

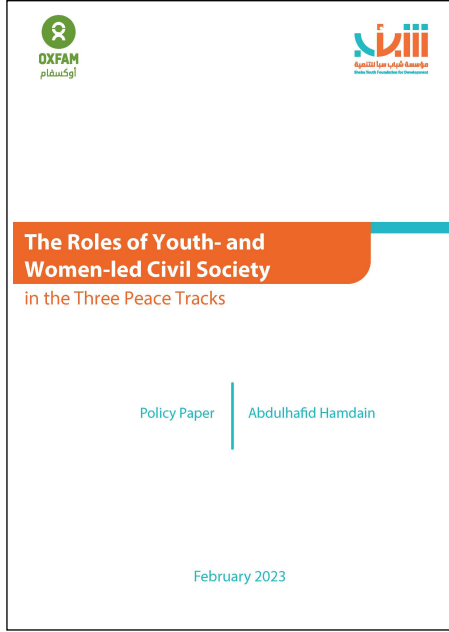
The Roles of Youth- and Women-led Civil Society

in the Three Peace Tracks

Policy Paper

Abdulhafid Hamdain

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Sheba Youth Foundation For Development

Address: Yemen - Taiz

Telephone: +967 - 4252733

Phone: +967 - 770450222

E-mail: info@shebayouth.org

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Summary

The roles of local civil society organizations in Taiz governorate and Yemen in general working in peace building have been connected to the context of humanitarian work, to a large extent, to fill the gap created by the collapse of local institutions. In addition, donors allocate the major part of their support to the field of emergency humanitarian response. However, local civil society organizations, despite all of this, are trying to make changes in the framework of the mechanisms of their activities by focusing and moving to work in the context of the three peace tracks in Yemen. Youth- and women-led civil society organizations have played effective roles in the field of peacebuilding, especially in the second and third tracks, as their efforts included activities such as prisoner exchange, opening roads, restoring services, resolving community conflicts, and community awareness in the field of peacebuilding. They were able to gain the trust of various parties, local community, and donors, as a result of these qualitative and tangible activities in the local communities in the governorate.

Many factors have emerged in support of the efforts of these organizations, the most important of which are: the work approach followed, the experiences gained by those organizations, and the confidence of the community, donors and conflicting parties in their efforts, networking and joint action. Also, these organization faced several barriers such as weak donor support and understanding of the nature of the work of these organizations in light of the existing circumstances, the weak capabilities of the organizations themselves in networking, the shortcomings in the institutional components, the limited capabilities of qualified staff and their experience in building peace, the security dimension and attempts to create doubts over their efforts, accusing them of bias and other inhibiting elements that limited the ability of the organizations to play their roles in building peace.

The paper concluded with a set of recommendations that focused on the importance of governance and developing the capabilities of youth and women led civil society organizations working in the field of peacebuilding, and building the capacities of staff and activists in the field of peacebuilding, in order to enhance the capabilities of these organizations to access international funds, networking, and joint work in the field of peace building between local organizations, and the importance of having a general plan of action focused on the priorities of work in the areas of peace in the next stage.

Keywords: peace in Yemen, civil society organizations, three peace tracks, youth and women.

Introduction

The civil society scene in Taiz governorate is dynamic, with a continuous and significant increase in local actors working in both humanitarian and peacebuilding sectors. The increasing number of youth and women led local community organizations, active in the field of peace building, in addition to other international factors and transformations, contributes to mapping the interests and future directions of local organizations active in the three tracks of peace process. For this reason, a closer look at this scene is necessary to fully understand the context of roles, in order to contribute to the development of organizations led by youth and women related to local peacebuilding efforts, and to enhance their ability to keep pace with international opportunities and trends related to peacebuilding in Yemen.

This policy paper focuses on examining the effectiveness and roles of youth and women-led local civil society organizations working in the field of peace building in Taiz governorate, with the aim of forming a clearer understanding

of these roles and making recommendations to enhance the role of these organizations in the three peace tracks, with some previous examples mentioned and commented on. The paper also dealt with the overall obstacles and challenges facing the roles of these organizations, and how to overcome them. Moreover, the paper sheds light on future opportunities and roles, and the requirements of those organizations that can contribute effectively and with influential roles in peace tracks at the local and national levels. Finally, these organizations provide a set of practical recommendations for the various stakeholders. The paper was prepared by referring to a number of sources published in different sites, in addition to conducting (9) interviews with leaders and decision makers within women's and youth organizations in Taiz, in addition to conducting (6) interviews and discussions with local actors and activists. These interviews were conducted during the period from February 2 to February 14, 2023.

