
Search for Common Ground - Indonesia Key Findings from 2009 Internal Evaluation

Search for Common Ground (SFCG) began working in Indonesia 2002 and has since worked alongside local civil society organizations (CSOs), media outlets, and conflict survivors among other to develop inventive and appropriate conflict transformation initiatives. While establishing strong working relationships with local official and community leaders, schools and universities, and community-based organizations, SFCG has implemented programs attempting to increase access to the judicial system for marginalized groups, promote peaceful elections, and capacity strengthening programs for institutions to foster tolerance and violence reduction. SFCG's programme in Indonesia is supported by DFID and the World Bank. Search for Common Ground is an international non-governmental organization that works to transform the way the world deals with conflict: away from adversarial approaches, toward cooperative solutions. With programs in or with Angola, Belgium, Burundi, DR Congo, Guinea, Indonesia, Iran, Liberia, Macedonia, Middle East, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Ukraine, and the United States, our "toolbox" includes mediation/ facilitation, shuttle diplomacy, training, radio/TV, journalism, sports, drama, and music.

EVALUATION SCOPE

Evaluators Stefanie D'Errico and Alif Imam conducted the evaluation of SFCG activities from April 2008 until February 2009. In February 2009 the report was updated and finalized. The purpose of this evaluation was to:

1. To assess the relevance of the project; was the AYRP a valuable means for fostering peace in Aceh?
2. To assess the effectiveness of the project (i.e., the extent to which the project's stated objectives were being achieved). The evaluation covered the entire process of technical production chains, starting with topics, production, broadcasting, and including feedback dissemination to stakeholders involved in the peace process in Aceh.
3. To assess the impact of the project
4. To determine whether the project facilitated the useful exploration/discussion of issues of concern amongst youth and policymakers
5. To provide recommendations for suitable programmes, in line with the needs on the ground, that enhance youth involvement in promoting peace in Aceh

The evaluators also put forth recommendations for future SFCG Aceh Youth Radio Project activities.

KEY FINDINGS

The SFCG Aceh Youth Radio Project was assessed to achieve outcomes at every level of social transformation; personal, relational, structural, and cultural. That said, the most significant changes occurred at the personal and relational levels.

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

- AYRP has brought substantial changes to the life of participants, here defined as team leaders, youth reporters and radio presenters. Most noted an improvement in their status within their respective communities after joining SFCG, and they now feel that they have a role in the peace-building process. Evaluators found many success stories of positive transformation which are further described in the personal transformation chapter.

Source: The majority of this document was taken verbatim from the Evaluation of Search for Common Ground Activities in Sierra Leone, August 2004, and from the Comparative Analysis of Audience Listening Surveys in 2002 and 2004. For the full evaluation or listenership analysis, please refer to: www.sfcg.org/sfcg/evaluations/evaluations.html

- Geunderang Damee listeners' levels of understanding of issues affecting Acehese society has improved, helping advance a productive dialogue. Most of them feel that false perceptions and miscommunications exacerbate tensions which can be blown out of proportion. However, some listeners still exhibit negative attitudes or apportion blame, which is unproductive in terms of reaching common ground, and could lead to negative behaviour.

“For Acehese to achieve a sustainable and peaceful future, the challenges of the tsunami and the MoU must be translated into a process of wide-reaching, inclusive and broadly supported societal change. An improved security environment combined with large-scale investment and economic assistance programs have the potential to reap economic dividends, but these must be supported by a process of constructive social transformation. This transformation, however, must come about from within.”

RELATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

- AYRP established broad networks among different communities across Aceh. Team Leaders were found to be fundamental in establishing these networks.
- The social status of the vast majority of AYRP participants (team leaders, youth reporters and presenters) has improved since joining the project. Their friends, family, and colleagues now see them as professional journalists, and think that they have good knowledge of the conflict and post-conflict Aceh. As such, AYRP project participants are more frequently engaged in community discussions than before, and their opinions are highly respected by their peers. Moreover, their friends rely on them to represent their opinions and concerns about society.
- The choice of content and stories that talk about differences within Aceh's society helped in creating networks among youth of different backgrounds and ethnicities. Fauzan, a youth reporter from Bireun, explained how he contacted the leader of the local Chinese community and invited him to speak at the talk show. He considered this a crucial moment because his friends openly recognised the Chinese as part of the Bireun community.

STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION

- The Aceh Youth View Reports are an innovative platform for expressing the views of Acehese youth. All decision makers interviewed found them to be useful, and appreciated their value as a new path to understanding.
- Decision makers discussed issues raised by youth with their colleagues after the meeting. All of those interviewed said that they would come to future meetings that highlight youth and peacebuilding issues, such as the Youth View Report presentations.
- The presentation style should be changed in order to be more effective. Most of the decision makers interviewed asked for a clearer agenda with main points supported by statistical data.

CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

- The evaluators found that, in general, the team leaders, reporter and radio presenters were capable of resolving issues of stereotyping or generalizations that emerged in field reporting, from phone-ins to the interactive talk shows, as well as via incoming SMS, received at the AYRP office in Banda Aceh.
- Overall, radio presentations, reporting packages, and interviews were delivered in a manner that would diminish cultural prejudices on the topics related to peace building and development in Aceh. In addition, based the broadcast record, all radio outputs adhered to local customs.

