has been fading away in front of me, and living in peace is the only last thing we wish to have in this country. Please stop the war and save what's left of our dreams!”

#ENOUGH_WAR CAMPAIGN PARTICIPANT
“We live the worst of everything: Death, Destruction and Displacement. We got tired and lost our power; therefore, we must raise up our voices loudly #Enough_War.”

MAHA AWON, SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVIST AMIDST DESTRUCTION IN TAIZ CITY

A young man and woman both lost their lower leg due to shelling.

Young People living with a disability also engaged with the campaign. One contribution in sign language came from a woman with a hearing disability, who translated the campaign hashtag into sign language.

A woman with a hearing disability translated the campaign hashtag into sign language.

Some audience shared their drawings to deliver their message.
EMPOWERING YEMENI YOUTH TOWARDS PEACE
ENSURING ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PARTICIPATION

Cease Fire Survey
- 1,056 participants

Why Peace Video
- 150,000 views
- 3,400 reactions

VOX POP
- 255,000 views
- 5,000 reactions

Cartoons
- 2 cartoons

Online mural
- 100 people

Animation video
- 107,000 views
- 1,700 reactions

"War or peace" video
- 277,000 views
- 6,500 reactions

Profile frame
- 36 shares
- 1,300 reactions

#Enough_War
- Trending hashtag

International Peace Day
- Drawings

Marginalized
- Sign Language
- Disability
- Displaced

Activist Engagement
Success Stories

The project has had an impact on the lives of young people, communities and organizations, with a number of success stories showcasing resilience, creativity and innovation in Yemen. While this report cannot share all the stories, three of them are recounted here. Other stories can be found on various links in this report.

Radio Lana

In March 2021, UNESCO GCC and Yemen office and Community Media Network in Jordan partnered with five local Yemeni radio stations from different Yemeni governorates to produce programmes aiming to enhance conversations around peacebuilding and voice the youth's needs and opinions with decision-makers and duty bearers. The activity included a capacity-building component to build the skills of radio professionals in producing peace-related programs targeting the youth. One of the participating Radios was Radio Lana 91.9 FM.

Through their participation in this activity, Radio Lana is highlighting important societal and peace-related issues and engaging with the youth, decision-makers and experts on topics such as the role of youth and women in peacebuilding, the economic impact of the war, the role of art, culture and sports in peacebuilding, ways and suggestions to reintegrate recruits into the civil community, among other subjects.

This project, through its programmes, provided the opportunity for Radio Lana to allow youth to have a specialised radio segment on peacebuilding and provided them with platforms to voice their opinions freely, a space for expression that is very limited in Yemen given the restrictions, both political and sectoral.

“Among the benefits of our participation in this project was that we were able to provide the youth with a much-needed platform to voice their opinions on important topics that directly impact them.”

DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMES AT RADIO LANA

The project also allowed Radio Lana to innovatively cover certain topics through angles that have not been explored before. For instance, the radio highlighted the issue of IDP children needing to have the right to education and be freed of any discrimination due to their origin. Integration of children in the education systems and schools and providing children with a safe environment were among the areas the radio focused on.

The project also allowed the participating radio stations, including Radio Lana, to establish partnerships and cooperate with one another in covering societal issues/ and problems that are not only related to one governorate but instead providing the perspectives and latitude of the problem in a different governorate, thereby promoting social cohesion from the perspective of one community feeling and relating to the sufferings of another one. Ashreqat Ebrahim, director of programmes at Radio Lana, shares, “It was interesting for us to collaborate with other radio stations and showcase humanitarian stories from different governorates. The audience reacted positively to the content, and we see that we will continue these collaborations.”

Members of Radio Lana received capacity building training, equipping the staff with the skillset needed to produce professional and engaging radio programmes. Jamal Abduh, a journalist at Radio Lana, stated that the training he received was extraordinary, and he feels the training and the coaching sessions that go in parallel with the productions has improved his skills, which he will continue to use throughout his journalistic career.
The most important addition to Radio Lana's traditional work, was its podcast production. “It was a unique experience that will further be utilised in attracting and engaging with the Radio audience.” Jamal Abduh shares.