Overview of civil society in Yemen

It is not possible to understand the current context of the work of civil society organizations in Yemen without linking it to its historical context, as the concept of civil society is a relatively modern concept in Yemen in terms of practice, as it did not appear clearly until the declaration of political pluralism in 1990, and the numbers of these organizations developed until the number officially registered of such organizations before 2011 reached 7,000 organizations¹.

With the launch of the popular youth revolution in 2011, the scope of civil work practice expanded, as the number of civil

society organizations reached 8,300 in 2014, and despite the role that civil society played during the period of the National Dialogue Conference, it was excluded by various political parties. Those components ignored the importance, influence and presence of civil society in the course of change, democratic transitions, formation of public opinion and building of a modern democratic civil state.²

The accelerated pace of violence and the outbreak of war in late 2014 and early 2015 also had devastating effects on civil society, as it caused a change in the legal framework governing civil society, leading to a change in

1. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/145651468169458110/pdf/810950WP0ARABI0Box0379828B00PUBLIC0.pdf>

2. www.twitter.com/adenalghad Statement issued by civil society organizations during the National Dialogue Conference

the fields of activities³

A survey conducted in 2015 found that 60% of these organizations were subjected to acts of violence, looting and harassment, or had their assets frozen⁴ However, according to the index of the sustainability of civil society organizations in 2018, the number of these organizations increased, as the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor estimated that there are approximately 13,200 civil society organizations throughout Yemen, and this number includes inactive organizations as well⁵.

This context that civil society faced in Yemen applies to local civil society organizations in Taiz governorate, which have faced and are still facing many challenges and difficulties at various levels, as a result of political changes, successive military interventions, and the siege imposed on it for more than seven years, which in turn affected the roles of local civil society organizations in Taiz governorate.

The roles of civil society organizations in Taiz governorate before 2015:

Since the outbreak of the ongoing war in 2015, and due to its increasing effects on civil society organizations and their leaders, most of whom were women and youth of the revolution and its activists in Taiz

Governorate, and with the intensification of fighting in the city's neighborhoods and regions, most civil society organizations forcibly closed their headquarters, and many headquarters were stormed and looting, and some of their leaders received threats, which forced them to leave the city, and the local civil society organizations in Taiz governorate before the war were among the most active organizations nationally, as they played prominent roles in the development of youth and women and defending public rights and freedoms. However, their activities declined as a result of the war, and then returned again after the situation stabilized in the center and east of the city. Other local organizations were also established. Most of these organizations focused on working on emergency response projects, relief and humanitarian aid, and avoided projects and activities that might expose them to security risks specially during the period between 2016-2019⁶ However, recently, many of them have re-started to play different roles in the tracks of peacebuilding.

The nature of the roles of civil society organizations led by youth and women in the three peace tracks

The nature of the roles of civil society organizations led by youth and women in the three peace tracks.

There is a difference in the opinions of the leaders of civil society organizations regarding the roles of their organizations in the three peace tracks, especially in the first track. The respondents in those organizations determined the roles of their organizations in

each track according to the following:

The roles of civil society organizations in the first peace process:

The respondents, from civil society leaders unanimously, unanimously agreed that the operations of the first track are limited to the direct parties to the current conflict in Yemen, including: "The internationally recognized government (IRG) and the Houthis," through

3. https://carpo-bonn.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/carpo_brief_18_04-05-20_AR.pdf The role of civil society in building peace

4. <https://sanaacenter.org/ar/publications-all/main-publications-ar/13094> A new track forward

5. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/145651468169458110/pdf/810950WPOARABIOBox0379828B00PUBLIC0.pdf>

6. Results of an interview with the director of organization (A) working in the field of peacebuilding in Taiz Governorate, February 2023.

coordination from the UN envoy. These are the actors at the negotiating table in the first track. While other researches and studies have highlighted that civil society actors should have been directly involved in the mediation process

The Three Tracks of Peace

- The first track: means the official peace and negotiation processes that take place between the main actors in the conflict, and international actors such as heads of state, foreign ministers, and high-level intergovernmental organizations.
- The second track: includes peace operations carried out by civil society organizations at the local, national, international, and foreign levels, former diplomats, authority figures in society, academic experts, neutral mediators, individual citizens, and neutral countries from a third party and they are separated from the first track, but they supportive to it.
- The third track: activities carried out by actors at the grassroots level, such as community networks, organizations and individual activists. This track focuses on engaging citizens and communities to influence their voices in peace negotiation efforts.

from the beginning so that they can provide a more accurate picture of what people on the ground want and need⁷ Some of the respondents believe that the roles and actions undertaken by influential institutions at the general national level, such as the Deep Root Foundation, Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies, or the Political Development Forum can be categorized under the first track operations.

