Final Evaluation

Community Information Management to Reduce Inter-Communal Violence in Myanmar

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9 June 2016
Disclaimer

The opinion expressed in this evaluation report are of the evaluator and not necessary reflect the official policy of Search for Common Ground (SFCG), Myanmar Information Development Organization (MIDO) Pan Zagar and Kan Let Fund (DAI).
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Search for Common Ground - Myanmar and its Country Director for providing me with this opportunity to carry out the final evaluation of the pilot project. This provided me with an opportunity to travel through Myanmar and interact with diverse stakeholders from different identity groups and enhance my understanding of the sociopolitical dynamics of the country.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to SFCG Programme Manager Ah Yo and Intern Saw Nay Blute for organizing the meetings, FGDs and Interviews in Mandalay and Amarapura, as well as in Lashio during the evaluation field trip.

Thanks are also due to my interpreter Aung Than Win for his oral interpretation during the interviews, FGDs and the lesson learned workshop.

I am also indebted to the Community Information Management (CIM) Committee members, key community influencers, and the participants of the Rumour Management Training in both Amarapura and Lashio, especially those energetic young people, for participating in the interviews and FGDs. Special thanks are due to U Tun Oo and Thet Thet Oo in Amarapura and Tun Lwin Oo and Maung Maung Than in Lashio. I am also thankful to leaders of the various religious groups for providing time for the interview.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank U Maw for driving me across the city and making my stay comfortable.

Thank you.

14 June 2016
Kathmandu
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBOs</td>
<td>Community Based Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIM Committee</td>
<td>Community Information Management Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSOs</td>
<td>Civil Society Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAI</td>
<td>Kann Let</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGDs</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussions</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information Communication and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labor Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>KII</td>
<td>Key Informant Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDO</td>
<td>Myanmar Information Development Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLD</td>
<td>National League for Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOC</td>
<td>Theory of Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEZ</td>
<td>Special Economic Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFCG</td>
<td>Search for Common Ground</td>
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Executive Summary

Introduction
In Myanmar, the risks of inter-communal violence are increasing with the proliferation of smartphones as well as fast growing access to online and social media. Rumours and/or manipulated information spread via either word of mouth, or in the form of fake photos on social media, have triggered many of the incidents of inter-communal violence throughout the country in the last couple of years. Rumours and manipulated information have been largely unaddressed to date in conflict transformation efforts in Myanmar despite being recognized as significant factors to inter-communal violence in the country. Considering this fact, Search for Common Ground (SFCG), in partnership with the Myanmar Information Development Organization (MIDO) and Pan Zagar, implemented a 9-month long pilot initiative entitled Community Information Management to Reduce Inter-Communal Violence in Myanmar.

The overall goal of this pilot initiative was to minimize the impact of rumours and manipulated information as triggers of violence in Myanmar. It had three objectives:
1. To increase key stakeholders’ and influencers’ understanding of how information and rumours can be manipulated, resulting in violence;
2. To strengthen the skills of key community influencers to reduce the impact of rumours and manipulated information in their communities;
3. To catalyze joint action amongst diverse stakeholders and influencers in order to reduce the violent impact of rumours and manipulated information.

Evaluation Methodology
The evaluation used a qualitative approach to collect data and information for the evaluation, mainly conducting FGDs and KIIs with SFCG and partner staff, CIM Committee members, and political, civil society, and religious leaders, as well as government officials and participants of the initiatives organized by the CIM Committees. The qualitative information gathered through interviews and FGDs were supplemented by stories, narratives and quotes from participants. The evaluation carried out 6 FGDs and 12 KIIs in two project locations, Amarapura and Lashio. The evaluator also participated in a lessons learned and sharing workshop organized in Pyin Oo Lwin and drew reflections from participants for the evaluation.

Summary Findings:
The evaluation assessed the project based on three evaluation Criteria: relevance, effectiveness and coordination. The brief findings are summarized below.

Relevance:
- Considering the ethno-religious dynamics in Lashio and Amarapura, the project is found to be highly relevant. This fact was also revealed by the interviews as well as directly corroborated by local CIM Committees as well as other civil society and religious leaders. This project has the potential to be scaled up as well as replicated in other sensitive locations.
- Since this project deals with highly sensitive issues in Myanmar society that need close collaboration with communities across dividing lines, its relevance is highly justified in this critical transition period of Myanmar’s political history.
Considering the increasing use of social media, particularly Facebook, and online media platforms among the larger population of a recently opened Myanmar society, new social media and smart phone users need to be oriented in conflict sensitive information management, especially through social and online media. This is exactly what the project is doing.

Since this project started to reach out to wider community, especially youth who are vulnerable to manipulation, the relevancy of the project has become even more significant.

Effectiveness

- The project has contributed to increasing awareness and understanding among participants about the concept of rumour and its negative implications for a peaceful life. Further, it has helped increase awareness around conflict sensitive news and information sharing;
- It also contributed in increased knowledge and skills (among participants) in rumour management, news verification, conflict prevention and resolution, and use of social media. The pre-post-test of the rumour management training shows that there has been 49% (Amarapura) and 31% (Lashio) knowledge increase among participants across 5 knowledge variables;
- Both CIMs have gone beyond information management and earned credibility as a conflict resolution platform at the local level. Specific examples include managing rumours that spread after election to incite violence between different identity groups, especially across religious identities.
- The training provided by CIMs to local people, especially youth, have left a marked impression among participants. Young participants literally remember differed knowledge gained through the training and present examples of using that knowledge in practice
- Though informal, an established process of news tracking (through social media), news verification (through local contacts, reporters, CIM members), producing positive narratives, and disseminating positive narratives/conflict management/resolution is existing
- Both CIMs have been able to establish relationships with government for possible future collaboration as a result of their good work. The CIM Amarapura has established formal relationships with the Office of the Chief Minister, whereas the CIM Lashio has built individual relationships with government officials.
- There has been collaboration with INGOs, CBOs, and CSO networks in organizing meetings around rumour management and conflict resolution, even if there has not been concrete collaborative actions yet.
- Collaboration with Monasteries, Churches, and Mosques in organizing awareness campaigns have been proven effective to increase community awareness and to generate interest in further work among religious leaders. The willingness of religious leaders to collaborate with CIMs in their mission is quite encouraging.
- Collaboration with Lasio news portal to disseminate positive narratives and establish it as a trusted source of news and information is a good step towards disseminating credible news and information.
- The outreach activities like pamphlet distribution, as a small action, has been able to create a buzz among community people as explained by some of the people who received information from the activity.
- Women's active participation in this project is quite encouraging
- The project has garnered good local ownership not only with CIM Committees but also with those youth and community people who participated in the two-day long training organized by CIM Committees in both locations.

Coordination
- There has been good coordination and collaboration between SFCG and MIDO in programme implementation
- There has been good understanding, collaboration and information sharing between the programme implementation team (SFCG and MIDO), the CIMs, and local stakeholders.
- Smooth implementation of activities despite not having ample time to plan and implement activities is a good sign of effective coordination among implementing partners.
- High level of reciprocal trust between SFCG, MIDO and CIMs.

Conclusions and Recommendations:
The project has laid a very good foundation for longer term strategic work on rumour management, inter-religious relationships, and peacebuilding in Myanmar. It was implemented smoothly and generated indicative results within less than a six month period, especially around building awareness and understanding of target stakeholders on rumour management, the importance of interreligious and interethnic relationships in the vulnerable society, developing basic skills on ICT, conflict prevention and resolution, and news literacy, and it created potential opportunities for cooperation and collaboration between civil society, religious institutions, and government agencies, including security agencies in the long-run.

The preliminary results of the project show that the theory of change articulated at the beginning of the project holds true and it has begun to show some effect as they were able to earn credibility as conflict resolution experts and a source of genuine information among community members, and have been able to prevent many rumours from triggering violence in their community as well as resolve many conflicts before they cause any incidence of violence.

The project was found to be inclusive from gender, religious, and ethnic dimensions, except in Lashio where it was challenging to include the Chinese and Hindu communities into the project's fold, despite outreach especially in the case of the Chinese community, and despite the research showing the prominence of conflict between the local community and Chinese immigrants, in addition to the Muslim-Buddhist conflict. The most important contribution of this project is that the people in both locations are quite familiar with the word ‘Kolahala’, the Myanmar word for ‘rumours’ and are able to speak about it confidently.

Based on the analysis and observation of the evaluation, longer term strategic outreach interventions in more places reaching a larger number of people, especially youth and religious communities, has the potential to produce wonderful results in the future.

The evaluation came out with number of recommendations to SFCG and its partners, of which a few important ones are highlighted below:

- Considering the interest among the religious leaders and their commitment for collaboration with CIM Committees, the project needs to design activities to formally work with selected key people from across ethno-religious identities to have a larger multiplier effect.
- It is recommended that SFCG needs to develop longer term programmes on rumour management to contribute in building resiliency among people.
- Considering the global phenomenon of youth engagement on the frontlines of violent activities and additional vulnerability of youth in Myanmar society, it important that SFCG and partners prioritize developing programmes that reach youth (both male and female) from across the ethnic and religious divides.
- Working with religious and academic institutions to organize regular short seminars with students and religious followers might prove to be an effective tool for building awareness and knowledge around rumour and its role in triggering violence in society.
- The future programme design should embed strategic outreach activities followed by capacity building components to amplify the results.
- It is recommended that formation of an interfaith network, though informal, could provide a strong and reliable platform for working in this field.
- Considering initial success in these two areas, it is important that these efforts be scaled up and replicated in a few other vulnerable areas as well as the national level to create a national-local linkage.
CHAPTER - ONE

1.1 Context

In Myanmar, the risks of inter-communal violence are increasing with the proliferation of smart phones as well as fast growing access to the internet and social media. Experts opine that rumours and/or manipulated information spread via either word of mouth, or in the form of fake photos on social media, have triggered many of the incidents of inter-communal violence throughout the country in the last couple of years. In a number of cases, facts concerning specific events have been reframed and manipulated by spoilers with competing interests. With telecommunication companies envisioning 80% digital coverage across the country within the next five years, and with millions of new users with low levels of media literacy joining the Web, the potential for further outbreaks of inter-communal violence remains high considering the inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions prevailing in the country. While the formerly censored country opens its access to new and unprecedented information, there is a pressing need to address the low-level media literacy skills of the public, in order to reduce the spread of unverified information (both offline and online) to mitigate violence. Rumours and manipulated information have been largely unaddressed to date in conflict transformation efforts in Myanmar despite being recognized as significant factors to inter-communal violence in the country.

