



WATER PUMPING TEST CONDUCTED IN AL MAHFAD COMMUNITY, ABYAN GOVERNORATE

YEMEN COMMUNITIES STRONGER TOGETHER QUARTERLY PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REPORT (Y2Q1)

October 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019

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ACRONYMS

AAC	Authority-Community Committee
APS	Annual Program Statement
AOR	Agreement Officer Representative
AQAP	Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
BoQ	Bill of Quantities
CBO	Community Based Organization
CC	Community Committee
CEC	Community Enhancement Committees
CES	Community Entry Strategy
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFO	Chief Finance Officer
CoP	Chief of Party
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCoP	Deputy Chief of Party
DRG	Democracy, Human Rights and Governance
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMMP	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
FMF	Field Medical Foundation
GC	Global Communities
HQ	Headquarters
HR	Human Resources
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning
MoPIC	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
NFDHR	National Foundation for the Development and Humanitarian Relief
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PACE	Participatory Action for Community Enhancement
PFG	Partners for Good
PGF	Peacebuilding Grants Fund
PSPA	Permissive Stabilization Programming Areas (Green Areas)
RoYG	Republic of Yemen Government
SCMCHA	Supreme Council for the Management and Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and International Cooperation (formerly NAMCHA)
ToT	Training of Trainers
USG	United States Government
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WPS	Women, Peace, Security
YCST	Yemen Communities Stronger Together
YMEP	Yemen Monitoring and Evaluation Project

A. OVERVIEW

“Only national actors can address their society’s needs and goals in a sustainable way... Local and traditional authorities as well as civil society actors, including marginalized groups, have a critical role to play in bringing multiple voices to the table for early priority-setting and to broaden the sense of ownership around a common vision for the country’s future. The full participation of women in these processes is essential, both as victims of the conflict and as important drivers of recovery and development.”

Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict, June 11, 2009

Yemen Communities Stronger Together (YCST) is a three-year program funded by USAID and implemented by Global Communities (GC), together with Yemeni partner, Field Medical Foundation (FMF), and specialized international partners Build Up and Partners for Good (PFG). Currently, it targets the four governorates of Abyan, Aden, Lahj, and Taiz. Since its inception in 2018, YCST focused on supporting local-level initiatives that mitigate conflict, strengthen social cohesion, promote the peaceful resolution of differences, and, where feasible, capitalize on stabilization opportunities in Yemen.

YCST goals are guided by the following theory of change: *“If local capacity to collaboratively identify and address conflict stressors and threats to social cohesion is built, and if tangible community-level results are demonstrated, then the resilience of Yemeni communities and institutions will increase, local authorities who participate in systems of accountability strengthened by YCST will be better prepared to lead their communities’ participation in national peace efforts, and the effectiveness of models that can be replicated across the country will be demonstrated, laying the foundation for a peaceful and effective transition process.”*

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

All the activities undertaken under YCST fall within the following program objectives, with Objective 4 acting as a crosscutting learning objective:

1. Objective 1 – Engage Communities in an Inclusive Approach to Identify and Implement Service Delivery and Conflict Mitigation Projects. Under this objective, YCST is using GC’s Participatory Action for Community Enhancement (PACE) to build the capacity of community members and local leaders to develop a vision for their community and to collaboratively identify and address issues through conflict mitigation and service delivery projects in targeted communities across at targeted governorates across Yemen to be selected in coordination with USAID. Projects selected by communities will address drivers and impact of the conflict, while participation in the process will build social capital and skills within the community.
2. Objective 2 – Build the Capacity of Formal and Informal Local Leaders, Organizations, and Networks to Serve as Neutral Arbitrators and Peace Builders and Meet Community and Constituent Needs. Within both PACE and stabilization communities, YCST will strengthen local mechanisms, and the skills of those who participate in them, to identify and address unresolved grievances that can spark violent conflict within their communities and at the district level. YCST will manage a Peacebuilding Grants Fund that will include a Women, Peace and Security and Innovation Sub-Funds to support CSOs’ abilities to implement technical projects that address priorities such as increasing women’s participation in peacebuilding, and forming youth networks to support positive engagement in civic life.
3. Objective 3 – Pilot Stabilization Activities to Identify Effective Models to Create Where Credible and Local Authorities and Systems Can Peaceably Manage Conflicts and Prevent a Resurgence of

Violence. Stabilization activities are only implemented in Republic of Yemen Government (RoYG)-controlled areas Yemen, with YCST piloting projects in four districts in Abyan and Taiz governorates in Year 1. Activities include assisting local authorities to understand the priorities of their constituents, facilitate authorities' plans for a response to those priorities to demonstrate tangible results and responsible governance, and provide capacity building of local authorities to sustain investments, build communications with constituents and demonstrate the transparency and accountability necessary to build credibility. Additionally, community-level activities will also reduce conflict and improve social cohesion.