While some of the respondents do not agree with this opinion, but rather consider those activities and movements carried out by national organizations or even international non-governmental organizations to be no more than activities within the second track or track one and a half, and they believe that the activities and programs of international organizations operating in Yemen is active and involved in building peace⁸.

A civil society leader says that he followed with interest the briefings and recommendations made by Oxfam and Safer world to the British House of Commons, which prompted the House to adopt a decision to stop arms exports to the parties of conflict in Yemen⁹ However, in the latest report issued by Oxfam in January 2023, detailing how arms sales by UK and USA are fueling a pattern of violence against civilians in Yemen.¹⁰

The roles of civil society organizations in the second peace process:

Civil society actors agree that in order for local and national organizations to have effective roles within the framework of the second track, the organization must have an effectiveness and presence at the first level, so that their leaderships are present in one of the advisory groups affiliated with the Envoy's office, such as Yemeni Women's Consensus for Security and Peace "Altadhamon". , or the women advisory group "Altaj". These two initiatives were supported by the Office of the UN Special Envoy to Yemen and the Office of Women at the United Nations, in implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security¹¹ The organization must also have an effective presence on the ground, and be able to engage in local mediation to resolve service and humanitarian issues and files. For example, files for releasing and exchanging prisoners and detainees, files for opening roads and pumping water, facilitating the transfer of humanitarian aid and other local issues that active local organizations are working on within the framework of the second track in the governorate. These issues are given attention by that warring parties and are not talked about in the framework of

7. <https://pressnet.net/article/12001507?news=%D9%85%D8%A7-%D9%87%D9%8https://www.diwanalarab.com/%D9%85%D9%86%D8%B8%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%BA%D9%8A%D8%B1A>

8. Results of interviews with a group of civil society leaders, February 2023

9. Results of an interview with the director of organization (B) working in the field of peacebuilding in Taiz Governorate, February 2023

10. <https://sputnikarabic.ae/20230111/%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B1-> Report: American and British weapons were used in the killing

11. https://carpo-bonn.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/carpo_brief_18_04-05-20_AR.pdf

direct negotiations.¹²

Another picture, some actors add, that there are two types of local organizations that were able to penetrate the second track and thus be an active and leading part of it, while the rest of the organizations are not an essential part as much as they are a supportive part of the leading organizations. And others add: “These organizations, whether leading or supporting, have formed types of consensuses, federations, and networks, such as Youth Platform for Peacebuilding, Youth Support Group, and Youth Consensus¹³ Through these clusters, access to the processes of the second track, is achieved.

Local community organizations can play qualitative roles in local mediation and negotiation to resolve many peace-building files in the second and third tracks, such as opening roads, exchanging prisoners and removing bodies, releasing detainees, and dealing with service files such as water, electricity, hygiene, sanitation and others, in addition to working to enhance understanding, building relationships between all parties at all levels.

Therefore, as a civil society, it is natural for it to be In the second track, however, most of these clusters were unable to adopt activities that would have a strong influence on international decision-makers, and some of them could not withstand and were subjected to division, which greatly affected their presence and effectiveness at the level of the second track.¹⁴

The roles of civil society organizations in the third peace process :

The effectiveness of youth and women’s civil society organizations working in peacebuilding in Taiz governorate is largely

related to the economic and social contexts and humanitarian aid. Most of their activities focus on humanitarian response programs, promoting community cohesion, resolving conflicts and building peace, promoting the political participation of youth of parties, and forming women’s and youth initiatives and forums to work on building peace in many areas of the governorate. In their view, the efforts of local organizations contribute to enhancing societal stability, transforming local conflicts, supporting concepts of peacebuilding, and increasing the effectiveness and roles of youth and women’s civil society organizations in working on the second and third tracks, by opening channels for the second track.¹⁵

Many civil actors consider that the activities carried out by civil society organizations in peacebuilding have caused a major shift in the awareness of women and youth compared to previous years, and they also confirm that their organizations have strategic plans and continuous or supportive contributions that have formed types of consensuses, unions and networks, such as Youth Platform For Peacebuilding, Youth Support Group, Youth Consensus, Aden Consultation Team ... and other youth and women’s clusters, and they are the ones that push the active organizations to reach the level of the second track process.¹⁶

12. Results of interviews with heads and members of civil society organizations in Taiz Governorate, February 2023.

13. Justifications for making peace in a more comprehensive and effective manner in Yemen <https://www.crisisgroup.org/ar/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/yemen/221-case-more-inclusive-and-more-effective-peacemaking-yemen>