In Myanmar, restrictions on access to information by the former military regime, created a culture of secrecy and suspicion whereby negative rumours spread quickly, and harmful stereotypes spread via word of mouth by vested interest groups became entrenched as “truth”. This “truth” was often manipulated for political advantage. The continued reliance on rumours (unverified information) and manipulated information, channelled through trusted networks, promotes unfounded resentment and inflames ethnic tensions against out-groups as a result of the Divide and Rule strategies adopted by the former Military Government. When people hear a rumour or receive manipulated information, especially during times of crisis, their first response is to believe it.1 Myanmar has a history of rumours and manipulated information being used to incite hate speech against various ethnic groups; to inspire vigilante mob mentalities; and to precipitate mass violence that has destabilized parts of the country.2 These incidents of communal violence are often inspired by a fabricated photograph or story of a perceived wrongdoing by a member of a different group. Sharing one photo with contradictory narratives by people with competing interests was a common feature of the recent student protests against government centralization of education.3 The growing popularity of social media services in Myanmar, and data coverage through the expanding cell phone service, has increased the geographic reach of these stories, photos, and calls to action. The need to support communities in Myanmar to critically evaluate and question the veracity of information received from word of mouth, media sources, and social media remains relevant despite the political transition in the last few months.4

Since 2012, the people of Myanmar have enjoyed increasing space, both online and offline, with respect to freedom of speech, assembly, and association. As a result, Myanmar’s transition to

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2. Dangerous Speech and New Methods of Prevention: Prof. Susan Benesch, TSAS Security Policies and Community Relations Summit November 4-5, 2013
3. SFCG/UNDP: Consultative Workshop on Social Cohesion, March 6, Yangon with civil society experts, lower Myanmar.
4. SFCG: Conflict Analysis, written by Taylor O’Connor. Funded by the European Union for the project Reconciliation in Myanmar, March 2015.
democracy and the socio-political conflict dynamics remain fragile and susceptible to derailment. With the increased freedom of expression and exposure to widespread information (both verified as well as unverified) through internet and local and global media is bringing positive as well as negative implications to the Myanmar society. This new flood of information in the country has made it difficult for many people to discern reliable information from the pool of fabricated information. With limited media literacy skills, the over-abundance of information demonstrates competing dynamics working for and against peace and reform. This has been particularly evident during the build-up to the elections held on 8 November 2015. There has been growing optimism after the democratic transition and the formation of new democratic government. Amidst this positivity, the MaBaTha is losing trust and credibility amongst the larger population, who report tiring of the false propaganda of this group who is now seen to support the military regime for political gain by further dividing the society on religious and ethnic lines. The evaluation team noticed that post elections, there is increased confidence and sense of security among people (relatively more in Amarapura than Lashio) with space for increased freedom of speech and trust in the recently elected government, proving to be a conducive environment for reconciliation in Myanmar society.
1.2 The project

1.2.1 Introduction of the Project
Search for Common Ground (SFCG), in partnership with the Myanmar Information Development Organization (MIDO) and Pan Za gar, implemented a 9-month long pilot initiative entitled *Community Information Management to Reduce Inter-Communal Violence in Myanmar*. The project addressed one of the most significant threats to Myanmar’s transition to democracy and sustainable peace: the impact of rumours and manipulated information on outbreaks of inter-communal violence. The implementation of this pilot initiative synergized with the information and communication technology (ICT) revolution in Myanmar that presents both opportunities and risks in the country’s new era of democratization and liberalization.

The project implementation coincided with the historical democratic election in Myanmar on 8 November 2015 and subsequent formation of the democratic government, with induction of a new democratic president of the country on 1 April 2016. A local to national-level, multi-pronged approach ensured the highest level of communication and behaviour changes amongst the target groups. This project carried out (i) research on the impact of rumours, analysis of information and communication channels, and related leverage points to prevent violence; (ii) provided opportunities to identify and train key community influencers, who could play key roles of information management within their communities; and (iii) support to information management communities with fact-checking and dissemination of positive messaging from partners via Facebook, blogs, Viber, and online media.

The overall goal of this pilot initiative was to *minimize the impact of rumours and manipulated information as triggers of violence in Myanmar*. It had three objectives:

1. To increase key stakeholders’ and influencers’ understanding of how information and rumours can be manipulated, resulting in violence;
2. To strengthen the skills of key community influencers to reduce the impact of rumours and manipulated information in their communities;
3. To catalyse joint action amongst diverse stakeholders and influencers in order to reduce the violent impact of rumours and manipulated information.

1.2.2 Key Theory of Change:
The project articulated an extended key theory of change (TOC) in order to achieve the three key specific objectives. The TOC is:

*If community influencers, empowered by knowledge and collaborative relationships, find platforms for action, then they will create spaces to challenge information, stereotypes and belief systems and penetrate echo chambers by injecting positive responses. As a result, the impact of rumours and manipulated information on inter-communal violence and hatred will be reduced.*

1.2.3 Target Groups and Areas
Target Areas: This initiative was implemented in two target areas – **Amarapura Township in Mandalay Division and Lashio Township of Shan State**; both areas saw the outbreak of violence in the recent past and until the present time, are still vulnerable to outbreaks of inter-communal violence. The consortium selected these target areas based on the following recognized factors of vulnerability:

1. Multi-ethnic and religious dividing lines;
2. A history of violence;
3. Economic inequity among ethnic or religious communities;
4. High unemployment;
5. External spoilers with business interests;
6. Easy access of partners due to existing activities/networks on the ground; and
7. High political stakes related to the census, elections, and the peace process.

Both SFCG and MIDO/Pan Zagar were operating in both of these areas even before the implementation of this initiative. SFCG carried out a conflict analysis and a series of consultative workshops in these areas, and Pan Zagar has been training youth and expanding the reach of its ‘Flower Speech Campaign’ in these areas. This project design was built on MIDO’s research with Myanmar Media and Society Research Initiative (M.MAS) and Oxford University; that intended to understand ways in which ordinary people view Buddhist-Muslim conflict, particularly those views that justify violence.

### 1.2.4 Primary Target Groups:

**Key Community Influencers:** SFCG and partners worked with 43 community influencers (at least 20 from each target location) including journalists, youth activists, women representatives from civil society, religious figures, village heads, local authorities, police, local business people, medical practitioners, tea and Internet shop owners, and market vendors. These community influencers were identified during the research period through Pan Zagar and SFCG’s locally rooted networks and based on criteria perceived by the communities themselves.

These actors are uniquely positioned to contribute meaningfully to reconciliation efforts throughout the life of the project. The consortium attempted to use a *spoilers to stakeholders approach* (framing/developing initiatives to encourage spoilers to have a stake in peace), and to actively reach out and engage persons with more extreme views to participate in the project. The facilitation of trainings and the formation of “Information Management Communities” were used to sensitize this initiative in order to ensure that persons from across dividing lines took interest and participated in this initiative. In addition, partners reached out to existing peace committees in the area during the identification phase of the community influencers.

**Community Information Management (CIM) Committee:** A CIM Committee was formed proactively by the community influencers after the training to work as a champion in managing rumours in the respective areas.

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5 Inter-communal Violence in Myanmar: Risks and Opportunities for Assistance, Mercy Corps by Adapt Research and Consulting, April 2014

6 A social media campaign led by Pan Zagar to promote positive speech found online at: https://www.facebook.com/supportflowerspeech?ref=br_rs
Besides, the project also served a secondary target group which includes the 277,154\(^7\) community members who are vulnerable to becoming victims/perpetrators of violence. These secondary target were reached through the community influences and the CIM committee.

### 1.3 Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation was planned in a short time frame and used KII and FGD with three types of stakeholders:

- **FGDs** with Community Information Management (CIM) Committees and the community people (especially young participants of the training organized by the respective CIM Committees in both Lashio and Amarapura).
- **KII** with certain members of the CIM committees who were either not available for the FGDs or would provide greater depth in the entirety of the project and the conflict dynamics of the region.
- **KII** with religious and civil society leaders, who were not directly involved in project activities but were aware of the contribution of the project and collaborated with CIM members in organizing at least one outreach activity.
- **Interviews** were also conducted with the SFCG programme team as well as MIDO programme team to gather internal information and reflection.

Further to this, the evaluator also observed the sharing and lessons learned workshop held during the evaluation period and drew from reflections of the participants.

A total of 6 FGDs and 12 KII were conducted as part of the evaluation method. The evaluation collected data around three evaluation criteria, namely 1) relevance of the project in the recent conflict dynamics in the tow pilot areas, 2) short-term effectiveness of the project in achieving some short-term achievement as a result of the project and 3) the individual and institutional coordination and collaboration in organizing various activities and taking ownership of the project. The interviews and KII were guided by the following key baseline questions:

**Relevance:**
- How important is the project in the context of conflict transformation and promoting democratic values in Myanmar?
- To what extent were the project’s approach and interventions relevant to addressing the violence resulting from the spread of rumours, hate speeches and manipulation of information?
- Is the project adding value to Myanmar society that others are not providing?

**Effectiveness:**
- To what extent has the project contributed to increasing the understanding of target stakeholders about the different dimensions of how information and rumours can be manipulated to cause violence?
- To what extent did the project empower and equip the target stakeholders to reduce the impact of rumours, manipulation of information, and expression of hate through speeches that result in outbreaks of violence?