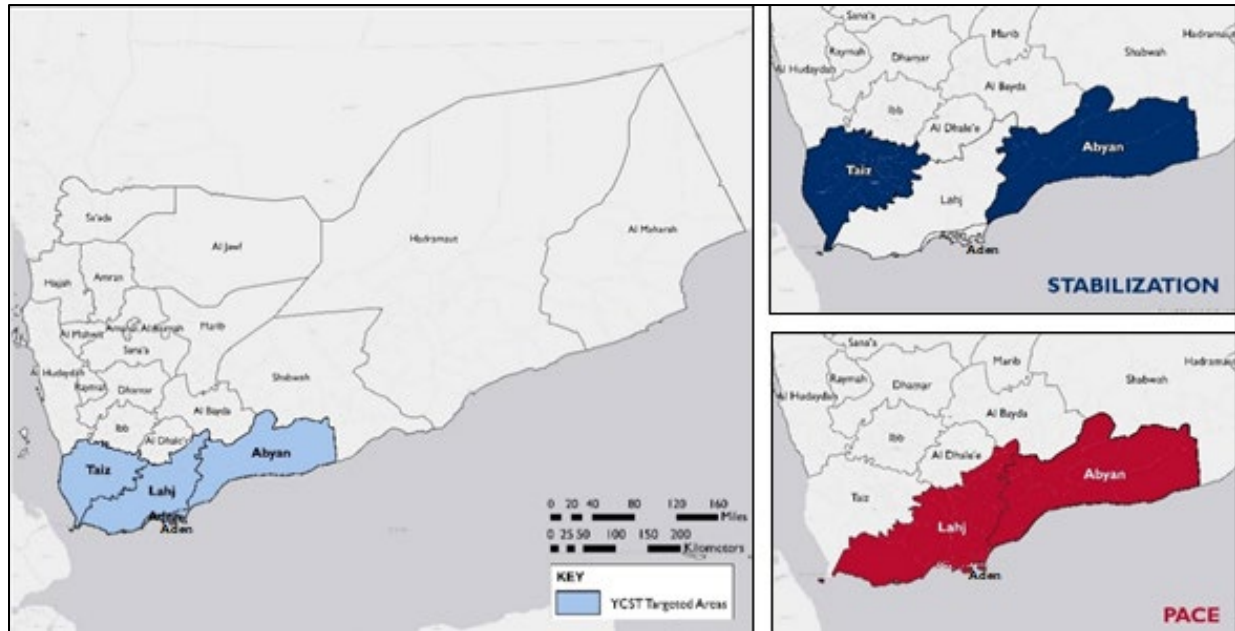
4. Objective 4 – Carry Out Regular and Action-oriented Learning and Contextual Analysis Across YCST Interventions to Support Adaptive Management for Enhanced Outcomes. Action learning will be integrated across YCST and examine pilot approaches under Objectives 1 through 3. YCST will incorporate mapping, piloting, scenario planning and ongoing feedback loops to test, adapt and scale up evidence-based programming that ensures do-no-harm, responds to a rapidly changing environment, and will result in achieving targeted outcomes. YCST will also provide knowledge and data to USAID on local-level political economy dynamics.

TARGETED AREAS

Year 1: YCST entered 12 **PACE** communities in four districts in the southern governorates of Abyan, Aden and Lahj. These included Al-Mahfad and Jayshan communities in Al-Mahfad and Jayshan districts in Abyan; six communities in Dar Sa'ad district in Aden (Abd Albari, Al-Loqaia, Al-Rabash, Al-Ulfi, Ali Jahis and Ibn Albasir); and four communities in Lahj (Al-Madharebah (Al-Shatt), Al-Suqaya and Al-Nabyah, Al-Suraih, and Ras Al-Aarah) in Al Madaribah Wa Al Arah district.

The **stabilization** component targeted four communities in the two governorates of Abyan and Taiz. In Abyan, the communities targeted were Juar (Khanfir district) and Zenjubar (Zenjubar district) and in Taiz governorate, Al-Azaez and Al-Suwa'a in Ash Shamayatayn and Al Ma'afar districts respectively. Activities in the stabilization pilot communities will continue in Year 2.

The map of Yemen and table below provide more information on YCST targeted areas for PACE and stabilization activities:



YCST TARGETED AREAS – Year I					
GOVERNORATE	DISTRICT	COMMUNITY	HOUSEHOLDS	POPULATION	INTERVENTION
Abyan	Al Mahfad	Al-Mahfad	950	8,400	PACE
	Jayshan	Jayshan	870	9,060	PACE
	Khanfir	Juar	9,521	66,649	Stabilization
	Zenjubar	Zenjubar	1,040	7,280	Stabilization
Aden	Dar Sa'ad	Abd Albari	3,169	22,937	PACE
		Al-Ulfi	1,790	12,320	PACE
		Al-Loqaia	1,325	9,378	PACE
		Ibn Albasir	1,339	9,304	PACE
		Al-Rabash	1,077	7,967	PACE
		Ali Jahis	1,074	7,292	PACE

YCST TARGETED AREAS – Year 1

Lahj	Al Madaribah Wa Al Arah	Al-Madharebah (Al-Shatt)	214	1,270	PACE
		Ras Al-Aarah	306	1,821	PACE
		Al-Suraih	266	1,577	PACE
		Al-Suqaya and Al-Nabyah	327	1,941	PACE
Taiz	Al Ma'afar	Al-Suwa'a	5,879	41,156	Stabilization
	Ash Shamayatayn	Al-Azaez	2,764	19,349	Stabilization

Year 2: In the Year 2 work plan, YCST selected 24 additional PACE communities in both the north and south. The table below shows the selected communities as well as their population figures, which were verified with district authorities and updated in November 2019. The communities in the white rows of the table are the 14 PACE communities that YCST has selected in the south. Community entry was planned for early in Year 2 and is currently delayed as YCST awaits MOPIC approval. The communities highlighted in grey are the 10 PACE communities that YCST selected in the north for program entry in March 2020 had Global Communities been able to successfully negotiate access and an acceptable agreement with SCMCHA by the end of December 2019. Given the extremely restrictive operating environment in the north and the continued existence of “red lines,” YCST is coordinating with its USAID AOR on an all-South scenario, as outlined in the Year 2 workplan.