14. Justifications for making peace in a more comprehensive and effective manner in Yemen <https://www.crisisgroup.org/ar/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/yemen/221-case-more-inclusive-and-more-effective-peacemaking-yemen>

15. Results of interviews with the majority of respondents during the period from 2-14 February 2023

16. Results of interviews with the majority of respondents during the period from 2-14 February 2023

Peacebuilding Efforts of Civil Society Organizations Led by Youth and Women in Taiz Governorate

Efforts of transformation and networking towards peacebuilding activities:

During the last period, most of the organizations in Taiz governorate turned towards humanitarian and relief work, and achieved great pioneership at the local and national level in this aspect since the beginning of the war and attracted hundreds of young people of both sexes to work in this field, however, many of these organizations are currently undergoing processes of change and shift in its infrastructure and administrative structures with the aim of shifting to peacebuilding activities.¹⁷

At the same time, there are efforts by other young women's organizations in the peacebuilding sector, and they are making an important shift in their plans to form a multi-process, as they focus on implementing activities aimed at addressing the interests of the warring parties in the context of a broader Yemeni agenda, and along the three tracks of political, security and economic issues.¹⁸

The respondents, from the leaders of the civil society organization in Taiz, indicated that there are many and varied projects being implemented on more than one level in the field of peacebuilding and the formation of strategic women and youth clusters to promote the idea of feminism and youth power by working with international actors ¹⁹ These projects are also being implemented in cooperation and partnership with a leading national organization whose activities are currently classified under the second track

operations.²⁰

Most of the interviewed organizations reported that they work within broad local and national civic coalitions, and that they have efforts within these civic networks within the framework of coordinating and unifying the civic positions and orientations sought by most Yemeni organizations. However, these networks and coalitions often lack the coordination and common vision as well as the resources to lead advocacy and lobbying activities. Most of these networks and alliances are directed towards activities at the national level only and do not have clear communication with the actors at the local level, who would be better able to create momentum around the peace process at the local level.²¹

Local mediation efforts in Taiz governorate:

Local mediation efforts emerged in Taiz governorate by legal and social personalities, as these personalities enjoy a great deal of impartiality and acceptance by both warring parties (the internationally recognized government and the Houthis) in Taiz. Mediation efforts were embodied through the interventions of mediators in a number of humanitarian issues, most notably the file Prisoners and detainees of war parties. In addition to recovering the bodies dumped on the frontlines, in the middle of 2016, the mediators completed the first prisoner exchange deal between the two parties, which included the release of (19) prisoners from Ansar Allah in exchange for (21)

17. Results of interviews with leaders of civil society organizations in Taiz Governorate, February 2023

18. The real participation of civil society in peace <http://3.https://www.yemenpolicy.org/ar>

19. The first two interviews with an executive director of a human rights and peace-building organization. The second is with a program coordinator for a youth organization interested in building peace in Taiz on 2/2 and on 2/13/2023..

20. According to the leaders of the organizations interviewed, the Sana'a Center is one of the organizations classified under Track II operations

21. Results of interviews with leaders of civil society organizations in Taiz Governorate, February 2023

prisoners from the internationally recognized government, and a few days later, a second deal was launched in which (118) prisoners affiliated with the internationally recognized legitimate government were released vs. (78) detainees affiliated to Ansar Allah.²²

During the period 2016 and 2018, the efforts of local mediators continued to gain the confidence of the parties, and the completion of many deals. In 2018, it was announced that a local mediation committee was formed in Taiz Governorate, the committee expanded its work on more than one file. In addition to the file of prisoners and detainees, the recovering and exchanging of bodies began, as well as the search for the kidnapped and missing persons. At the end of 2019, the local mediation committee succeeded in completing an exchange deal, the largest of its kind, as (135) detainees from both sides were released.²³

Other organizations continue to make great efforts to work in the field of local mediation in Taiz governorate, and at least two organizations are working on important political and humanitarian files in Taiz governorate, including water pumping file and prisoners' file, in addition to other files such as roads file, electricity file and other files, by which excellent efforts are being exerted by women youth organizations in the city to solve them.