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\(^7\) Population of Lashio, Shan State and Chan Aye Thar Zan, Mandalay according to geonames geographical database.
How have they applied those skills in practice? Are there any examples of positive intervention of the target stakeholders in minimizing the efforts of spoilers to cause violence through above mentioned means?

How has the project caused pro-active collaborative initiatives (joint actions) among diverse stakeholders and key influencers towards reducing the impact of rumours and the manipulation of information in the lives of people?

What unexpected positive or negative results did the project lead to? What potential is there for scaling up this initiative?

What are the best practices/lessons learnt?

**Coordination**

- How well was the program implementation process managed?
- How was the coordination between SFCG’s program team and the partner organizations in implementing the program?
- How coherent were the activities implemented to achieve the goal/objectives set by the project? To what extent did the different categories of activities complement each other?

**1.4 Scope and Limitations of the Evaluation**

The evaluation team took particular interest in talking with indirect participants and key community leaders to gauge community impressions about the project.

However, the project was a pilot initiative and was implemented for a very short period of time. Since the projects activities were taking place as late as one week before the evaluation, the project was not yet ready for evaluation. It is not advisable that a project with this short timeframe should undergo a rigorous evaluation process.

The findings of the evaluation are generated based on the opinion and analysis of participants and other key community stakeholders and the evaluator’s analysis and interpretation based on the information provided by the respondents and other relevant project documents.
2.1 Evaluation Findings Summary

This was a short-term pilot project implemented for 8.5 months during October 1st 2015 to June 14th 2016 with the following programme (actual) implementation schedule.

2.1.1 Project Outputs

<table>
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<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Oct 2015</td>
<td>Project awarded</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nov 2015</td>
<td>Fund released</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nov-Dec 2015</td>
<td>Research conducted pre- and post-election</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dec 2015-Jan 2016</td>
<td>Dialogue event held with potential community influencers</td>
<td>Agreed by community stakeholders to form Community Information Management Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jan 2016</td>
<td>Training manual developed for three trainings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Feb 2016</td>
<td>ICT and News Literacy Training held (4 days)</td>
<td>Implemented by Partner NGO (MIDO) 43 people trained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Feb-March 2016</td>
<td>Rumour Management Training held (2 days)</td>
<td>43 people trained</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>March 2016</td>
<td>Common Ground Approach (CGA)/Conflict Management Training held</td>
<td>43 people trained</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>March-May 2016</td>
<td>Half day mentoring/refresher workshops held (3 times)</td>
<td>Refresher training on CGA and rumour management. However, the ICT refresher was given to participants in Amarapura only.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>May 2016</td>
<td>Independent local Initiatives (training to community/youth Pamphlet distribution to strategic gatherings as strategic locations) Not envisioned by the design</td>
<td>One training (2-days) for 20 people organized in each location. Mosques, Churches, monasteries, market places, and other places for public gathering were targeted</td>
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</tbody>
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2.1.2 Evaluation Summary

The table above clearly shows that the project was implemented for a short-time frame with tight implementation schedule with most of the activities implemented within three months during February-April 2016, while few of the outreach activities were implemented during May 2016. Since this was a pilot project, the tight schedule was part of the design as a donor requirement. The evaluator has been considerate to this fact and tried to identify indicative results on all three objectives as well as the evaluation criteria. The relevance and effectiveness criteria were
assessed based on four categories (Highly relevant/effective; effective/relevant; moderately relevant/effective; and not relevant/effective). The coordination criteria were assessed based on three categories (effective coordination, meditatively effective coordination, and poor coordination).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>Highly relevant</td>
<td>Considering the potential vulnerability of the project sites, prevailing inter-religious/ethnic mistrust and frequent use of Facebook to spread unverified information and rumours, the relevancy of this project is found to be high.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
<td>Since the project is very short and activities were implemented recently, it is too early to capture significant results. However, indicative results and progress towards achieving goals are visible.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effective (in building awareness and understanding)</td>
<td>Distinct visibility of increased understanding and knowledge about rumour (<em>Kolahala</em>) and its negative consequences among concerned stakeholders interviewed.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effective (in enhancing skills to reduce the impact of rumours)</td>
<td>Clear explanation from the target stakeholders on how to verify news to minimize the impact of rumour.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Moderately effective (Few joint actions initiated)</td>
<td>Short time frame and lack of ample outreach activities did not provide enough opportunity for collaboration among CIMCs, government agencies and other civil society stakeholders.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td>Highly effective</td>
<td>The coordination between SFCG and MIDO as well as with Community Information Management Committees in Amarapura and Lashio was very effective and mutually respectful.</td>
</tr>
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### 2.2 Relevance

The project implementation timeline saw the much awaited historical (democratic) election in Myanmar on 8 November 2015. The project started riding on the dates of the national election and most of the activities were implemented immediately after the national election, in which the National League for Democracy (NLD) secured a landslide victory against the military backed USDP. The timing of the project implementation was also significant because it fell in the transition period, where the Military backed government, despite its humiliating defeat, had yet to hand over the power to the democratically elected government. Some of the radical groups, such as MaBaTha, were trying to create instability through various propaganda news and rumours to derail the political transition as well as the ongoing peace process. However, despite all these challenges and potential obstacles, finally, after half a century of military-led regimes, Myanmar saw the swearing in of a democratically elected government on 1 April 2016.

The relevancy of the project becomes even more important in the two project sites Amarapura and Lashio because of their population composition and the past inter-religious/ethnic violence.
Since Both Lashio and Mandalay experienced an outbreak of Buddhist-Muslim violence in 2013 and 2014 respectively and many parts of the country have seen anti-Muslim violence, people still feel insecure, especially Muslim populations. This fact was also highlighted by the research commissioned by SFCG in November-December 2015 and further supported by the interviews during the evaluation. One of the Moulavis (of Jame Masjid) interviewed during the evaluation said that as high as 60% of the population from each conflicting religious group (Muslim and Buddhist) do not trust each other.” The sense of insecurity was more visible in Lashio than in Amarapura, as the violence in 2013 took place at the heart of the city and most of the structures damaged/burnt during the violence are still not renovated or replaced. Further, Lashio, particularly, is still undergoing armed violence in its outskirts and any unverified information making the rounds in the city could trigger massive violence. Thus, the project is relevant to support the ongoing peace process as it helps minimize triggers that cause outbreaks of violence.

The interview revealed that there are rounds of rumours travelling via word of mouth as well as through social media continuing now and the ability of rumours or unverified news to trigger violence is still high. All of the respondents interviewed said that such projects are highly relevant to their city considering the state of fragility in the city and its multi-cultural society. The research⁸ carried out by an external researcher immediately before and after the election also showed that there was a high level of tension between Buddhist and Muslim communities before the election, which was relatively calm as the anti-Muslim and anti-NLD propaganda of MaBaTha did not work among people and their corresponding political alliance was thwarted in the general election which gave an overwhelming majority to NLD.

However, the research also pointed that the lull in the tension could be short lived as the lack of trust among Buddhist and Muslim community members is still very low in the two target areas. Such a historical deep-rooted mistrust was further aggravated by the 2013 violence in Lashio and the 2014 violence in Mandalay, causing a high level sense of insecurity among both population groups, especially minority Muslim groups as reported by the Moulavi of Jame Masjid in Lashio. Similarly, a Father of a Roman Catholic Church also said that there is a deep sense of uncertainty and sense of insecurity among Christian community despite them not being affected by the religious violence until now. He further added that it does not take many people to spread hatred and start a cycle of violence in a vulnerable society like Myanmar. These statements clearly justify the relevancy of such initiatives, which work towards bridging the gaps and reweaving the fabric of a heterogeneous society torn apart by the recent spree of violence against each other.

2.3 Effectiveness
The project intended to contribute to minimizing the impact of rumours and manipulated information as triggers of violence in Myanmar. The project had three specific objectives of i) increasing the understanding of target stakeholders on how information and rumours can be manipulated, resulting into violence; ii) strengthening the skills of key community influencers to reduce the impact of rumours and manipulated information in the communities; and iii) catalysing joint actions among diverse stakeholders and influencers in order to reduce the violent impact of rumours and manipulated information. The following sections present the

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⁸Mears, Emily Speers, 2015. Community Information Management to Reduce Inter-Communal Violence in Burma Project inception research – Mandalay and Lashio December 2015
findings based on three specific objectives of the project. However, the findings are presented based on the key evaluation questions articulated based on the project objectives.

a. How has the project contributed in increasing awareness, understanding, and knowledge (on issues covered by the capacity building components) among target stakeholders?

The evaluation observed that the short pilot initiative was successful in building awareness and understanding about rumour and how it contributed in triggering violence in the community by playing with the ethno-religious emotions of people who are less educated and do not understand the vested political interest of certain groups of people. However, the research carried out in the two locations suggested that the tendency of believing in rumours is not only limited to uneducated people but also prevails among educated groups as the religious and ethnic majority and vice-versa prevails over the educational wisdom among people in Myanmar. The project initially worked to build the awareness, understanding and skills of the key community influencers/CIM committees followed by the selected groups of community people, including women and youth.

The interviews with CIM Committees, Key Community Influencers and the participating community members revealed that the effort has resulted in increased awareness on rumours and unverified information and its negative implications for the peace and harmony of the society. The four sets of trainings on rumour management, news literacy, ICT Application and conflict management (Though it was titled Common Ground Approach Training, however, participants do not remember this title) training have helped build the knowledge and capacity among the CIM Committee members and Key community influencers. All of the participants in the FGDs and KIIs said that they have learned many new things from the training such as conflict resolution skills, news verification, news sensitivity, positive use of Facebook, rumour management etc. they said that, even before the training, they were already familiar with the concept “rumour,” but had never gotten an opportunity to think about rumours so critically. The training helped them learn various dimensions of rumours and false information on social media and other sources and provided them with the skills on how to deal with these rumours.