GOVERNORATE	DISTRICT	COMMUNITY	NO. OF HOUSEHOLDS	EST. POPULATION
Abyan	Al Mahfad	Al-Kafa	TBC	TBC
	Khanfir	Al-Kod	1,393	9,723
		Shoqra	675	4,288
		Al-Dergag	466	2,727
Aden	Seerah/Crater	Al-Telal Al-Moltahiba	3,310	19,947
		March 2nd	3,267	17,999
	Al Buraiqeh	Al-Shouhada	2,118	13,005
		Nagi	1,105	8,649
Dhamar	Utmah	Bani Suwaid	1,179	8,253
		Hemayar Abzar	2,023	14,158
	Wusab As Safil	Bani Hatam	1,726	12,082
		Bani Swadah	1,853	12,968
Ibb	Dhi As Sufal	Khenweh	11,746	82,224
		Wadi Dheba	5,271	36,900
Lahj	Al Hawtah	Harah Qaisi	448	2,944
		Harah Masawi	437	2,872
	Al Musaymir	Al Musaymir	300	1,721
		Gol Madram	234	1,346
	Tur Al Bahah	Al Mashbab	652	2,267
		Al Raga'a	529	1,837
Sana'a	Manakhah	Lahab	1,804	12,629
		Manakhah	1,689	11,825
	Sa'afan	Al-Taraf	1,016	7,109
		Bani Araf	1,582	11,076

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Per Section A5.2(b) of Cooperative Agreement No. 72027818CA00001, this Quarterly Program Performance Report summarizes the activities and accomplishments of the YCST program for its first quarter of FY2020, the reporting period from October 1 to December 31, 2019. YCST accomplished important milestones under each objective in the reporting month.

- ✓ Reviewed Participatory Conflict Analysis in PACE Year 1 Communities
Technical assessments conducted by YCST led to the finding that it would not be feasible to implement projects to address the first-ranked priorities of several community enhancement communities. These communities then reviewed other highly-ranked priorities and selected alternative priorities.
- ✓ Design of Service Delivery and Conflict Mitigation Projects for PACE Year 1 Communities
YCST and USAID agreed on the format and content for submission of project proposals. YCST completed assessments, testing, bills of quantity (BoQs), Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and related support documentation required for submission.
- ✓ Launch of Annual Program Statement (APS) for Peacebuilding and WPS Grants Fund
The Annual Program Statement was launched in October 2019 and a kickoff workshop was held in November with more than 100 representatives of Yemeni NGO/CSOs attending. YCST received 96 concept papers in the November round and 25 concept papers for the December round for consideration.
- ✓ Innovation Grants Fund
YCST and its partner Build Up developed a detailed implementation plan for the Innovation Grants Fund program. YCST developed communications outreach materials to be used to launch the plan in the next quarter.
- ✓ Annual Learning Workshop
YCST held its first annual learning workshop in Amman, Jordan from November 16-18, 2019. Attended by 28 participants, the workshop resulted in building a consensus around the critical moments and factors that may positively or negatively impact achieving Year 2 milestones as well as how to incorporate the lessons learned in Year 1 into Year 2 activities.
- ✓ Community Dashboards
YCST developed draft community dashboards for Year 1 communities. The interactive dashboards are based on the baseline data collected between December 2018 and March 2019.

LOOKING FORWARD

In the upcoming January – March 2020 reporting period, YCST looks forward to the following milestones and activities:

- ✓ Submit proposals to USAID for approval for PACE and stabilization projects identified by Year 1 communities following the completion of required assessments, testing, bill of quantity (BoQs), Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and related support documentation.
- ✓ Conduct baseline surveys for 14 Year 2 PACE communities.
- ✓ Enter 14 Year 2 PACE communities.

- ✓ Prepare to start on-the-ground construction/rehabilitation projects following USAID approval, tendering, award, Memoranda of Understanding, and contractor mobilization.
- ✓ Launch Innovation Grants Fund, followed by receiving proposals and selecting finalists and awards (ten grants, each to a team of at least two persons, selected from communities in Lahj, Abyan and Aden).
- ✓ Award the first Peacebuilding grants based on concept papers submitted in the first round in November 2019 which were invited to submit full grant applications.
- ✓ Award the first grants under the Women, Peace and Security sub-fund to selected women's organizations.
- ✓ Hold quarterly reflection meeting to consider recommendations of the November 2019 annual learning workshop and incorporation into revised Year 2 Implementation Plan.
- ✓ Complete online community dashboards.
- ✓ Conduct data collection and report on changes and impacts of the stabilization interventions in targeted areas.

B. PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

Program activities during the reporting period focused on the preparation for implementation of service delivery interventions for Year 1 PACE and stabilization communities and the kickoff of the Peacebuilding and Innovation grants programs. Other notable program activities during the reporting period were the Year 1 annual learning workshop held in Amman in November and the development of community dashboards shared with USAID in December.

OBJECTIVE 1 – ENGAGE COMMUNITIES IN AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH TO IDENTIFY AND IMPLEMENT SERVICE DELIVERY AND CONFLICT MITIGATION PROJECTS

YCST staff reviewed the participatory conflict analysis in communities where the technical assessments revealed that initial priorities were not feasible. The design of service delivery and conflict mitigation projects was completed for nearly all communities. At the end of the reporting period, the YCST PACE team was poised to enter Year 2 communities, pending MoPIC approval.

OBJECTIVE 1 – ENGAGE COMMUNITIES IN AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH TO IDENTIFY AND IMPLEMENT SERVICE DELIVERY AND CONFLICT MITIGATION PROJECTS

INDICATOR	TARGET (FY20)	FY20Q1 PROGRESS (OCT 1, 2019 – DEC 31, 2019)	FY19-FY20Q1 PROGRESS (OCT 1, 2018 – DEC 31, 2019)
Expected Outcome 1.1: Community cohesion and resilience strengthened			
1.1.1 Percentage increase in participation in community decision-making among target beneficiaries	45%	NA	20%
1.1.2 Percentage increase in participation in community groups and activities among target beneficiaries	60%	NA	47%
1.1.3 Percentage of community-prioritized projects maintained three months after completion	50%	NA	NA
1.1.4 Number of people with access to improved levels of essential services	45,176	NA	NA
1.1.5 Percentage of community members who agree that YCST-funded projects address their critical needs	70%	NA	NA
Expected Outcome 1.2: The drivers of an impact of violent conflict is reduced			
1.2.1 Percentage of conflict-mitigation activities developed with input from women and youth	95%	NA	94%
1.2.2 Number of new groups or initiatives created through USG funding, dedicated to resolving the conflict or the drivers of the conflict (PS.6.2-1)	136	0	140
1.2.3 Percentage of community members who agree that YCST-funded projects contribute to improved conflict-resolution	70%	NA	NA

Note: NA means data is not available at this stage of the program implementation. This is either because the related activities are not yet conducted, i.e. service delivery projects, mid-term outcome surveys, etc.