Paying attention to water file in Taiz governorate is considered by local and international organizations as a priority in the field of conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The first step began with a local team called Taiz Consultation Team, consisting of leaders of parties, youth, women, and civil society organizations. Then it was adopted by a civil

society organization in Taiz to work on it with a team of local mediators. Then Taiz water file turned into one of the most important files of civil society organizations to work on it within the framework of the second track, and the manager of this foundation succeeded in transferring the file to the corridors of the UN envoy's office, as she says: Taiz water file has become part of the agenda of the envoy's office, and it is considered part of the efforts aimed at bringing the parties' viewpoints closer within the framework of direct negotiations regarding humanitarian services for the residents of the city of Taiz, and the office of the envoy is keen to follow up the local developments that the mediation team is making regarding the completion of the agreement and the resumption of water pumping for the residents of the city of Taiz on both sides.²⁴

Different peace-building efforts by young women initiatives and components:

The role of civil society in building peace was not limited to civil society organizations. Rather, some youth and women initiatives made efforts in the three tracks of peace building, directly or indirectly, such as providing advice to political and civil parties, and holding dialogue workshops that help bridge the points of view between the conflicting parties and international actors. And they played a role in the field of local mediation to solve many issues, service files and the needs of the population that the main parties are not interested in talking about, and they worked to enhance understanding and build relations between all parties at all levels. Examples of such efforts including formation of the Youth Team to Support Mediation in Taiz; in order to provide direct support to local mediators and

22. The website of Deeproot, which implements peace-building programs in Yemen <https://www.deeproot.consulting/single-post/>

23. Interview with a leader in the Mediators Committee and head of a human rights organization working in the field of local mediation, Taiz, February 2023

24. Interview with the head of (C) organization working on the water file in Taiz Governorate, February 2023

integrating community-level peacebuilding efforts led by youth and women into informal peace processes (the so-called the second track of peace process).²⁵ Many of the youth and women components established by active peacebuilding organizations have also succeeded in creating a space for emerging

youth leaders to learn and benefit from the exceptional women and men involved in mediation efforts and enhancing this approach through many interventions to resolve social conflicts and the efforts of the youth initiatives of neighborhoods and different regions in Taiz Governorate.

Peacebuilding Efforts of Civil Society Organizations Led by Youth and Women in Taiz Governorate

Many civil society activists consider the high levels of participation of civil society organizations in peacebuilding a positive development, as the cooperation of local organizations with international organizations helped to emphasize issues that were neglected or marginalized in the past, in addition to increasing transparency in the decision-making process. The respondents indicated a number of factors that contributed to supporting the efforts of civil society organizations in the second and third tracks, as follows.²⁶

Factors supporting the efforts of civil society organizations in the second track:

- Adoption by civil society organizations of issues and service files that are not available to official actors in the first track to work on them within the framework of the second track, which strengthened their presence and influence in this track.
- Establishing effective civil networks and alliances, networking among them, building long-term relationships based on trust and transparency, and working with civil society in conflict areas to make efforts stronger, more influential, and more present among the targeted communities.
- Paying attention to knowledge production aimed at raising awareness and influencing decision-making through preparation of

policy papers specialized in the field of peacebuilding, political empowerment of women and youth, and their involvement in decision-making, which contributes to increasing the orientation of international actors towards what are produced by active local community organizations in terms of knowledge publications on peacebuilding.

- Increasing the influence of local community organizations in the process of direct negotiations in the first track by continuing to export and share information and data with international actors such as the envoy's office and the main parties, a point that seems absent from many local and international organizations.

Factors supporting the efforts of civil society organizations in the third track:

1. Strengthening the approach of local civil institutions in dealing with conflict parties at the local level, and working continuously to gain the trust and respect of the conflicting parties.
2. Raising controversial service and humanitarian issues from a humanitarian perspective and in a language that enhances transparency, credibility, and complete neutrality by civil society organizations working in peacebuilding, which raises the level of trust in civil society organizations and positive interaction with them.

25. A set of results of interviews conducted with respondents who are leaders of civil society organizations in Taiz during February 2023.

26. A set of results of interviews conducted with respondents who are leaders of civil society organizations in Taiz during February 2023.

3. The approach based on building good relations with international actors by some leaders of local organizations in Taiz, which strengthened the presence and strength of the activities of these organizations at the local level and their ability to reach and influence the peacebuilding process, not only at the local level, but also at the level of Yemen.
4. Building the capacities of workers in the local community sector, accumulating experiences, and focusing visions, goals, and directions for local organizations to work on specific issues such as working on women and youth issues, and gender issues, which contributed to good achievements that are able to implement peacebuilding activities effectively.
5. Continuous institutional development and internal work mechanisms by some local community organizations that include administrative, technical and financial aspects, which has enhanced their ability to play qualitative roles in peacebuilding, depending on their available institutional capabilities.