When asked by the evaluator what they learned from the trainings, one of the participants from Lashio said, “We learned four major things from the training. They are: Information management, preventing and managing conflict, preventing the spread of rumour preventing religious conflict and new knowledge in ICT, including Facebook security”

“We had heard about these things in the past but did not know about their details. Now, we are not only familiar with these concepts, but can also apply them in our everyday lives.” - Respondent in Lashio
The word rumour (*Kolahala*) was quite popular among all the people interviewed. Every single person, including girls and boys as young as 15 years, are able to articulate the meaning of ‘rumour’ and its implication for society. The multi-religious and multi-ethnic youth groups’ FGDs in Lashio revealed that they knew about four types of news (promotional news, entertainment news, propaganda news and technical news) as discussed in the training. They could also clearly articulate five different types of conflict handling styles such as compete, avoid, win-win/cooperation, win-lose/compromise and accommodate. Further, the group was able to explain position and interests of the conflicting stakeholders and explained how they are now trying to see positions and interests in every conflict they witness or are involved in.

The project has created a shift in Facebook culture among participants. One youth participant in Lashio said, “Earlier I used to post any news from Facebook, sometimes even without looking at its content. I used to trust people in my Facebook circle blindly, without knowing their intention to post such news. However, after the training, I realized that I was making a mistake and unknowingly and unintentionally contributing to promoting violence. Nowadays, I only post or share those news or messages after knowing it as true or genuine news. I always think about consequences before posting a Facebook message.” This quote is a representative one. There were many similar quotes or opinions expressed by youth during the interview.

Similarly, other participants from FGDs said that they had learned from the training that rumours are easily spread where there is a low level of education; there is no culture of transparency in the society; there is hidden agenda of ‘some people’; no trustworthy media and people carry strong emotion. They further said that, if we want to manage and minimize rumour in our society, we need to address the above five characteristics of our society sustainably. This clearly shows that the training, albeit short, has been able to increase their awareness and understanding of concepts like rumour management, conflict sensitivity (though indirectly9) and conflict management from out of the topics discussed in the training. Participants’ interviewed were found to be conflict sensitive while using Facebook and other online media platforms. Though symbolic at the moment, this result has huge potential for a multiplier effect in the future, especially among young people, who are a population often at the core of violent acts and are quite easy to manipulate and mobilize by extremist groups.

According to the pre-test and post-test data received from the rumour management training for community influencers and CIM Committees, 49% (Amarapura) and 31% (Lashio) of participants demonstrated increased knowledge across 5 knowledge variables after the training: understanding about rumour; difference between gossip and rumours; types of rumours; nature of Information spreading, and analysing rumours.

Another area to which the project has contributed significantly among participants is that it has helped increase knowledge on how to use internet, Facebook, Facebook security, and modern technology (including smart phones), as reported by the participants during the interviews. They credit this increase in knowledge to the training on media literacy. Similarly, they also credit the rumour management training for increasing their ability to think critically about much of the news.

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9 They did not pronounce the phrase ‘conflict sensitivity’, but when they explain things, they bring in ingredients of conflict sensitivity.
and information coming to them. One of the participants in the Amarapura said, “The training helped me to think critically and analytically. There is nothing like black or white. Our society is complex and we need to analyse our society and developments very carefully.”

b. To what extent has the project helped strengthen the skills of participating stakeholders in managing rumours and promoting peace in target communities?

Despite being a short-term pilot project, it has been successful in imparting some basic skills among the primary target groups on conflict management and rumour management and preventing spread of rumours and triggering violence. Every single CIM committee member and key community influencer interviewed explained the exact process they follow in preventing the spread of rumour, spreading positive narratives, and preventing and managing conflict if the rumour has already spread. Though informal, they established processes of:

- news tracking (through social media and other sources),
- news verification (through local contacts, reporters, CIM members),
- producing positive narratives
- disseminating positive narratives
- Managing/resolving conflict where necessary.

The following diagram shows the process the participants explained during the interviews, showcasing their enhanced skills on rumour management.
All the participants explained the above framework of rumour management. Even the young people and other community people, who participated in a two-day long training on rumour management and conflict resolution, were able to explain the process of preventing the spread of rumour among community members. There is ample evidence of applying this knowledge and skills of rumour management and conflict resolution in their communities. They explained how they prevented rumours triggering violence in both Lashio and Amarapura.

The FGD participants collectively narrated a story of how they played down a rumour about a Muslim killing a Buddhist Monk. “A rumour was spread through word of mouth in Amarapura that a Buddhist Monk had been killed by a Muslim Man in Bone Ohn Village. Everyone started
to talk about this and people were looking at each other suspiciously. There was a tense environment around Amarapura. The CIM Committee Amarapura mobilized its local focal points coming from the particular locality. They visited the Monastery and discovered that no such incident has happened. They also contacted the local police and ward administrator and found the news was absolutely wrong. Once they confirmed that the news was false and someone was trying to trigger violence between Muslim and Buddhists, they communicated this message to villages, posted in CIM Amarapura Facebook pages, and every member shared this through their Facebook pages. Once people knew that the message was false and no such incident had happened, the tense environment eased slowly and ethnic/religious violence was averted.”

Similarly, there was a rumour about a woman from outside Amarapura stealing a child, which was also proved to be false and the personal safety of women was ensured by bringing her to a police station.

After the recent election of the Parliament and victory of NLD in the election, there was a nationwide rumour that people were kidnapping/stealing children from houses, trying to show that there is no guarantee of security of people. The respondents in Amarapura said that this was done by some of the specific organizations who were badly defeated in the election to create a sense of insecurity and instability even before the government had taken over. However, this could not be verified for its accuracy.

During this time, a poor woman from Taungyi visited her husband in the prison in Amarapura with her small baby. When she was returning from the prison it was already late and she did not have money to buy foods and she went begging house to house. When she reached an apartment to ask for some money or food, the land lady suspected her of stealing someone’s child and started to make noise.

Immediately this rumour spread to the entire community through word of mouth and a large group of people started to chase her with sticks in their hands. They were about to beat her.

The members of CIM Amarapura heard about this incident and immediately rushed to the incident. They managed to escort the lady to the nearby Ward Administrator’s Office. There were already more than 100 aggressive people demanding her to be handed over to them. However, the CIM Committee members took control of things, questioned the lady and found out that she was there begging for food and the baby actually belonged to her. The CIM members and the Ward Administrator explained the whole story to the crowd and successfully dispersed the crowd and saved the lady. This is another example of how they managed to avert communal violence caused by a false rumour created by one single person against an innocent lady, who was already suffering so much with her husband being jailed for some reason.

Another case of rumour managed by the CIM Amarapura is an issue around a City Development Project in Shankalay Island. The government wanted to make a city beside the bank of Ayeyarwadi River, which required 2000 acres of land, which the farmers needed to sell. The City Government prepared a blue print for the development of the city. However, some of the people started to spread a rumour through various sources that the city government was planning to take over the land of farmers and that they would be displaced from their ancestral land. The farmers got scared and agitated, fearing that they would be homeless and did not know what the City Government was planning to do exactly. This news spread through
Democracy, Yatanarbon, and the Voice Journals. This issue became the talk of the town among many people, especially the residence of Shankalay Island.

The people were not sure whether the news about the city development plan and the subsequent rumours about the land were true or not. There was already a tension in the community and they started to worry. This had potential for a violent confrontation between residents of Shankalay Kyun and the government authorities, especially the security forces. CIM committee also had no clue about this news and decided to investigate.

When they contacted the City Development Office, they found that the news about the development of the island was true. They contacted the developer company directly with the help of Ko Aung Thura, a CIM Amarapura Member. The company provided the CIM Committee the blueprint of the Development plan and explained that the company was asking for only a portion of their land rather than entire farming land. The company explained their plan to employ locals for the project and that the farmers would still be able to continue to farm their land. The CIM Committee contacted the concerned ministry and verified that the project had government approval and that it would be implemented within the timeframe mentioned in the blueprint.

The Committee came back to the community and explained the whole concept of the project. They managed to help the community overcome their fear and sense of economic insecurity. After this CIM Committee intervention the rumour was dismissed, the project did not meet obstruction, and the farmers agreed to sell certain parts of land covered by the City Development Blue Print to the developer. Now the CIM members estimate that around 80% of the farmers are willing to provide their land for the city development project.

Another recent example of managing rumours in Lashio was well explained by the Chairwoman of the Network of CSOs in Shan State and one of the active members of CIM Committee, Lashio (see the box below).

“In April 2016, there was a rumour spreading through Facebook that a large number of swords were seized from a Yangon Mosque, without naming the mosque. This rumour was spread just before the water festival in the New Year. This was very sensitive timing as the water festival was approaching and some specific groups wanted to create a situation of violence during the festival time in order to get some benefit for themselves. This news was widely shared by MaBaTha members across Shan state. There was a certain level of tension and sense of insecurity among people, especially Buddhist and Muslims in Lashio. The wounds of the 2013 violence are still fresh in people’s memory and it affected people quickly as people started to react through various means. They verified with their contacts and Lashio news portal that no such incident has happened in Yangon. The CIM Committee investigated this case and found that the Facebook posting originated from a person based in Jakarta, Indonesia. The person included a photo of sword in the FB posting and spread the rumour. The CIM Committee posted a comment to the person to tell him that there is no such incident happening in Myanmar and he should not be spreading such a false news. They told him that he was potentially triggering a religious conflict and it is very sensitive in Myanmar. They asked him to delete this comment. He deleted this immediately and apologized that it was his mistake. Once they confirmed everything, they circulated the news from Lashio News, Radio Free Asia and the CIM Facebook page as well as their personal Facebook pages. This had an immediate effect as people realized that this is a ploy of some specific group to destabilize the country and create religious conflict”. 
The project has enabled the Key Community Influencers and the CIM committees to go beyond their role of rumour management and they are recognized as ‘the people to go to’ when there is crisis in the city. They have earned the credibility of trusted committees to manage rumours and false news and to resolve conflicts amicably.