Radio Lana has taken ownership of the interventions and intends to continue production beyond the period of the project. "We plan to continue engaging with the youth on peacebuilding even after the end of this activity,” Ashreqat Ebrahim added.

Weam Initiative

Weeyam is one of 14 youth-led initiatives that were selected and supported to develop ideas to achieve peace in their local communities as part of the ‘My Solution“ activity. Weeyam, a youth led initiative that aims to raise the awareness and empower the youth with hearing loss in Yemen. Through organizing workshops, videos, and leaflets using sign language, the initiative engages with the youth on a variety of topics including health, economic empowerment, and peacebuilding.

Aisha Jubari, director of the initiative and a woman with hearing impairment, and Ahmed Alakhli, sign translator and relations officer, are among the seven people working on the initiative. All individuals working in the initiative, except the translator, are people with hearing loss.

As part of the My Solution, Weeyam worked on raising the awareness of people with hearing loss on the UN Resolution 2250, one that discusses the role of the youth in peace and security.

The initiative organised a TOT to equip ten young women and men with hearing loss with the skills needed to deliver training on the UN resolution to a larger audience. Subsequently, using sign language, the trainers were able to raise the awareness of 80 students with hearing loss in 3 schools and a university. Jubari and Alakhli explain, “Both the trainers and students were very enthusiastic about learning about peacebuilding. It was the first time some of the participants learned about the UN resolution. This peacebuilding awareness training targeting the individuals with hearing loss was the first of its kind in Yemen.”

In parallel, short films using sign language were produced and posted on social media discussing peacebuilding, the challenges endured by individuals with hearing loss and the importance of integrating them into society. The videos featured success stories empowering the youth. Jubari and Alakhli explain, “Among the posts, we featured a real story of a student with hearing loss who attended a regular school and succeeded in teaching other students in sign language. The story was inspiring to many and received large support from the viewers.”

Jubari and Alakhli stated that the project was beneficial to the members of the initiative who themselves are individuals with hearing loss. The training that the initiative received helped to upskill the performance of the initiative and its plans to engage the audience online.

Furthermore, this opportunity brings the initiative on its first step to start empowering youth with disability and their right to education and engagement in the peace process. The initiative intends to continue organising advocacy campaigns on peacebuilding despite all challenges.
Aulef is a youth led initiative that brings together 20 young women and men from different Yemeni governorates to work on projects that aim to strengthen the Yemeni identity, peacebuilding, and development. The initiative, based in Aden, organizes heritage revival activities such as heritage music parades, exhibitions, campaigns featuring Yemeni traditions, among other efforts. Part of this project, the initiative first organized field visits to map out historical shops and capture their stories, which were then featured in an online awareness raising campaign. The campaign aimed to spread knowledge about the shops, promote their cultural values and encourage coexistence in the society. The founder explains “By featuring these historical shops, we were able to raise the society’s awareness about their existence and cultural values. Among the success stories is one being featured in our online campaign – a shop owner informed us that after years of slowdown in his sales due to the conflict, his shop is being revived with customers interested to learn more about his cultural products.”

The initiative created a short film, which was posted on social media and reached over 5,000 individuals, to show Aden’s rich heritage and promote coexistence. Additionally, Aulef organized an exhibition featuring the different historical shops and cultural traditions.

“We wanted to relay a message of peace through culture and art. We asked the attendees to dress in their traditional costumes from different parts of Yemen, and we noticed acceptance and support to the diversity presented. Following the exhibition, we received much positive feedback showing that people are enthusiastic about the diverse traditions in Yemen and support peace and coexistence.”