PARTICIPATORY CONFLICT ANALYSIS

Several of the PACE communities reviewed the community participatory conflict analysis and identification of community stressors to be addressed through YCST interventions during the reporting period.

Aden: The PACE team, alongside YCST engineers, conducted meetings in October 2019 with the Public Electricity Corporation (PEC) in Dar Sa'ad to discuss the projects prioritized in five of the six communities in Aden, namely Abd Albari, Ali Jahis, Al-Ulfi, Al-Loqaia, and Ibn Albasir. As a result, the five Community Enhancement Committees (CECs) agreed to a project to rehabilitate and enhance the distribution of electricity across the five communities. A draft PEC report was submitted in November and studied by the YCST team in December with a decision to recruit a senior electrical engineer consultant to advise on the matter.

The CEC in Al-Rabash community, however, selected improving the community's sanitation network as its priority need. Meetings were held to discuss the intervention with the local water and sanitation utility company. The sanitation intervention, which was initially selected, proved to be technically unfeasible. At the end of the reporting period, an alternative sanitation intervention was under consideration by the water and wastewater company for submission to YCST in January 2020.

Lahj: In December 2019, the PACE team met with CEC members of Al Suraih community in Al Madaribah Wa Al Arah district. Engineering studies—reported below—had shown that the initial water intervention was not feasible and it was planned that PACE team and CEC members would review the participatory conflict analysis on the remaining top priorities in January 2020.

FINALIZE DESIGN OF SERVICE DELIVERY AND CONFLICT MITIGATION PROJECTS FOR YEAR I COMMUNITIES

Abyan: YCST submitted a draft proposal summary format to USAID in November 2019 using Al Mahfad Water Supply Enhancement Project (MWSEP) as an example. The purpose of the MWSEP is to upgrade the current diesel-operated system with a solar-powered system to increase water output for residents of the community. The proposal was subsequently modified by YCST's engineering team to align with input received from the AOR on the frequency of monitoring, climate risk management, water quality testing, pre-rehabilitation assessment, pre-design analyses, design-bid-build design, and piping rehabilitation. Security concerns hampered the scheduling of the water quality testing and well pumping tests in Al Mahfad as most potential contractors expressed unwillingness to travel to this remote section of Abyan. Following a competitive award process, water quality and pump tests were completed in December, and the report was reviewed with the contractor on December 24. The results indicated that a nearby second well also must be tested, and the program will begin the tendering process for this testing in January 2020.

Aden: As reported above, in October and November, YCST held meetings with CEC members and representatives of the Public Electricity Corporation (PEC) to discuss how YCST could support PEC in improving the electricity distribution network in YCST communities in Dar Sa'ad district. The current system suffers from overloading and aging equipment and transmission lines, which often break down, resulting in



YCST MEETS WITH THE PEC TO DISCUSS THE ELECTRICITY NETWORK IN ADEN GOVERNORATE



outages as long as a week. The issue was ranked as the priority for five of the six communities in Dar Sa'ad.

Lahj: YCST's PACE and engineering teams organized efforts for the Ras Al-Aarah Water Supply Enhancement Project (RWSEP). Similar to the MWSEP, this service delivery and conflict mitigation project aims to counter the lack of a sufficient quantity of potable water supply to the residents of the Ras Al-Aarah community in Al-Madaribah Wa Al Arah district (Lahj governorate). The CEC and local community members identified this as one of its prioritized community stressors. Under this project, the selected subcontractor will install a solar-powered submersible pump with electrical equipment (including solar panels, bracing, inverter, combiner and cables) to increase pumping capacity. The subcontractor will also replace damaged steel pipes in the pumping line and construct a new concrete water tank. The subcontractor will conduct a maintenance training course and supply a maintenance kit for community committee members, operators, and engineers to operate and maintain the facility to ensure sustainability. The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will include frequency of monitoring, climate risk management, water quality testing, a pre-rehabilitation assessment, pre-design analyses, a design-bid-build design, and piping rehabilitation, per comments received from the YCST AOR. Water quality and well pump tests were completed in late December. YCST aims to finalize the proposal, inclusive of the results of the water quality and pumping tests, for submission to USAID for approval in January 2020.

OBJECTIVE 2: BUILD THE CAPACITY OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL LOCAL LEADERS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND NETWORKS TO SERVE AS NEUTRAL ARBITRATORS AND PEACE BUILDERS AND MEET COMMUNITY AND CONSTITUENT NEEDS

At the end of October 2019, YCST launched an Annual Program Statement (APS) to solicit applications for the Peacebuilding Grants Fund (PGF) for interventions that will be implemented in Abyan, Aden, Lahj and Taiz governorates, and for the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Sub-Fund of the Peacebuilding Grants Fund. YCST announced a two-step process to select eligible proposals to implement activities that contribute to the objectives of the fund. Under Step 1, applicants submit concept papers. Under Step 2, shortlisted applicants submit full applications. Competition for this APS will be open for six months on a rolling basis.