SUCCESSFUL ELEMENTS & AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The AYRP was found to have a mix of successful components that helped the programme achieve its objectives as well as room for improvement in certain areas. Successful elements of the program include the networks established as a result of the programme, the general production and broadcasting of the radio programme, and the process and product of the Aceh Youth View Reports. Areas for improvement included the limited number of radio networks for broadcasting, format and time limitations on the talk show, lack of technical training as part of capacity building for journalists and presenters, and too limited distribution of Youth View Reports.

SUCCESSFUL COMPONENTS

- **Establishment of Network:** Networks were established as a result of the AYRP between youth reporters, radio stations otherwise competing for their market share, and team leaders. Networks were also created between Aceh youth and radio stations from different towns.
- **Production and Broadcasting:** 85% of listeners considered the show useful in solving conflicts in their community. Additionally, it was found that issues are presented in an effective manner. 85% of listeners surveyed thought that GDAM reflected issues that affect their community.
- **The Youth View Reports:** the Youth View Reports and presentations succeeded in creating dialogue between youth who work for AYRP and policy makers.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- **Partnership with Community Radio:** The AYRP budget did not allocate resources for broadcasting the radio programming beyond the 12 commercial radio stations. The program didn't maximize the use of community radio networks in Aceh that would have enhanced the geographic and social scope of Geunderang Damee listenership.
- **Format of the talk show:** The talk show format was seen to be the second most preferred format, from the survey. The 30-minute show was a limitation as well, as most radio presenters lamented the fact that there was not enough time to adequately cover complex issues while giving adequate time to guests, phone callers and people who sent questions or comments via SMS.
- **Capacity building of team members:** Participants cited the need for additional sessions in more technical aspect, including sound editing and interviewing techniques. They also expressed the will to learn how to work more actively within the community.
- **Engaging policy makers:** SFCG did not do enough to distribute and socialize Youth View Reports. A limited number of stakeholders participated in the presentations of Youth View Reports. On average, less than 20 participants attended the youth view presentations; remarkably the number increased at the final presentation that hosted 29 participants. All policy makers interviewed asked for a major involvement of political parties from the whole Aceh's political spectrum. Aceh youth view report have been an innovative exercise, and for this reason it needs time to be cultivated in the public arena. The Youth View Report and presentations hold great potential for increasing collaboration between youth and development stakeholders in Aceh. It is imperative that SFCG engage participants from different realities of Aceh's politics in order to raise youth issues as a cross cutting interest for all political parties.

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

- The preferred listening format amongst youth is song requests. It is overwhelmingly the most popular format of 61% of Aceh listeners. The evaluators recommend including it in further programmes.

- The choice of broadcasting times for AYRP was appropriate. Acehnese listen to the radio in the afternoon from 2pm-7pm (27%) or in the evening from 7pm to 11pm (26%). The evaluators recommend broadcasting during these two time slots to maximize listenership.
- The Talk Show is the second most preferred radio formats amongst Acehnese listeners. It was chosen by 34% of people surveyed. It is also very useful in bringing issues raised by youth to the attention of adults. Unfortunately, the Geunderang Damee Talk Show is only broadcast by 6 radio stations. It should be broadcast by all partners in order to reach a broader audience.
- The presentation style of the Aceh Youth View Reports should be reviewed. Most decision makers interviewed asked for a clearer agenda with main points supported by statistical data.
- Some of Geunderang Damee's listeners voiced negative attitudes toward particular groups when we asked them to explain their opinions about the conflict during Focus Group Discussions. Even if they are a minority among listeners surveyed, the evaluators recommend implementing strategies to mitigate these negative attitudes.
- Some youth reporters interviewed did not attend the trainings. The evaluators recommend providing more workshops and trainings to participants in order to give them a clearer understanding of the organization's vision.
- During face-to-face and phone interviews many participants showed an interest in working within the community. They have used radio to bridge different realities of Acehnese society but do not possess adequate facilitating skills. The evaluators recommend providing trainings on facilitation and mediation skills for participants so that they can undertake community work within the networks created by the program.
- Team Leaders faced many difficulties in dealing with increased responsibilities after the programme officer left. The evaluators recommend hiring a new programme officer with coordination and conflict transformation skills.
- Decision makers interviewed expressed the need to make stronger linkages with youth groups beyond media, in a youth congress or forum. It would be very useful because such thing doesn't exist in Aceh. It is strongly recommended that this possibility is pursued in future programming.
- The evaluators recommend conducting a further assessment within target communities to assess what kind of future activities would be useful to utilize build upon the networks created.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the evaluation can be defined by the acronym KARB, which stands for knowledge, attitudes, relationships and behaviours. Five key questions were addressed:

- Has the project increased knowledge among participants and listeners?
- Has the project transformed youth attitudes towards cooperative approaches?
- Has the project created relationships across dividing lines?
- Has the project positively transformed youth behaviour?
- Has the project brought youth issues to the attention of local decision makers

Methods of data collection included the distribution of 434 listenership surveys, interviews with team leaders, 19 radio presenters, 10 radio station managers, 6 Acehnese decision makers, focus group discussions, content analysis of all 24 episodes of GDAM and GDTS, and direct observation of the third Youth View Report.

Source: The majority of this document was taken verbatim from the Final Evaluation Report: Aceh Youth Radio Project, February 2009. For the full evaluation, please refer to:
<http://www.sfcg.org/sfcg/evaluations/indonesia.html>