The CIM Committee in Amarapura explained how they managed to solve the conflict between the squatter settlements and the Amarapura City Government, demonstrating their role as a conflict resolution platform going beyond rumour management.

There is a squatter settlement in Amarapura Township beside the industrial zone located in the Special Economic Zone (SEZ). On 15 May 2016, the residents of the squatter settlement received an order from the City Development Council through the Ward Administrator telling them to evict the area by 20 May 2016 and the city government will be demolishing the area after 20 May in order to expand the road going through the squatter settlement. There was also confusion where this order came from and who made such decision as not all of the people in City Development Council and the Political parties were aware of this. This created anger and a sense of insecurity among the residents.

There was potential chance of violent confrontation between the police and the residents should the order be implemented on 20 May 2016. The CIM Committee, which was named a Taung Tha Man Network (named after famous Taung Tha Man Lake in Amarapura) took notice of this potential violence and discussed with the Squatter settlements and the city government, including the ward administrator. They checked with the city government and came to know that there was no such order from State government in Mandalay, rather they were citing a verbal announcement from the Chief Minister a few days before. The network member decided to establish the fact behind this letter and met the Chief Minister’s office in Mandalay. However, the Chief Minister’s office clarified that the Chief Minister was only talking about managing the squatters and expanding the road without relocating the settlement. The network members discussed this with the city government and the city government withdrew the eviction order, thus, preventing a clash between the city government and the community people.

The CIM Committees in both Amarapura and Lashio organized rumour management trainings to community people, especially targeting the young generation, and to multiply the knowledge and skills they acquired from the series of training provided by SFCG and MIDO. Despite not having any specific monitoring data to demonstrate the increase in knowledge and skills among the participants, there was enough appreciation of the training by the participants interviewed through FGDs. Since the trainings were conducted quite close to the date of the evaluation, the participants in FGDs in both locations recalled the major issues and agendas discussed in the trainings and expressed a level of enthusiasm and commitment to apply this knowledge and skills while sharing news and information in the future.

A group of LGBT youth/college students said “when I receive controversial news, I try to verify it first before sharing with or forwarding it on to others or posting in the Facebook. If I knew that the rumour is not even entirely true, I post message to the person’s wall on Facebook requesting to delete such posts which might

“When someone tells or shares news without detailed information, I rather started to ignore such news. I try to verify this before entrusting it. This is what I learn from the training and I’m trying to apply it in my daily life as much as possible”. A young participant in Lashio
jeopardize the already vulnerable social harmony of our community”.

The participants said that they were not even familiar with the word ‘rumour’ and how it negatively affects our society and individuals. They said that they started to become very sensitive on such issues and started to practice the culture of verifying such news or information before trusting them and reacting on them.

Another person said, “When someone tells or shares news without detailed information, I rather started to ignore such news. I try to verify this before entrusting it. This is what I learn from the training and trying to apply in my daily life as much as possible”.

Both CIM Committees also produced sets of pamphlets carrying messages on conflict sensitive information management, especially rumours, and how to prevent them from triggering violence in their respective society. Though it was a small, one-time activity, it created conversation among people about the negative implication of rumour and the sensitivity one needs to adhere to while sharing and posting any sensitive information. The committees/networks chose strategic days and strategic locations to reach targeted groups of people. Some of the locations where the pamphlets were distributed were Thein Gyi Market, Shwe Kyat Yat Pagoda and U Pain Bridge (in Amarapura), Jame Masjid, Roman Catholic Church, and Mansu Pagoda (Lashio). All of these locations were strategic as they could reach different targeted stakeholders with the support of key influential people such as the Moulavis⁹, Fathers, and Monks.

Reflecting on the contribution of pamphlets distribution, a local grocery shop owner in Amarapura said, “I read the pamphlets and it helped me to understand not to trust every news coming out in the community from any sources, unless verified.” Similarly, a young girl, aged 15, knew about rumours and their negative implications just through the pamphlets. Her exposure to the project activities is only through the pamphlet distribution. Despite such limited exposure, she was explaining about rumour and how it affects society very well. It was quite an impressive explanation based on reading a one-page pamphlet. The effect of pamphlets was also highlighted by the religious leaders of the Buddhist, Muslim and Roman Catholic communities. All the religious leaders interviewed expressed their strong desire to collaborate with CIM Committees to spread the message of peace and social harmony, should there be any opportunities. They said that the doors of religious institutions are always open for those who want to promote religious tolerance, mutual respect, understanding, and social harmony in society.

c. To what extent was the project able to catalyse joint actions and create synergy among diverse stakeholders and influencers to reduce the violent impact of rumours and manipulated information?

Since the project was a pilot initiative and the actual implementation period lasted for less than six months (though the project period stretched to 8.5 months), there was not ample time to organize large numbers of independent collaborative initiatives and to create synergy among various stakeholders within or outside of the project activities. When all the training targeted to community Influencers/CIM committees was completed, it was already March 2016 and the CIM Committees or the networks had only two months (April and May 2016) for organizing rumour

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⁹ Mawlawi (also spelled Maulvi, Moulvi, and Mawlvi; Arabic: مولوی) is an honorific Islamic religious title given to Muslim religious scholars or Ulema preceding their names.
management. In this couple of months’ period, they have been able to independently collaborate with different stakeholders within and outside of the scope of the project. While they collaborated among themselves to organize various activities, they also reached out to various religious leaders and government authorities to organize outreach events which were not part of the project design, but significantly achieved the objectives set by the project design. Considering the timeframe, some of the activities they organized can already be considered as significant achievements. These small initiatives opened the door for future collaboration, on the one hand, and also provided a few lessons learned for the future. Following are some of the collaborative initiatives observed during the evaluation, which have the potential to contribute towards managing rumour, preventing hatred and promoting social harmony in the two target locations.

- The CIM Lashio collaborated with religious leaders/institutions (such as Monks, Moulavis, and Fathers) during pamphlet distribution to reach larger numbers of people from specific religious communities, so that they would understand the importance of conflict sensitivity of information flow and management. Similarly, the CIM Amarapura (which is also recognized as the Taung Tha Man Network) collaborated with civil society organizations and NGOs to distribute the pamphlets in strategic locations such as the Pathein Gyi Market, Shwe Kyat Yat Pagoda, and U Pain Bridge during the Kason Full Moon day. This strategic approach helped them to reach out to multiple stakeholder groups from different identity groups and to create a conversation among community people as revealed by the community people and youth interviewed during the evaluation. However, it is ‘too early and too little work’ to expect any significant results, despite being proved as an effective awareness raising campaign in both the locations.

- The CIM Amarapura has been recognized by the State Government of Mandalay as a credible civic network (despite not having a formal status) and was invited formally in the meeting of the CSO with the government after the formation of the new government. The Chef Minister of Mandalay met with them and invited them to collaborate with the government in organizing similar activities that promote social harmony and peace in the city. The presence of ward administrators and NLD leaders in the CIM committee/network has also helped them to work closely with the government. It is yet to be seen what types of collaborative activities they will organize with the government in the future. The representatives of CIM Amarapura said that they were not expecting such a positive gesture from the head of the government in the State. However, the conflict dynamics in Lashio are more complex than Amarapura and the CIM committees are yet to be institutionally linked with the government authorities. They have not introduced themselves as a CIM group until now considering the short project cycle, which was closing soon. However, they have been able to establish personal relationships with the government authorities and the local police authorities to facilitate the process of promoting social harmony and religious tolerance and addressing conflicts before they turn into organized violence. An example to demonstrate their collaboration with police was given to the evaluation team. The Chairwoman of CSO Network in Shan State narrated the following story.
A Buddhist and a Muslim youth had an argument and a fight. When the police were informed about this incident, the police wanted to arrest them both and to investigate the case. However, a physical altercation between a Muslim and Buddhist (regardless of the cause leading to this) is already a sensitive case considering the fresh wounds of the 2013 religious violence. However, before acting on the case, the police consulted some members of the CIM Lashio and sought their help on how to take this case forward. The CIM members (Maung Maung Than and Nay Myo) from Buddhist and Muslim communities felt that if this case goes to media and the youth get arrested, it might refresh the religious animosity and may cause a fresh round of religious violence. So the invited senior religious leaders from both sides sat in a closed door meeting with the youth and facilitated a discussion that helped to reconcile the situation. This news did not reach the media and social media. The CIM Lashio is proud of handling this case successfully. The Chairwoman of the CSO network claimed that whenever there is a conflict, these two members are always invited there first and many government officers turn to them for reliable information from both of their communities.

- The CIM Amarapura has organized a joint meeting with ILO, World Vision, NLD, and local CBOs to discuss the conflict dynamics of the town and how can they prevent the spread of false rumours and maintain peace and harmony among divided communities. This meeting led them to join hands with others in pamphlet distribution in different localities.

- The CIM Lashio has joined hands with the Lashio Online News Portal and Radio Free Asia, which are the two most credible news outlets in Lashio. They use these two media outlets to disseminate positive narratives as well as to denounce false rumours to prevent the triggering of violence.

- The CIM Amarapura joined hands with NLD Amarapura to organize a ‘Democracy Tree Plantation’ programme to welcome the new government. Similarly, the CIM Lashio collaborated with the CSO network of Shan State to distribute the pamphlets outside of Lashio. They spent Ks 800000 of their own money to facilitate this process. This initiative has expanded the scope of the project outside of the project target locations. This demonstrates that the local stakeholders have taken ownership of the project initiative. The chairwomen of CSOs Network of Shan state, who is also a member of the CIM committee said, “Even if the project will not continue after June 2016, we will continue to work, anyway, as a team.”