OBJECTIVE 2: BUILD THE CAPACITY OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL LOCAL LEADERS, ORGANIZATIONS AND NETWORKS TO SERVE AS NEUTRAL ARBITRATORS AND PEACE BUILDERS AND MEET COMMUNITY AND CONSTITUENT NEEDS

INDICATOR	TARGET (FY20)	FY20Q1 PROGRESS (OCT 1, 2019 – DEC 31, 2019)	FY19-FY20Q1 PROGRESS (OCT 1, 2018 – DEC 31, 2019)
Expected Outcome 2.1: Mechanisms that allow citizens to identify and address grievances strengthened			
2.1.1 Percentage increase in trust in local institutions among target beneficiaries [Baseline Values: Local government (32%) Legal system (32%) Local security forces (30%)]	10% increase	NA	NA
2.1.2 Number of groups trained in conflict mediation/resolution skills or consensus-building techniques with USG assistance (DR.3.1-2)	24	NA	12
Expected Outcome 2.2: CSOs strengthened to promote social cohesion, participation of women and youth, and reconciliation.			
2.2.1 Percentage of target beneficiaries who view project-supported conflict management and dispute resolution mechanisms as effective ways to handle disputes	70%	NA	NA
2.2.2 Percentage of target beneficiaries who feel that local CSOs are positively contributing to social cohesion	70%	NA	NA
2.2.3 Number of local women participating in a substantive role or position in a peacebuilding process supported with USG assistance (GNDR-10)	86	NA	126 
2.2.4 Number of local youth participating in a substantive role or position in a YCST-funded peacebuilding activity	58	NA	59 
2.2.5 Number of CSOs supported to provide services to marginalized communities and populations	8	NA	NA
2.2.6 Number of USG-supported activities designed to promote or strengthen the civic participation of women (DR.4-1)	1	NA	NA

Note: NA means data is not available at this stage of the program implementation. This is either because the related activities are not yet conducted, i.e. service delivery projects, mid-term outcome surveys, etc.

PEACEBUILDING AND WPS GRANTS KICKOFF WORKSHOP

The first Annual Program Statement (APS) pre-application workshop was held on November 13, 2019 in Aden at the Coral Hotel. The workshop offered information to interested applicants on the grants competition, eligibility information, and the application submission and review process. A total of 114 representatives (33 females, 81 males) of 80 entities (NGOs/CSOs) participated in the pre-application workshop. While attendance at the workshop was recommended, it was not a requirement for submission of a concept paper under the APS. In order to ensure



PEACEBUILDING AND WPS GRANTS KICKOFF WORKSHOP IN ADEN GOVERNORATE

equal opportunity to all interested applicants, on Sunday, November 24, 2019, YCST posted the workshop's presentations, along with questions received from applicants and YCST's responses, on the Yemen HR website at <https://yemenhr.com/tenders/1596>.

PEACEBUILDING AND WPS GRANTS CONCEPT PAPERS

In December 2019, YCST conducted evaluation sessions for concept papers received during November 2019 as a response to the first round of the APS. A total of 96 concept papers were received from 64 organizations, of which 53 concept papers required clarification. Final evaluations resulted in a total of 27 concept papers that met requirements to proceed with next steps, while 69 did not meet basic requirements. Following the end of year holiday, YCST planned to contact the 27 applicants that presented a viable concept paper to submit a full technical and cost application. YCST expects these full grant applications to be submitted during the coming reporting period.

During the second round of the APS (December 2019), YCST received 25 concept papers from 20 applicants. The evaluating committee will review the submissions during the coming quarter.

DISCUSS PRIORITIES WITH SELECTED WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS FOR PEACEBUILDING AND WPS GRANTS FUNDS

In early October, the Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) Manager alongside the Grants department conducted meetings with all Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) who expressed their interest in YCST's Women Peace and Security (WPS) sub-fund.

Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Security (Tawafuq) expressed interest in submitting a concept paper and sent representatives to attend the APS pre-application workshop on November 13, 2019. At the end of the reporting period, YCST was coordinating with Tawafuq to identify and support initiatives that reduce the marginalization of Yemeni women from substantive engagement and decision-making on political transitions and peace processes. In December, Yemeni Women's Pact submitted two draft concept papers for consideration, which will be reviewed in the next reporting period.

The YCST grants team met with representatives from the Yemeni Women's Union (YWU), Abyan and Lahj branches in December. During the reporting period, YWU submitted three concept papers for activities in Lahj and Abyan governorates. These concept papers were reviewed by the evaluation committee in anticipation of receiving full applications.



YCST MEETS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS IN ADEN

INNOVATION GRANTS FUND

During the reporting period, YCST and its implementing partner Build Up worked to prepare for the launch of the Innovation Grants Fund. The aim of the Innovation Grants Fund is to pilot the use of technology and creative approaches in peacebuilding projects in five PACE communities and one stabilization community. Build Up will provide accompaniment and design support over a one-year period so teams can develop and test a pilot initiative. After refining the initiative, teams will plan to scale it up, ensuring to include appropriate sustainability measures and an approach to roll out to additional communities or across a broader geographic area. Build Up will support these phases through in-person workshops and onsite engagement. YCST community mobilizers will also provide ongoing facilitation and will network with the project teams to promote exchange and peer learning.

Build Up, with input from YCST, developed an Outreach Materials Index to describe materials for use during the innovation grants program outreach and application process. Based on the context of the five targeted communities in Dar Sa'ad district in Aden, Al Mahfad district in Abyan, and Al Madaribah Wa Al Arah district in Lahj and the different levels of access to technology among them, this plan suggests two main approaches/sets of activities that can be carried out for outreach purposes. Specifically, this includes offline activities for physical interaction with the communities on the ground and online activities to make use of the most suitable platform in the given the context. In addition, outreach and application materials were drafted to provide information to the target communities on the innovation fund itself, as well as the outreach and application processes. YCST aims to finalize and submit these materials to the YCST AOR for review and concurrence in the coming quarter.

OBJECTIVE 3: PILOT STABILIZATION ACTIVITIES TO IDENTIFY EFFECTIVE MODELS TO CREATE WHERE CREDIBLE AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND SYSTEMS CAN PEACEABLY MANAGE CONFLICTS AND PREVENT A RESURGENCE OF VIOLENCE

YCST worked on preparing project proposal requests for submission to the USAID AOR. A preliminary template was sent to the AOR and agreement was received on content and format. It is expected that proposals will be completed by the next quarter.