Obstacles faced by civil society organizations in Taiz governorate in the field of peacebuilding

Youth and women led civil society organizations, throughout Yemen in general and in Taiz governorate in particular, have played qualitative roles in building peace by providing humanitarian aid and social services, maintaining stability and cohesion of the social fabric, and participating in local mediations to mitigate conflicts. Despite this, these organizations face a number of challenges and increasing restrictions, especially those working in the field of peacebuilding.²⁷

According to the respondents' interviews, a set of obstacles emerged that limited the roles of civil society organizations in working on the second and third peace tracks, which can be summarized as follows.²⁸

Obstacles and challenges within the framework of the second track:

1. Absence of a vision on the part of international donors to support the tracks of peacebuilding, as the international donors did not implement the plan to support organizations operating and specialized in peacebuilding projects and activities, despite the announcement of the joint plan.
2. The donors intend to motivate local organizations that have been working in humanitarian response for years, and move them to work in the field of peacebuilding, with the justification that organizations working in peacebuilding do not have a strong institutional structure, which means opening a competition for organizations that have possessed qualitative institutional capabilities as a result of the funds they obtained in the field of Relief on the account of organizations that have extensive experience in peacebuilding activities, but do not have the necessary physical and institutional structure, which opens the door to conflict in local civil society and in countrywide.
3. Donors consider organizations working in peacebuilding for the past four years to be unqualified and have no administrative and financial foundation to manage large peacebuilding projects. The requirements

27. Enhancing the voice of women in the peace process in Yemen <https://sanaacenter.org/ar/publications-all/main-publications-ar/19538>

28. A set of interviews with leaders of civil society organizations, activists, and peacebuilding experts in Taiz Governorate during February 2023

for accessing funding opportunities include complex due diligence conditions, eligibility criteria, and registration processes, and only a few donors have separate funding allocated for CSOs.²⁹

4. Weak influence by women's groups and local community organizations within the framework of the first track due to the lack of information available to civil society in some negotiations files, especially the military file. This track does not have files that can be discussed by civil society in the negotiations, which weakened the contribution of some organizations in the second track, sometimes as a result of the absence of information that requires dealing with it to support the peace track, especially in the file of services that fall on the front lines.
5. Logistic obstacles: civil society organizations working in peacebuilding suffer from the scarcity of funds directed to the peacebuilding sector and that the support is focused on humanitarian and relief at the present time, in addition to the absence of financial support for the success of the tasks of mediation committees and local organizations, especially those working in the files of the exchange of prisoners and detainees, recovering bodies or in mediation services.

Obstacles faced by civil society organizations in Taiz governorate in the field of peacebuilding:

1. The increasing security challenges and systematic campaigns of defamation and incitement against local civil society organizations working in building peace by more than one party inside the country, as these organizations are exposed to threats and hate speech and incitement spread

through religious sources or different societal norms and traditions, and some media outlets adopt publishing malicious advertisements in order to diminish the efforts of local mediations as organizations and mediators, which affected their roles in building peace, in addition to accusing them of being collaborators and biased in favor of internal parties or international intelligence agencies despite the high levels of trust between the main parties and the local mediation committee, and spreading hostile concepts to the roles of women's organizations and activists in field of peacebuilding.

2. weakness of institutional foundations of civil society organizations in Taiz governorate working in the field of peacebuilding, enabling them to carry out great activities in the tracks of peace, as these organizations suffer from weak administrative, technical and financial capabilities, and they do not possess cadres with sufficient experience and skill in modern administrative and technical work. This forces them to rely on the capabilities of the founder in managing external relations at its various levels and to place heavy burdens on him/her. In addition to the weakness of participatory decision-making and the monopoly of the founders or the board of trustees to manage the relations and activities of local organizations.
3. The low level of awareness and sufficient knowledge of the management of peacebuilding projects that are dealt with by some organizations as a development project, as many specialists in local organizations do not have the minimum level of knowledge of the three peace tracks.

²⁹. Empowering the leadership role of civil society Previous referenc <https://sanaacenter.org/ar/publications-all/main-publications-ar/13094>

Opportunities and roles available to civil society organizations in Taiz governorate in the tracks of peace

The organizations working in building local peace showed sufficient knowledge of the importance of investing the current available opportunities and the tendency of the international community to allocate large funds to support the activities of local organizations in the tracks of peacebuilding in Yemen. We summarize them according to the opinions of the respondents as follows:

Opportunities available for local organizations:

1. Investing the current opportunities for the so-called HDV, which is the approach between the methodology of humanitarian relief, development, and peacebuilding, as one of the leaders of women's organizations believes that local civil society organizations should take advantage of this approach to get out of relief slowly and enter into peacebuilding, as it is an important opportunity for all local organizations.³⁰
2. Benefiting from the orientations of international donors in the field of peacebuilding in Yemen, as some actors in local community organizations confirm that their organizations are currently working on developing their institutional systems to keep up with the opportunities available in the direction of international entities and donors to transfer funds allocated to humanitarian work and peacebuilding in full to the leadership of Yemeni local organizations Under the name of the Global Initiative for the Localization of Humanitarian Work and Peacebuilding in Yemen.
3. The opportunity for the existing long-term truce, which opens the door for multiple activities for civil society organizations in

the field of peacebuilding in the second and third tracks, to overcome the problems of stopping services, opening roads, multiple treatments in the field of services and community cohesion, and improving the reality of war-affected communities, especially in the contact zones.³¹

4. Opportunities for extensive coordination and communication to reach a consensual formula between local community organizations in order to unify the efforts of work partners in the field of peacebuilding to face potential challenges and invest in the climate of peace imposed by the truce and international and local trends through networking and interest in building and qualifying the capacities of women and youth components, initiatives and groups working in peacebuilding.³²

Future roles that women and youth peacebuilding organizations can work on:

Through the opinions of the respondents, many roles emerged that civil society organizations working in the field of peace in Taiz governorate can work on, as one of the leaders of these organizations confirms that his organization has a new plan to work on peacebuilding and transitional justice programmes, and he adds: "We plan to increase the impact of our project." Bottom-up peacebuilding" to influence the first track.³³

A director of a civil society organization added, "We will continue to provide support for the efforts of the UN envoy to Yemen by working in the field of local mediation in the file of prisoners and detainees, searching for missing and forcibly disappeared persons, and exchanging the bodies of the dead on

30. Interview with (S), a leader of a civil society organization in building peace in Taiz Governorate, February 2023

31. Two interviews with an expert (A, B) in the field of peacebuilding, February 2023

32. A group of interviews with leaders of civil society organizations, previous reference

33. Interview with respondent (D), director of a civil society organization active in peacebuilding, in Taiz Governorate, February 2023

the lines of contact, which we consider still an important role that we have to play in the next stage.³⁴

On the other hand, a decision-maker in a women's organization adds, , "We will continue coordination and dialogue efforts regarding the issue of opening safe roads for civilians, working to re-pump water, and facilitating the transfer of humanitarian aid to the residents of the city of Taiz on both sides.³⁵ One of the mediators believes that the local mediation committee will continue efforts to consolidate the existing truce in the short and long term, and work on the file of protecting politicians, military personnel and officials in the state. They will also work to stop the trial files of those convicted by both parties because of the events".³⁶

While the head of a women foundation indicates that her organization has a set of programs and goals within the framework of clusters and networks to put pressure on the Yemeni government and international actors to increase the representation of women and youth by no less than 30% based on the UN

resolutions concerned with involvement of women and youth and activate their role.³⁷

Actors in the organizations and the local mediation committee in Taiz are also looking forward to transferring their experiences gained in this field to the actors and activists of civil society organizations working in the field of peacebuilding, strengthening partnerships with organizations, exchanging experiences, and increasing interest and focus on working in activities and projects of "bottom up peacebuilding approach " and marketing this experience to many international actors and opening channels linking all work tracks to build the capabilities and expertise of women and youth in the field of peacebuilding, and providing a clear vision for decision makers about the role of local organizations in building peace in Yemen.³⁸

Requirements to strengthen the efforts of civil society organizations in Taiz Governorate in the tracks of peace

In connection with the opportunities and roles played by the civil society organization concerned with peacebuilding efforts in Taiz governorate, a set of requirements emerge ,that must be provided to enhance the ability of these organizations to implement their activities in the governorate, and most of these requirements are related to the trend towards the localization of funding provided

to Yemen. the decline in the role of donors and their inability to fulfill their obligations affected the location of funding as they pledged at the World Humanitarian Summit held in Istanbul in May 2016 ³⁹ The respondents highlighted a number of requirements that must be met for civil society organizations working in peacebuilding to carry out their roles in this aspect and they are as follows⁴⁰:

34. Interview with respondent (e), director of a civil society organization active in the field of conflicts, in Taiz Governorate, February 2023.

35. An interview with a respondent (and) the director of a women's organization working in the field of peacebuilding in Taiz Governorate, February 2023.

36. Interview with respondent (Z), a member of the local mediation committees in Taiz Governorate, February 2023

37. Interview with a respondent (H), the head of a local organization active in the field of peacebuilding and empowering women in Taiz Governorate, February 2023.