- The CIM Lashio collaborated with a Kann Let Programme-funded Center for Youth and Social Harmony from Yangon, which organized a literary talk on ‘Diversity and Development’ by bringing three top literary writers form the country. The title of the programme was Diversity and Unity: Peaceful State with a slogan of ‘One people: One nation.’ They developed a comprehensive programme package where they organized a four-day long training for community people from Lashio, 2 days of campaigns against spread of rumour and promoting religious tolerance, and a 1-day literary talk programme. This programme created synergies between the two ‘Kann Let’ funded programmes and was able to spread the message of peace and love to larger numbers of people from across dividing lines.
The Moulavis of Jame Masjid, the Father of the Roman Catholic Church, and the head Monk of Maung Shu Pagoda in Lashio have expressed desire to collaborate for similar activities in the future too. They highly appreciated the CIM Committee for reaching out to them and trying to spread positive messages of peace and harmony. The Head Monk of Mansu Pagoda was so impressed by the messages delivered through the pamphlets that he wanted to provide financial support to the CIM team to translate the message into Shan language (the earlier pamphlet was in Burmese Language) and to distribute to the Shan Speaking community. His offer for financial support is still there. However, the CIM Committee decided against taking the support from a religious leader for printing pamphlets in Shan, rather decided to mobilize their own resources to do so in the near future.

The effectiveness of the project is also enhanced by the right selection of the participating stakeholders as key community influencers and inclusion of persons from different ethnic, social, and religious backgrounds in the CIM committees as well as the community training. The project intervention considered the inclusiveness as the core of its implementation process. Even among the youth participants of the training, there were an equal number of male and female participants (44% women), not to mention the inclusion of members of LGBT community as CIM members, as well as participants in the training.

The project took specific guidance from the research findings and identified key community influencers based on the recommendations furnished by the project. This was the reason the project paid special attention in both places to bringing civil society leaders from Muslim and Buddhist religious groups and less attention was paid to other religions. The domination of religious conflict dynamics in Lashio contributed large number of CIM members from political and religious backgrounds whereas the composition in Amarapura focused on other actors such as drivers, vendors, handloom workers, and people closer to the Muslim community as the conflict dynamics in Amarapura have a stronger social component than religious one. The selection of a medical doctor who runs a clinic in a Muslim settlement, a bus driver, a political leader, a market vendor, a grocery owner, and a tea shop owner are some of those people who interact with large number of diverse stakeholders every day. Similarly, in Lashio also, the CIM members composed of a member of a Network of Muslim Community, Representative of Shan CSO network, member of NLD, member of youth organization, LGBT rights activist, freelance peace activist, local journalist, a Muslim community leader, among others, which helped garner greater respect and trust towards the Committee from all segments of a divided society. Only missing form CIM Lashio are representatives of Hindu and Chinese communities. As a result, these people are effectively working as local early warning responders to develop an early warning system based on the rumours going around the settlements.

The findings above imply that the Theory of Change articulated during the project design holds true in the current context and the enhanced capacity and mentoring of the SFCG and MIDO programme team has enabled them to self-initiate to establish a platform in the form of CIM Committees in both Amarapura and Lashio. The informally operating rumour management mechanism has not only helped them to effectively curtail the negative implications of rumour, but also helped minimize the spread of rumour as demonstrated by the number of examples from both locations. The CIM Committees have been effectively working as a credible conflict resolution platform in both of the locations. They have been spreading positive messages of inter-identity relationships and community harmony through formal and informal means and working with leaders from various religious backgrounds to promote messages of peace, coexistence, and mutual respect. However, there is not enough information and evidence as to whether the effort has sustainably reduced the inter-communal violence and mistrust in the
project locations. This needs further monitoring and continued interaction with the CIM Committee members in the days to come.

2.4 Coordination

The evaluation looked into the coordination from two different perspectives: i) coordination between SFCG and MIDO in planning and implementation of the project; ii) coordination of SFCG and MIDO with the CIM Committees; iii) coordination with the individuals and institutions that are the direct stakeholders of the project.

The coordination between SFCG and MIDO was found to be mutually respectful and supportive. There was a high level of understanding and coordination in organizing the project intervention. The evaluator had the opportunity to witness the effective coordination and smooth organization of the lesson learned workshop in Pyin Oo Lwin. Both the implementing partners were complementing each other very well and exchanging their roles very effectively.

SFCG programme team and MIDO programme team appreciated each other and expressed their desire to work with each other on similar initiatives in the future too.

Similarly, the reciprocal trust between MIDO, SFCG and the CIM Committees was found to be very respectful and mutually complementing. There has been very good understanding, collaboration, and information sharing between the programme implementation team (SFCG and MIDO), the local CIMs, and local stakeholders. Such a coordination and respectful relationship ensured smooth implementation of activities despite the limited timeframe. The programme implementation schedule showed that the activities were quite compact during January to April and despite one activity following another within a very short interval, the programme implementation went well without any challenges.

The CIM Committees were quite effective in joining hands with other stakeholders who were not the direct participants of the project. Their effective coordination and collaboration with religious leaders, government officials, and other CSO networks and media outlets has proven to be effective in multiplying the effectiveness of their work. The Partnership of CIM Lashio with local media such as Lashio News Portal and the Radio Free Asia helped enhance the credibility of the CIM Lashio’s work, because of the reputation of these media outlets among the community people in Lashio. The evaluator did not find any coordination challenges among the concerned partners and stakeholders.
CHAPTER - THREE

3. Programmatic Gaps and Lessons Learned

The pilot initiative has achieved indicative results within a very short time frame and demonstrates potential for its continuation in the current project locations as well as replication in other potential vulnerable locations across Myanmar. Despite the indicative results, the evaluation observed few gaps and lessons learned from the implementation, which need to be addressed in order to increase the effectiveness of similar initiatives in the future. Some of the gaps and lessons learned are highlighted below.

- The evaluation understands that the project is a pilot initiative and was intentionally designed for a short period of time. However, because of its very short time frame, it did not allow sustained community engagement in order to deepen the message of the project objective in the communities, which are vulnerable to exploitation for ethnic and religious violence. The evaluation observed that such initiatives are more effective if they are implemented for a fairly longer period of time so that the awareness, knowledge, and skills are saturated and institutionalized to bring sustained attitude and behaviour change.

- The evaluation also observed that the training components were important for building awareness, knowledge, and skills among key community influencers and focal points, along with few selected community members, but the trainings were not complemented by outreach activities in the programme design in order to deepen the application of knowledge and skills into strategic approach of managing information and rumour. There have been few interventions by the CIM Committees, which were taken up by the committees and were addressed most of the time in a reactive approach, but the CIM Committees did not get opportunities and resources for strategic proactive approach in applying those knowledge and skills and reach out to larger number of people to have a sustainable approach of rumour management. The trainings followed by ample outreach activities by the CIM committees, key community influencers, as well as those community participants of the rumour management training, especially young people, are expected to generate better results reaching out to a larger population. However, this gap in the pilot initiatives is well understood and provides a strategic direction for future initiatives of similar nature.

- Based on the discussion with the young participants and the key strategic leaders in both of the communities, it is observed that such initiatives need to reach a larger number of youth and key community people in order to generate powerful results. This evaluation observed that the more young people that are reached through such initiatives, the more impact it will generate in their mind, as they are highly vulnerable and are the most frequent users of social and online media.

- There has been increasing interest of community people, who are aware of the CIM committees, to join the committees, but the CIM committees are not sure whether to open the committee for further membership or not. This has hindered enhancing the credibility of the group.

- The CIM Committees were distributing pamphlets among the public without giving their institutional identity (as CIM Committee) and many people were reluctant to receive
pamphlet, which does not have an institutional ownership due to the heightened security and mistrust in Lashio.

- It was learned that the more journalists the initiatives engages, the more effective it will be, as they can mobilize media for controlling rumours and disseminating authentic news and analysis.

- The CIM Committee in Amarapura has been acknowledged by the Chief Minister of the Mandalay division and was told that it can collaborate with the government. However, they have no idea how they could collaborate with the government on these issues. A strategic guidance, in this regard, might prove to be a major boost in managing information, addressing rumours and preventing or resolving conflict in the region.

- It seems that the project team did not make enough effort in reaching another minority group, the Hindu communities. Despite these groups not feeling vulnerable, the risk associated with these groups cannot be denied. The informal conversations with some Hindu community members to find out the reasons for their non-participation in the project revealed that they were not even aware of such an initiative happening in their community.

- The project design envisioned at least three, three-days trainings for the participants on specific areas such as rumour management, news literacy and Common Ground Approach. During the research interviews and in preliminary consultations with the potential target stakeholders, they advised the project team that the 3-day training would be too long for them to attend and the project team revised the training schedule to limit it to two-days per module and provided ongoing half-day refresher trainings. However, during the evaluation, the participants said that they felt the training was too short and they wanted to learn too many things, as their level of understanding on the topics covered by the training was very low. This suggests a requirement for a careful needs assessment of the community in the future.
CHAPTER – FOUR

4.1 Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings under the three evaluation criteria and the gaps and lessons learned, the evaluation has drawn some important conclusions and specific recommendations for future reference and use.

4.1.1. Conclusions

This project was piloted in a society which was just coming out of 60 years of authoritarian rule. Further, Myanmar society is marred by decades of ethnic conflict followed by sprees (including recently) of religious violence with increased Buddhist fundamentalism and extremism, especially targeting Muslim communities across the country with the backing of the military government. With a severe lack of exposure and access to the outside world, especially formal media, social media and internet, and the community’s dependence on hearsay news, rumours have played a major role in shaping the opinion of society and the conflict dynamics in the country.

In this context, the project has laid a very good foundation for a longer term strategic work on rumour management, inter-religious relationships, and peacebuilding in Myanmar. Though small in scope and short in timeframe, it was implemented smoothly and generated indicative results within less than a six-month period, especially around building awareness and understanding of target stakeholders on rumour management, the importance of interreligious and interethnic relationships in the vulnerable society, developing basic skills on ICT, conflict prevention and resolution, and news literacy, and created potential opportunity for cooperation and collaboration between civil society, religious institutions and government agencies, including security agencies in the long-run.