OBJECTIVE 3: PILOT STABILIZATION ACTIVITIES TO IDENTIFY MODELS TO CREATE CONDITIONS WHERE CREDIBLE AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND SYSTEMS CAN PEACEABLY MANAGE CONFLICT AND PREVENT A RESURGENCE OF VIOLENCE

INDICATOR	TARGET (FY20)	FY20Q1 PROGRESS (OCT 1, 2019 – DEC 31, 2019)	FY19-FY20Q1 PROGRESS (OCT 1, 2018 – DEC 31, 2019)
Expected Outcome 3.1: Local legitimate authorities are supported to deliver responsive governance			
3.1.1 Percentage of participants who report increased awareness of avenues to engage with local government institutions	67%	NA	NA
3.1.2 Number of consultations/feedback sessions held between the government and citizens	12	NA	NA
3.1.3 Number of people with access to improved levels of government services	26,886	NA	NA
Expected Outcome 3.2: Stabilization initiatives of local legitimate authorities are strengthened			
3.2.1 Number of local government officials who participate in program activities	N/A	NA	58
3.2.2 Percentage of stabilization projects maintained three months after completion	50%	NA	NA
3.2.3 Percentage of community members who agree that government-led stabilization projects address their critical needs	70%	NA	NA

Note: Note: NA means data is not available at this stage of the program implementation. This is either because the related activities are yet conducted, i.e. service delivery projects, mid-term outcome surveys, etc.

N/A means that the indicator will not be reported on for FY20 and targets were not set.

FINALIZE INTERVENTION DESIGN

YCST's Stabilization team worked with the Engineering team to finalize the design and submission documentation for the Al Mansoorah Health Center Rehabilitation Project (MHCRP) located in the Al-Azaez community (Taiz governorate) in December 2019. The MHCRP was selected by the Authority-Community Committee (ACC) through consultative and consensus-building meetings as one of its prioritized projects to deliver basic services to the Al-Azaez community. Rehabilitating the occupational and medical staff buildings of the Al Mansoorah Health Center will allow residents of the community to receive improved basic health services. The proposal for the MHCRP will be presented to USAID upon completion of all required proposal documentation in January 2020.

YCST's Stabilization team, with support from the Engineering team, conducted several field visits to supervise topographical surveying work required to finalize the design of a proposed sanitation project in the Juar community, located in the Khanfir district of Abyan governorate. Reports for the topographical studies were completed and revealed that the planned sanitation projects were not technically feasible. The YCST Stabilization and Engineering teams will meet with local authorities in the next reporting period to identify alternatives.

During the reporting quarter, YCST's Engineering team conducted market assessments to determine product availability and cost of maintenance tool kits for proposed stabilization rehabilitation projects. These include solar-powered system equipment to meet local authority office needs in Zenjubar and Juar, equipment and supplies needed for the rehabilitation of Al-Sijn Park in the Juar and the Al Shuhda Park in Zenjubar district of Abyan governorate. These market assessments are vital to ensure accurate BoQs and EIAs for submission to USAID for review and approval.



ACCs IDENTIFY REHABILITATION NEEDS LIKE REPAIRING SCHOOL STRUCTURES IN ZENJUBAR COMMUNITY, ABYAN GOVERNORATE

YCST's Engineering team continued work to finalize the design and documentation for health centers, a hospital, schools and parks in Taiz and Abyan governorates with submissions to USAID planned for the next quarter. Local government authorities have requested assistance in equipping offices to allow them to better meet local citizens' needs. YCST will discuss these requests with USAID when they have been reviewed with an accompanying estimate of costs.

DEVELOPMENT OF METHODOLOGY AND TOOLS FOR STABILIZATION LESSONS LEARNED STUDY

In December, YCST developed the methodology and tools for a study that aims to assess the changes and impacts of the stabilization interventions in the targeted areas. Using a mixed-methods approach, data collection tools were developed to collect quantitative data (household and scalar questionnaires) and qualitative data (focus group discussion and key informant interview guides). The study attempts to address nine study questions, which assess the impact of stabilization pilots on community members' perception, confidence and trust in local authorities as well as the capability and responsiveness of local authorities in

service delivery. The study will also show the extent to which the stabilization program can be linked to the wider peace processes in Yemen. Data collection will start at the beginning of January 2020.

OBJECTIVE 4: CARRY OUT REGULAR AND ACTION-ORIENTED LEARNING AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS ACROSS YCST INTERVENTIONS TO SUPPORT ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT FOR ENHANCED OUTCOMES

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INDICATOR	TARGET (FY20)	FY20Q1 PROGRESS (OCT 1, 2019 – DEC 31, 2019)	FY19-FY20Q1 PROGRESS (OCT 1, 2018 – DEC 31, 2019)
Expected Outcome 4.1: Regular and actionable gender, conflict and stabilization analysis and mapping effectively conducted and utilized			
4.1.1 Number of participatory activities to reflect on gender, conflict and stabilization findings	3	1	NA
4.1.2 Number of the learning questions that are developed to address the gender, conflict and stabilization themes	8	7	19
Expected Outcome 4.2: Interventions adapted to respond to learning and contextual changes			
4.2.1 Number of adaptive management decisions following documented program learning	12	NA	7
4.2.2 Number of people trained in adaptive practices	10	NA	8
4.2.3 Number of approaches, methods, tools, or events implemented for reflection and other adaptive practices	4	2	3

Note: Indicator 4.1.1 reports on the annual learning event that is conducted in Amman. Indicator 4.1.2 reports on the learning questions that is addressed by the ongoing stabilisation lessons learned assessment, which are related to stabilization and gender. Progress on Indicator 4.2.3 is related to the learning event and stabilization assessment.

NA means data is not available at this stage of the program implementation.