Through their participation in ‘My Solution’ the young members of the initiative were themselves enthusiastic and accepting of their different cultural backgrounds. The Aulef founder explains: “I noticed a 180-degree shift in our team’s interaction approach with each other, as they are now very positive to working together and embrace their regional diversities.” The founder of the initiative also noticed large support from young people in general on the topics of culture and peace, “I am receiving many messages from young women and men asking to join our initiative and support our activities.”

On a final note, the founder says: “Our participation in ‘My Solution’ helped us reach a greater number of young people, and even after the end of this project, we plan to continue reaching out to them to promote peace and coexistence through culture and art.”
Lessons Learned and Recommendations

The project has demonstrated the importance of setting up and supporting platforms for youth to present their voices and experiences and to partner with each other to work towards peace together. Creating safe online and face-to-face spaces for youth to learn from each other, give and receive support, has been instrumental in bringing young people at a more central place in the conflict resolution process.

Youth voices need to be heard on their own terms, without expecting young people to subscribe to entrenched opinions and predetermined aims of a peace process.

The project topic, peacebuilding, is inherently sensitive in a country where war has been raging for seven years, and media and public opinions are polarised. The project has achieved its set outcomes and succeeded in overcoming the challenges posed by the inherent topic sensitivity and the sudden onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was able to do so through the adoption of a neutral, balanced and fact-checked approach, focused on the needs and aspirations of youth and women.

With the onset of COVID-19, a certain number of on-the-ground activities were threatened and had to be modified to ensure health and safety. The project adapted quickly to the new conditions by moving implementation to online modalities, and keeping some activities face-to-face, while ensuring that all the safety and health measures were taken into account and adhered to. While online modalities have proven successful, they were generally more time-consuming. Future interventions can benefit from online modality with proper planning, leveraging technology tools, and providing time and resources for users to get familiar with the technology. In addition, mitigation measures are needed to tackle the slow internet services in Yemen.

Some of the significant challenges as informed by project experience:

Time is always a significant limitation to competing needs and expectations. Proper planning is critical to the success of such interactive, multistakeholder and multi-activity programmes.

A crisis environment has unexpected demands and requirements. Additional time and resources are needed to maintain communication, coordination, and follow-up with various stakeholders. The use of online mobile applications to communicate, rather than official email channels, has proven to be very efficient in the case of Yemen, where internet access is not always stable.

Local authorities and community leaders must be included in the initiative and take part in the discussion channels to contribute to project implementation success.

The use of social media to engage youth in this project and reconnect them with the peacebuilding process has proven to be successful and critical to the initiative's success. Social media offered a new platform for young people's freedom of expression. It allowed them to discuss important topics related to their country and its future, including with youth with different backgrounds and from different parts of the country. They were also able to express their needs and aspirations through creative visuals.
Developing a youth-focused and gender-sensitive content strategy to support discussion and dialogue is essential to ensure participation and representation of excluded population groups. Future intervention can explicitly include other marginalised groups as target groups, such as internally displaced persons and youth with disabilities, in order to broaden inclusion and further expand on themes of cooperation and social cohesion.

The project supported a platform and young journalists. Future interventions might include other independent platforms beyond Manasati30 to further build an alternative narrative. A network of trained journalists could be created to further support the creation of a neutral peacebuilding narrative.

While the project had a few capacity-building programmes, youth need more education and skill development to engage online and take up initiatives. Online training is becoming a sound alternative for project implementation, team collaboration and dissemination of information. Media and Information literacy initiatives would be beneficial for Yemeni youth, also in the area of peacebuilding.

At the same time, much work needs to be done to improve these online platforms. New technologies can be further leveraged to create more opportunities and play a significant role in shaping future interventions. Online surveys, blogs, podcasts, vlogs, among others, are changing the way projects can be implemented in a more connected manner.

The online modality requires a lot of communication with more meetings to create links and connections and maximise the information-sharing potential. Online activities need more commitment and further engagement to ensure the inclusion and participation of all.