Despite not having strategic outreach interventions followed by various training programmes, the participants have been able to apply this knowledge and skills in facilitating rumour management, promoting religious tolerance and harmony, and peacebuilding in the region. Besides, this project has provided a shared platform for diverse stakeholders to come together and work as a collaborative team in reweaving the Myanmar society torn apart by ethnic and religious conflict. The CIM Committees have been able to establish themselves as a platform which is ever ready to find peaceful solutions to potential and existing conflicts and find common ground among people from across dividing lines.

The project was found to be inclusive from gender, religious, and ethnic dimensions, except in Lashio where they did not include the Hindu and Chinese into the project’s fold, despite the research showing the prominence of the conflict between local community and Chinese immigrants. The gender dimension is particularly praiseworthy and almost half of the stakeholders, including those in the community training, were women. The project has also been able to generate a high level of interest and desire to remain associated with the mission of the project among all the people interviewed. Outreach activities such as the Pamphlet distribution in market places and religious institutions have gained acceptance from people, as revealed by the individuals who were recipients during the event. Based on their reflection, people are quite interested in being part of the campaign against rumour management. The
most important contribution of this project is that the people in both locations are quite familiar with the word ‘Kolahala’ and are able to speak about it confidently.

Based on the analysis and observation of the evaluation, longer term strategic outreach interventions in larger numbers of places reaching larger number of people, especially the youth and religious communities, have the potential to produce wonderful results in the future.

4.1.2 Recommendations
Based on the findings and the gaps and lesson learned identified, the evaluation furnished following recommendations.

- Considering the interest among the religious leaders and their commitment to collaboration with CIM Committees, the project needs to design activities to formally work with selected key people from across ethno-religious identities to have a larger multiplier effect.

- Rumours are part of communication culture in the relatively closed Myanmar society and it requires a longer term intervention in bringing attitude and behaviour change among people in order to sustain the effect of the project intervention. Thus it is recommended that SFCG develop longer term programmes on rumour management to contribute in building resiliency among people, and replicate and scale up the pilot project in other sensitive areas of the country.

- Considering the global phenomenon of youth engagement on the frontline of violent activities and additional vulnerability of youth in Myanmar society, as they are exposed to social media and online media, it important that SFCG and partners prioritize developing programmes that reach youth (both male and female) from across the ethnic and religious divides.

- The target stakeholders (the Key Community influencers and CIM Committees, along with the participants of local training) are not yet fully equipped with the knowledge and skills required to manage rumours and prevent or resolve conflict effectively. SFCG needs to develop stronger training programmes to build their capacity further and mobilize them as change agents and master trainers to organize localized training in the communities in order to reach out to a larger number of youth and adults to create a multiplier effect.

- Working with religious and academic institutions to organize regular short seminars with students and religious followers might prove to be an effective tool for building awareness and knowledge around rumour and its role in triggering violence in society.

- The current pilot initiative focused on working with a limited number of key community influencers and focal points who were part of the CIM Committees and it was successful in enhancing their awareness, knowledge, and skills in managing false rumours and demobilizing them to reach to larger audiences occasionally. However, if such initiatives are to have larger impact in the wider community, then there should be outreach programmes devised to reach larger communities on a regular basis. So, SFCG and partners need to develop ample cost-effective outreach activities as part of the programme design that facilitates the application of the knowledge and skills imparted through the capacity building trainings.
- The initial research and the evaluation both observed two important things: the division of Myanmar society across religious lines creates a conducive environment for rumour to spread and trigger violence (threat); and strong willingness of religious leaders in cooperating with CIM Committees or other similar platforms to bridge the divides within the society. Thus, it is recommended that SFCG and partners should develop strategies and interventions to engage religious leaders from all four major religious groups (Buddhist, Muslim, Christian and Hindu) so that the messages reach ‘more people’ through respective ‘key people’. Working with these key people might help reach those otherwise ‘hard to reach’ populations, especially in a society where at least 60% of people form two major religions still do not trust each other in the aftermath of the 2013 religious violence, according to religious leaders.

- It is recommended that formation of an interfaith network, through informal, could provide a strong and reliable platform for working in this field.

- Considering initial success in these two areas, it is important that this effort be replicated in other vulnerable areas as well as at the national level to create a national-local linkage.

- SFCG needs to develop a specific plan of action on how to engage and mobilize the young people post-training.

- The lack of proper branding for the pamphlet distribution had some implication on its credibility and acceptance in a sensitive society. Any outreach activities should be organized under specific a banner for greater credibility and to overcome scepticism in the future.

- The lack of formal structure of the CIM Committees did not prove to be helpful in organizing itself under a banner and in collaborating with government and other organizations to initiate joint actions on a larger scale. SFCG needs to debate and decide on how to take those CIM Committees forward by analysing both pro- and cons- of such an attempt. SFCG and the CIM Committees also need to make a decision about what to do with those who aspire to join the CIM Committees and contribute to achieving the mission.

- SFCG needs to reach out to the Hindu community to bring them into the fold of similar work in the future to ensure inclusion and work with all vulnerable groups living in the conflict prone zones.

- There is a need for SFCG and partners to facilitate a process where the scope of CIM Committees expands gradually so that it becomes a mass movement in the long-run.
Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Final Evaluation of the Project
“COMMUNITY INFORMATION MANAGEMENT TO REDUCE INTER-COMMUNAL VIOLENCE IN MYANMAR”

Search for Common Ground Myanmar is looking for an experienced evaluator to carry out the Final evaluation of its project “Community Information Management to Reduce Inter-communal Violence in Myanmar” a program aiming to minimize the impact of rumours and manipulated Information as triggers of violence in Myanmar.

This Terms of Reference (TOR) defines the scope of the work to be carried out by the external evaluator. It provides a brief outline of the project, specifies the scope of the evaluation, and outlines the key evaluation questions and methodological guidelines.

I. Background
1. A Project Summary
In Myanmar, the risks of inter-communal violence are increasing with the proliferation of telecommunications and web coverage. Experts opine that rumours and/or manipulated information spread via either word of mouth, or in the form of fake photos on social media, have triggered many of the incidents of intercommuned violence throughout the country in the last couple of years. In a number of cases, facts concerning specific events have been reframed and manipulated by spoilers with competing interests. With telecommunication companies envisioning 80 percent digital coverage across the country within the next five years, and with millions of new users with low levels of media literacy joining the Web, the potential for further outbreaks of inter-communal violence remains high considering the inter-ethnic and interreligious tensions prevailing in the country. While the formerly censored country opens its access to new and unprecedented information, there is a pressing need to address the low-level media literacy skills of the public, in order to reduce the spread of unverified information (both offline and online) to mitigate violence. Rumours and manipulated information have been largely unaddressed to date in conflict transformation efforts in Myanmar despite being recognized as significant factors to inter-communal violence in the country.

Considering the sensitivity of the issue around rumours and manipulate information through multiple sources, SFCG implemented a 9 month project with an overall goal of minimizing the impact of rumours and manipulated information as triggers of violence in Myanmar. Project implementation began two months preceding the 2015 National Elections that had the posed additional vulnerability to spread rumours and manipulated information for political gain. It has three objectives:

1. To increase key stakeholders’ and influencers’ understanding of how information and rumours can be manipulated, resulting into violence;
2. To strengthen the skills of key community influencers to reduce the impact of rumours and manipulated information in their communities;
3. To catalyze joint action amongst diverse stakeholders and influencers in order to reduce the violent impact of rumours and manipulated information.
The key theory of change of the project is: If community influencers, empowered by knowledge and collaborative relationships, find platforms for action, they will create spaces to challenge information, stereotypes and belief systems and penetrate echo chambers by injecting positive responses. As a result, the impact of rumours and manipulated information on inter-communal violence and hatred will be reduced.

This project proposes a skills and knowledge transfer to assist communities to analyze and deal effectively with new information, especially pertinent during the lull - the time for intervention – after an initial trigger (e.g. either from a rumour or unsubstantiated incident) and the subsequent outbreak of violence. A local to national-level, multi-pronged approach ensures the highest level of communication and behavior changes amongst the target groups. This project will provide (i) research on the impact of rumours, analysis of information and communication channels, and related leverage points to prevent violence; (ii) opportunities to identify and train key community influencers, who will play key roles of information management within their communities; and (iii) support to information management communities with fact-checking and dissemination of positive messaging from partners via Facebook and Viber.

The target groups and areas for this program are:
The initiative was piloted in two target areas - Chan Aye Thar Zan, Mandalay City, Mandalay Division and Lashio, Shan State; both areas are vulnerable to outbreaks of inter-communal violence. The consortium selected these target areas based on the following recognized factors of vulnerability:

- Multi-ethnic and religious dividing lines;
- A history of violence;
- Economic inequity among ethnic or religious communities;
- High unemployment;
- External spoilers with business interests;
- Easy access of partners due to existing activities/networks on the ground; and
- High political stakes related to the census, elections, and the peace process.

Primary Target groups included:
Community Influencers: SFCG and partners will target 40 community influencers (20 from each target location) including journalists, youth activists, women representatives from civil society, religious figures, village heads, local authorities, police, local business people, tea and Internet shop owners, and market vendors.

Focal Points: The consortium will also engage 10-20 focal points identified from the key community influencers or Pan Zagar’s networks in each target area. They will provide support to the community influencers in each target location and in turn will be supported by the partners.

Volunteers: Pan Zagar will engage with their existing networks of volunteers who are already supporting peacebuilding and information management efforts. They will provide in kind support to the key community influencers and focal points.

The secondary target group includes the 277,154 (according to Geonames Geographical Database) community members who are vulnerable to becoming victims/perpetrators of violence. The partners will support the focal points and key community influencers to reach these individuals through information dissemination in each target area.
The project activities included:

1B: Organizational Background
Search for Common Ground (www.sfcg.org) has been working in Myanmar since April 2014. SFCG’s mission is to transform the way the world deals with conflict: away from adversarial approaches, toward cooperative solutions. SFCG works in 35 countries across Africa, Asia and the US engaging in a long-term process of incremental transformation.