ANNUAL LEARNING WORKSHOP

On November 16-18, 28 participants attended the Year 1 Annual Learning Workshop in Amman, Jordan. This three-day workshop included the CoP, DCoP, Director of MEL, 11 Yemeni program, M&E, and procurement staff, seven local partner staff, and seven GC HQ staff. The workshop was also attended by three USAID representatives. Reflection and learning discussions were conducted for objectives 1, 2 and 3. The YCST program staff reflected on program activities and discussed the following topics: a) what was working well and b) what adjustments are required for Year 2.



YCST HOLDS ITS ANNUAL LEARNING WORKSHOP IN AMMAN IN NOVEMBER 2019

The workshop sessions on Year 1 aimed at building the consensus around milestones that can be identified as the foundation for the Year 1 timeline. The participants also identified the critical moments that contributed positively or negatively to achieving Year 1 milestones. With regards to Year 2 discussions, the YCST program staff participated in Purpose to Practice (P2P) brainstorming sessions. These sessions assisted the participants in building a consensus around the critical moments and factors that may contribute to achieving Year 2 milestones as well as how to incorporate the lessons learned in Year 1 into Year 2 activities.

Three representatives from USAID attended the last afternoon of the workshop for a session in which YCST participants presented the discussions of the first two days. Additionally, USAID participated in the Rise to Top exercise where the participants identified the most impactful insights from the three days of reflection and learning.

YCST finalized the report for the workshop. The report highlights key takeaways from the implementation of both PACE and stabilization activities in FY19 as well as recommendations for changes and adjustments as the program enters Year 2. The MEL department will track and follow up on the implementation of these recommended actions. The final report will be submitted to USAID in January 2020.

DEVELOP AND SHARE COMMUNITY DASHBOARDS FOR TARGETED COMMUNITIES

YCST has developed the first version of the community dashboards for Year 1 communities. The interactive dashboards are developed based on the baseline data collected between December 2018 and March 2019. The dashboard features 31 indicators in relation to general security information, community security, social capital index and NGO operations. YCST shared illustrative screenshots of the community dashboards with USAID during the reporting period. Additional indicators can be added in response to USAID's requests for information. The final version is expected to be completed in January 2020.

BASELINE FOR YEAR 2 TARGETED COMMUNITIES

YCST planned to finalize the procurement process for the baseline study, including negotiations and selection of the vendor, in December 2019. YCST reviewed proposals submitted by nine local and international firms. Unfortunately, YCST faced difficulties in identifying a suitable consulting firm. Financial proposals ranged from \$60,000 US (within the YCST budget) to \$300,000 US (far beyond the budget). While the proposals of the international firms exceeded the YCST budget, the local firms with more appropriate cost estimates did not demonstrate the required skills and experience to undertake large studies in YCST's intervention sectors. Consequently, YCST decided to re-advertise the request for proposals and will review new submissions in January 2020.

SHARING OUR STORY VIDEO

YCST's local implementing partner, FMF, developed a draft for the "sharing our story" video, focusing on Participatory Action for Community Enhancement (PACE) activities in Year 1. The video features footage of CEC meetings and interviews with CEC members from several communities, communicating the PACE process and the impact it has had on the individuals involved. At the end of the reporting period, USAID

had given feedback on improving the video, with changes expected to be completed early in the next reporting period for resubmission to USAID.

MID-TERM EVALUATION

During early to mid-December, the mid-term evaluation was conducted by USAID's third-party monitoring implementing partner, IBTCI, to assess YCST's performance to date and to make recommendations to USAID and Global Communities in areas where performance could be improved. IBTCI representatives met with team members of all program departments to ascertain information on the implementation of project activities and subsequent outcomes. It is expected that the final mid-term evaluation report will be shared with Global Communities early in the next reporting period and will inform adjustments to the YCST Year 2 program.

INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT

In November, YCST's Chief of Party made a presentation on the integrated development approach at an INGO coordination meeting. In December, the Chief of Party and Director of Finance and Administration held discussions with JSI regarding start-up issues for its new Yemen Systems, Health and Resilience Project (SHRP). A scope of work was developed for the YCST Integrated Development Specialist position and was advertised on Yemen HR in December 2019. YCST will screen candidates for hire during January 2020.

MANAGEMENT

STAFFING: The points below highlight the major staffing changes that occurred during the first quarter of Year 2.

- ✓ Deputy Chief of Party: Whitney Sims, who began work in October 2019, arrived at post in Amman, Jordan in November where a streamlined remote management platform was established, per discussions with the USAID AOR.
- ✓ Knowledge, Learning and Communications Specialist: Noelina Opiyo began work during this reporting period, attended the Year 1 Annual Learning Workshop in Amman, and worked remotely until a Yemeni visa issued. She will post in Aden, Yemen in January 2020.
- ✓ Grants Manager: Omar Ababneh began working during this reporting period, attended the Year 1 Annual Learning Workshop in Amman, and worked remotely pending issuance of a Yemeni visa. He will post in Aden, Yemen in January 2020.
- ✓ Additional positions: A number of positions for a more robust staffing plan were added during this quarter. Two positions under the YCST Grants department are currently being recruited, two positions for the MEL department were advertised during this quarter, and one position for the Procurement department will be advertised in January 2020.

DECISION TO NOT WORK IN THE NORTH

In late December, YCST notified the AOR that an agreement had not been reached with NAMCHA for implementation in the north that would comply with USAID rules and regulations. Consequently, YCST plans to reprogram the activities it had slated for the north in the south. The reprogramming will consider points raised during the Annual Learning Workshop in Amman in November 2019 as well as the findings

of the midterm evaluation, with discussions planned to start in January 2020 on the best approach for proceeding forward.