38. Results of interviews with respondents who are activists in the field of local mediation in Taiz Governorate, February 2023

39. <https://sanaacenter.org/ar/publications-all/main-publications-ar/13094>

40. A group of interviews with directors of civil society organizations, activists and experts in Taiz Governorate, February 2023 AD / previous reviewer

1. Building the capacities of the staff of local organizations concerned in the fields of peacebuilding and community mediation, specifically those specialized in the second and third tracks to enable them to understand the contexts of the fields of peacebuilding, and to develop relations between local community organizations on the one hand and key decision-makers on the other hand.
2. Supporting the efforts of civil society organizations in governance, developing their institutional capacities, and managing their activities and projects in the field of peace-building with its specificity at the national and local levels.
3. Strengthening the capacities of local civil society organizations to mobilize financial resources for activities and projects directed towards building and strengthening stability and sustainable peace in Yemen.
4. Donors should absorb the potential and capabilities of women and youth organizations working in the field of peacebuilding that are unable to meet the requirements of administrative and technical standards, and contribute to raising their capabilities according to the minimum international standards approved in the institutional building of civil society organizations, and support projects that help sustainability of the local organizations working in peacebuilding .
5. Providing internal channels of communication for international organizations that are not officially operating in Yemen, and facilitating their communication and access to support local organizations in Yemen.
6. Complete the terms of reference for local organizations specialized in peacebuilding. It is indicated that: “Deep Root” company has adopted the idea and is currently working on developing a work methodology under the name “Peace Practitioners Group”, and work has begun on it since the beginning of the year 2023.

Proposed solution recommendations

Through the analyzes and conclusions presented in the content of this paper, the most important recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of local civil society organizations working in the field of peacebuilding in Taiz governorate are as follows:

- 1. Governance and development of the institutional capacities of civil society organizations:** through rehabilitation of civil society organizations in accordance with the requirements of governance and the development of organizational, administrative and technical capabilities through development projects supported by international organizations and donors as part of the strategy to support the sector

of civil society organizations specialized in working on building peace and promotion of the principle of monitoring and evaluation of performance indicators for the purposes of improving the work of these organizations.

- 2. Enhancing the organizations’ capabilities to access international funds:** improving the capabilities of local organizations working in the field of peacebuilding to increase funding opportunities in mitigating local conflicts, sustaining peace, focusing more on supporting the efforts of community organizations led by women or youth, and strengthening the principle of long-term partnership, and make this funding flexible and available to all local organizations working in the field of peacebuilding and in

all phases of building sustainable peace.

3. Building the capacities of workers and activists in the field of peacebuilding:

Implementing qualitative short and long programs for workers and volunteers in civil society organizations in the field of peacebuilding, with a focus on capabilities related to managing peacebuilding projects, negotiation, mediation, dealing with conflicts and other aspects of peacebuilding.

4. Networking and joint action: Organizations active in building peace at the local and national levels should continue to increase their active participation in the coordination and networking mechanism. This will require participation and raising the organizations' capabilities through networking mechanisms, joint action and building strategic relationships, which would strengthen the work of local civil society organizations working in peacebuilding in Yemen, therefore, organizations must focus on creating more networks and youth women's clusters, and finding a common understanding of work and harmonizing peacebuilding efforts at the local and

national levels.

5. Adopting a general plan of action focused on the priorities of work in the areas of peace in the next stage:

Women and youth organizations in Taiz have an inspiring experience in working on local peace issues, and they need support from donors to continue their achievements in the outstanding issues, in which they have made strides, and they need to move to achieve new progress in the course of local mediation in the issues of pumping water, roads, and exchange of prisoners, as it is close to complete the steps of its final solution, and to achieve an additional contribution to the track of comprehensive and sustainable peace in Yemen. Therefore, the organizations working on these files need to develop joint and targeted plans to support and advocate the issues that they have been working on for years.



Sheba Youth Foundation is a civil society organization led by youth and women who work in a team spirit to empower youth and women to actively participate in development and peace-building in Yemen with a true vision of a stable society in which youth and women enjoy peace, development and sustainable coexistence.

www.shebayouth.org
info@shebayouth.org
+967 - 4 - 252733 / +967 - 770450222
@shebayouthf

About the researchers:

Abdulha id Hamdain: A researcher and human rights activist, he holds a BA in law, and his contributions to knowledge include the preparation of studies, various reports, and working papers. He is a consultant for several local civil NGOs. Hamdain focuses on human rights, development, and peacebuilding issues.



مؤسسة شباب سبأ للتنمية

Sheba Youth Foundation for Development

@shebayouthf



+967 - 4 - 252733



+967 - 770 450 222



info@shebayouth.org



www.shebayouth.org