In Myanmar, SFCG has a multi-pronged approach to support the peacebuilding process, combining media with community peace building work and cultural expressions. SFCG Myanmar has 10 staff with a presence in four provinces across the country and works with youth, women, cultural actors, media, government authorities and other civil society actors.

2. The Evaluation
2A. Organizational Goal
SFCG as an organization is committed to conducting evaluations project basis in order to maximize the effectiveness of our programming and engage in continuous improvement and learning within programs and across the organization.

2B. Evaluation criteria and key evaluation questions
The final evaluation will be carried out on May 2016 during the last month of the project period. The findings for this evaluation include lessons learned and recommendations, which will be very helpful for developing and planning projects on projects dealing with rumours, manipulations of information and hate speeches in the future.

The evaluation will specifically focus on the following evaluation criteria taken from the OECD DACs Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding activities:

Relevance:
- How important is the project in the context of conflict transformation and promoting democratic values in Myanmar?
- To what extent were the project’s approach and interventions relevant to addressing the violence resulting form the spread of rumours, hate speeches and manipulation of information?
- Is the project adding value to Myanmar society that others are not providing?

Effectiveness:
- To what extent the project contributed in increasing the understanding of target stakeholders about the different dimensions of how information and rumours can be manipulated to cause violence?
- To what extent did the project empower and equip the target stakeholders in reducing the impact of rumours, manipulation of information and expression of hate through speeches to result into the outbreak of violence?
- How have they applied those skills in practice? Are there any examples of positive intervention of the target stakeholders in minimizing the efforts of spoilers to cause violence through above mentioned means?
- How has the project caused pro-active collaborative initiatives (joint actions) among diverse stakeholders and key influencers towards reducing impact of rumours and manipulate information in the lives of people?
What unexpected positive or negative results did the project lead to?

Coordination
- How well was the program implementation process managed?
- How was the coordination between SFCG’s program team and the partner organizations in implementing the program?
- How coherent were the activities implemented to achieve the goal/objectives set by the project? To what extent did the different categories of activities complement each other?

Other
- What potential is there for scaling up this initiative?
- What are the best practices/lessons learnt?

2.C Audience
The primary audience of this evaluation includes:
- The staff and members of SFCG Myanmar and partner organizations for drawing out reflections and lessons learned from the project and to use the recommendations for future project design, and
- The OTI, the funding agency, for assessing the effective and efficient use of the funding to achieve stated goals and results of the project.
- Myanmar Peacebuilding communities, inter-religious and inter-ethnic leaders, including Government authorities, among others

2D. Evaluation Methodology
SFCG has guiding principles for conducting program evaluations. These include: participatory, culturally sensitive, committed to building capacity, affirmative and positive while honest and productively critical, and valuing knowledge and approaches from within the context. The evaluator will meet the project participants, partners, SFCG staff and relevant stakeholders. The evaluation will be carried out in both project locations and will consist of qualitative approach of evaluation. The evaluation will be carried out with the direct involvement of Institutional Learning Team and follows systematic evaluation approach to ensure high standard and accountability towards global evaluation standards. The evaluator will develop the methodology and tools of the evaluation and finalize in consultation with SFCG management and DM&E staff. The evaluation methodology and data collection tools will need approval from the SFCG Myanmar leadership and DM&E team before launching the evaluation field work.

The evaluation will include the KIIs, FGDs and documentation of case studies, narratives, quotes, and photos as evidence of the change they claim. The evaluator will also try to trace the changing behavior of the specially selected individuals and organizations to trace the contribution of project in bringing behaviors change among major and vulnerable stakeholders

II. Scope of Work
3.A Location:
This evaluation will take place in Chan Aye Thar Zan, Mandalay City, Mandalay Division and Lashio, Shan State.

3.B Deliverables:
Within seven days of confirming the assignment with donor approval, the evaluator will submit the Inception Report, which clearly defines the evaluation methodology such as the clearly outlines FGDs and KII checklist, case study development template, and evaluation timelines with specific deadlines for each deliverables. The inception report will be reviewed and approved by SFCG Team.

The final evaluation report should strictly be written in English language and should not exceed 20-25 pages (excluding annexes). It should be submitted electronically in a MS-Word document. It may include:

- Cover page
- Executive Summary of key findings and recommendations;
- Introduction, including brief context description
- Methodology
- Evaluation findings, analysis and conclusions with associated evidence and data clearly illustrated. Use of tables, graphs, quotes, anecdotes and stories to illustrate findings and conclusions is encouraged. The findings section should be sub-divided as sub-chapters according to the evaluation criteria.
- Recommendations for the future, which should be practical and linked directly to conclusions; and
- Appendices, including methodology and evaluation tools, list of interviewees, questionnaire, and brief biography of evaluator.

The evaluator will incorporate the comments furnished by SFCG Myanmar and will submit an edited final report at the end. The report will be credited to the evaluator and potentially placed in the public domain at the decision of SFCG.

3.C Duration & Deadlines
The duration of evaluation will be a total of four weeks during the month of May 2016. The details will be worked out during March 2016.

3.D Logistical Support
SFCG Myanmar will provide preparatory and logistical assistance to the evaluator(s), including:
- Background materials (project proposal, periodic reports, existing evaluations, etc.)
- Spontaneous Translator Accompaniment
- Meetings, phone/e-mail communication with program administrators
- Identify interviewees and provide contact information
- All logistical support for the field visit, including the travel cost (local as well as international travel)
- Arranging meetings and appointments with stakeholders and beneficiaries in the field (if necessary).

Evaluator’s Role
The evaluation will be carried out by a single ILT evaluator, who will report to and work under the guidance of SFCG’s Country Director, who is also the Evaluation Manager of this evaluation.

The external evaluator will:
- Identify and define evaluation priority areas, methodology and indicators;
• Design and implement data collection;
• Analyze data and findings and prepare a report;
• Write and submit a final report;
• Make a brief presentation of findings and recommendations to SFCG Myanmar and partners.
Annex 2: FGDs and KIs Checklists

The evaluation will specifically focus on the following evaluation criteria taken from the OECD DACs Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding activities:

**Context:**
- How do you assess the current conflict dynamics (political, religious, ethnic conflict) and its impact for peace and harmony of your society?
- Do you believe the threats of rumour prevalent in your society? If yes, how frequent it is and how it is affecting your society and its people?
- How is the sense of security in your society?
- How do you compare the political and security situation before and after the election and after the formation of new government?

**Relevance:**
- In your Opinion, how important is the project initiative to promote peace and harmony in your society?
- Do you think it as a relevant work that needs to be continued in the future too? If so, why does it need to be continued?
- How relevant were the knowledge and skills provided by the project activities based on the needs of the community people?
- To what extent the project activities were relevant to addressing the violence resulting from the spread of rumours, hate speeches and manipulation of information?
- Was this project doing something new in your community that others stakeholders never did?
- Is the project adding value to Myanmar society that others are not providing?

**Effectiveness:**
- What were the new knowledge you learned from the project activities?
- In your understanding how rumour contributes to violence in your society or in Myanmar??
- To what extent did the project empower and equip the target stakeholders in reducing the impact of rumours, manipulation of information and expression of hate through speeches to result into the outbreak of violence?
- What are the most important contribution of the project to you and your society?
- How have you applied those skills in practice? Are there any examples of positive intervention of the target stakeholders in minimizing the efforts of spoilers to cause violence through above mentioned means?
- How has the project caused pro-active collaborative initiatives (joint actions) among diverse stakeholders and key influencers towards reducing impact of rumours and manipulate information in the lives of people? Do you have any examples of such collaboration?
- Do you believe the project activities contribute din increasing community awareness around effect of rumours and manipulation information in the Myanmar society?
- What unexpected positive or negative results did the project lead to? Can you give examples?
- Do you believe this project should be continued in your community and other similar areas of Myanmar? If so why??
- What are the best practices/lessons learnt?
Coordination

- What was the programme Coordination mechanism?
- How was the coordination between SFCG’s program team and MIDO?
- What was the communication Channel?
- How did SFCG and MIDO worked with CIM Committees? How did the CIM Committees coordinated with local media, civil society, Government and other stakeholders?
- What were the coordination Challenges? How did you manage them, if there were any?
- How coherent were the activities implemented to achieve the goal/objectives set by the project? To what extent did the different categories of activities complement each other?
## Annex 3: List of Respondents

**LASHIO**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Ethnic/Religion</th>
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<td>NSCSON Chairperson</td>
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**Total: 15**

**First FGD (CIM Lashio Focal Point)**

**Second FGD (Attendee of the training given by CIM Lashio)**

KII
Annex 4: Biography of Evaluator

Shiva K Dhungana is Asia Regional DM&E Specialist of Search for Common Ground. Shiva has more than 15 years of professional experience of development and peacebuilding field and seven years of experience in monitoring and evaluating peacebuilding programming in Asia. He has a Master’s Degrees in Human Rights and Democratization (MHRD) from University of Sydney and Master’s Degree in Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) from the University of the Philippines at Diliman. Shiva has written journal articles, policy papers research monographs and edited books, training manuals and number of unpublished research reports, particularly focusing on peacebuilding and conflict transformation, community security, forced migration/refugees, election issues, implementation of UNSCR 1325 and trafficking. He has contributed his articles on Journal of Peacebuilding and Development, Forced Migration Review, Philippines Journal of Third World Studies and Refugee Watch, among others. He has more than 20 publications till date. His preferred areas of research are youth and community security, women, peace and security, refugee and IDP studies, identity and violence, and issues surrounding the conflict dynamics peacebuilding in Nepal and the region. Shiva is expert trainer on peacebuilding and conflict transformation, youth and women leadership and one of the few trainers of Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) Framework in Nepal. Shiva has recently carried out evaluation on Democracy and Governance project and Countering Violent Extremism Project in Kyrgyzstan and remotely supported various conflict analysis research, baseline studies and evaluation in all seven countries of SFCG Asia Programme.