C. CHALLENGES

REMOTE MANAGEMENT

The DCoP, who arrived at post in November, is working in Amman, Jordan where the YCST regional office was established per USAID approval received in early November. The DCoP was able to meet with senior team members, who attended the Year 1 Annual Learning Workshop, to establish remote management protocols, including operational aspects needed to maintain continuity between the YCST/Aden and YCST/Amman offices; weekly, monthly, and quarterly reporting requirements; and regularly scheduled virtual meetings.

SECURITY

Although international staff returned to Aden in September, YCST continued to minimize the expatriate footprint in Aden via a rotational system through the end of October. Such rotations would not have more than two international staff in Aden at a given time to minimize the efforts of an evacuation if one was needed.

Lack of access to certain geographical areas due to security instability continues to be problematic, particularly in Abyan. This has resulted in delays with contractors willing to travel there to conduct water quality and pump testing.

Senior Yemeni governmental leadership was not available during much of the reporting period. The MoPIC Vice Minister returned to Aden in late November after the Riyadh Agreement. At that time, he requested changes in YCST Year 2 communities, which caused the delay in signing the sub-agreement with MoPIC. The agreement remains unsigned during this reporting period.

D. SUCCESS STORIES

EMAN'S RESILIENCE SETS AN EXAMPLE FOR WOMEN IN PEACEBUILDING



EMAN MOHAMMED SHARES ABOUT HER ROLE IN PEACEBUILDING
PHOTO CREDIT: YCST – GLOBAL COMMUNITIES

“It was the hardest time in my life, to work, study, and take care of my elderly parents. But understanding my role as a CEC member under PACE and seeing how transparent the whole process was, I had to reach out to female community members because I was going through the same challenges as my community.”

– Eman Mohammed

31-year-old Eman is a Yemeni woman who is the sole breadwinner in her family. She works, studies, takes care of her elderly parents and her brother who lives with a disability, and fulfills societal roles expected of her. Eman is one of the two female members in a nine-member Community Enhancement Committee (CEC) in Aden’s Ibn Albasir community. She plays an instrumental role in engaging female community members and ensuring that their issues are addressed in the committee.

The Yemen Communities Stronger Together (YCST) program is building the capacity of the community through the Participatory Action for Community Enhancement (PACE) model, empowering communities to identify and address their problems. The CECs facilitate and engage community members to identify and implement projects that respond to communities’ basic needs and services in areas where most conflict-related damage has occurred. Through the program, community members collectively form and elect representatives to serve as CEC members. These committees identify community priorities in a transparent manner, restoring the trust among members of the community that has deteriorated due to the war.

Eman is a pioneer and an inspiration to many women in her community. As a member of the CEC, she reaches out to female community members to ensure that the needs of women and men are voiced and addressed in the committee. If female community members like Eman did not play such a role, then CEC may not be aware of women’s priorities in the community. Due to cultural norms, men typically can only reach out to other male members in the community and do not connect with women to ask for their perspectives.

As Eman expressed to YCST, “When I was elected, it was really difficult to balance between my role and service to my community, and my own responsibilities. Later, I realized that the issues that affect women like lack of water and electricity, are being discussed. So, when I went out and held discussions with female youth and women in my community, they would relate to these issues. That is when I realized that I was playing a critical role of bringing female-related issues to the discussions and meetings of CECs. This would

not have been possible if I was not a member. I hope that more women are inspired to take on such roles.”

Eman is one of the few people in her community who actively engages women in the reconstruction process in Dar Sa’ad district in Aden governorate, where mistrust amongst the community members is at its lowest. The conflict has strained relationships within the communities, weakening the social fabric and widening divisions among community members. Eman is an ambassador in YCST’s Women, Peace and Security agenda where activities that directly support women’s role in decision-making, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution are supported. She plays a vital role in representing women's priorities at the decision-making table.

The PACE model is restoring confidence, bringing hope, and empowering communities to identify and address issues affecting them, thereby enhancing communities’ resilience. Eman concludes by emphasizing, “In addition to the fact that I am able to serve my community and reach out to women and female youth, this process has strengthened my own resilience as a person.”

YCST SUPPORTS LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN THEIR STABILIZATION EFFORTS

“Having served Abyan for long as a leader and having been elected by the community, I am accountable to the community in building a new Abyan, after the war.”

– Sheikh Nasser Al-Mansari

Sheikh Nasser Al-Mansari, age 49, is the District Manager of Khanfir, one of the districts in Abyan governorate that has faced war and instability since 2011. Rebuilding the crumbling infrastructure of Abyan is an immense challenge, particularly as the weakened government institutions face high expectations from communities with extremely limited resources.

Additionally, district authorities are no longer able to provide basic services, further eroding the trust of the communities.

To help respond to this challenge, USAID’s Yemen Communities Stronger Together (YCST) is piloting a stabilization program to support legitimate local authorities to address the priorities of their communities. YCST engages district authorities to put in place inclusive community structures, known as Authority-Community Committees (ACC), that work with communities to identify stressors inhibiting community cohesion and to prioritize solutions.

To achieve these, district managers like Sheikh Nasser Al-Mansari play a key role in the implementation of the program activities through their membership in the ACCs. “I am dedicated and have devoted my time to serve my community and convey their needs by participating in the household survey that collected, identified and prioritized key issues that my community faces. I am pleased because this project enabled us to serve our communities,” Sheikh Nasser told YCST as he emphasized the importance of the involvement of the local authorities in implementing the community projects.

Sheikh Nasser Al-Mansari was given the opportunity to restore his community’s trust in his authority by identifying and addressing the hardships endured by his district as a result of the longstanding conflict in Abyan. Prioritized by the ACC, the rehabilitation of the Juar Park in Abyan will draw the community’s youth into civic life and away from joining in the ongoing conflict. After the rehabilitation, the park is expected to host youth activities, including sports tournaments.



SHEIKH NASSAR AL-MANSARI MEETS WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN ABYAN GOVERNORATE
PHOTO CREDIT: YCST – GLOBAL COMMUNITIES