"Manasati30 support helped us make stories of people in Al-Hodaydah. What we learned helped us build stories simply and attractively tailored to social media. This change in our style made people interact with our content more than before, and it was reflected in the increased number of likes, comments and shares. Support has also helped us build a new strategy to use short writings and supportive designs, depending more on multimedia to convey tailored messages for young people."

LAHTHAT INITIATIVE DIRECTOR, PEACE BUILDER AWARDEE
Conclusion
Conclusion

After 7 years of war and despite several round of peace talks negotiation, the Yemeni conflict threaten every day more the life of its population and the future of its youth. As the political landscape, the media landscape is highly polarized with the spread of hate speech and disinformation, fuelling further the conflict and the country’s division. While freedom of expression and access to information are essential to build strong and united communities and ensure sustainability of the state through transparency and accountability, spaces for expression in Yemen are reduced and access to information is limited. This is particularly the case for the Youth and for women, being excluded from public discussions. The project “Empowering Yemeni Youth towards Peace: Ensuring access to information and participation” aimed at answering a crucial problematic, the absence of 70% of the Yemeni population, the Youth, in the peacebuilding process. The Youth is among the first victim of the ongoing conflict, being deprived not only of their voices but also of their present and of their future. This project sought to provide the Yemeni youth with an unbiased information about peace development in Yemen, offer them spaces to express themselves and share their opinion, amplify their voice so to be heard by the main stakeholders, and make the peacebuilding process more inclusive.

One of the first step of the initiative was to give access to a quality information for the youth to be better informed and able to formulate their needs and opinions based on unbiased facts. Through capacity building of young Yemeni journalists, the creation of the Road to Peace page but also through collaboration with community radios, sensitizing them to the importance of Youth and Women representation, new information channels and contents were created. This project, relying mainly on media content production and online platforms, showed that using innovative digital tools can make a difference in Youth and Women inclusion. More than ever in the past, the world is ultra-connected, everything goes and happens online, and one of the main public of online platforms is the Youth. While this evolution provides a formidable opportunity to accelerate change, enhance communication, and facilitate unified action, not knowing the codes and usage of media platforms can also lead to the raise of misinformation and further worsen the division of country already destabilised. Through capacity building, supervision from media professional and smart online moderation to foster engagement, the project succeeded in protecting its users and providing them with a safe online space for dialogue, giving the priority to women and the youth in sharing their opinions.

The project contributed to change the narrative and reposition the youth at the centre of the discussion. Whether through the six surveys conducted, the 5 debates organized, the 14 peacebuilding initiative supported or youth participation to international events, the opinions of young Yemenis were directly shared with the main stakeholders, demonstrating not only the full capacity of the Youth to express itself but also the importance of their opinion to build the country’s future. It showcased several success stories echoing the struggle and hardships but also the resilience and creativity of the Yemeni youth and their strong will to fight for their future and see the conflict ending. Outside the scope of Yemen, this project has demonstrated how social media, online communication platforms and media productions, can be leveraged to foster freedom of expression and access to information, and provide Youth living in countries in conflict with new venues and spaces to express themselves and make their voices heard.
UNESCO would like to thanks its partners without whom this project wouldn't have been possible, starting by the United Nations Peacebuilding that funded this project, and RNW Media for its involvement in the project as main implementing partners.

UNESCO would like to also convey its appreciation and gratefulness to all our partners, Manasati30, Community Media Solution, Media Association for Peace, Al Jazeera Media Institute, community radios, media professionals, civil society organizations and human rights activists in Yemen, that were committed to work together to contribute to the success of this project and more importantly to support the Yemeni Youth.

The success of this project and its accomplishments goes to the Yemeni Youth and their continuous support and participation in all the project activities and their strong willingness and resilience in the face of conflict. These young women and men have shown that one of the most significant roles youth can play in peacebuilding and conflict resolution is for them to be the change they want.
Empowering Yemeni youth towards peace: Ensuring access to information and participation

Published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

UNESCO GCC and Yemen
66 Lusail Street - West Bay
Doha, Qatar

www.unesco.org

Published: January 2022