Final Evaluation

Strengthening Local-Level Social Cohesion Competencies through Training and Support

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Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in this evaluation report are of the evaluator and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of Search for Common Ground (SFCG), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) or Implementing CSO Partners.
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Thank you

August 2016
Kathmandu
## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CGA</td>
<td>Common Ground Approach</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Country Programme Document</td>
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<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>Community of Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSOs</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>FGDs</td>
<td>Focused Group Discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIs</td>
<td>Key Informant Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KMSS</td>
<td>Karuna Myanmar Social Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma Ba Tha</td>
<td>Myanmar’s Buddhist Social Movement supported by the Committee for the Protection of Nationality and Religion</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLD</td>
<td>National League for Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSAs</td>
<td>Non-State Actors (Ethnic Armed Groups and their affiliates)</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCSS</td>
<td>Restoration Council of Shan State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOT</td>
<td>Training of Trainers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOC</td>
<td>Theory of Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>SFCG</td>
<td>Search for Common Ground</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements .......................................................................................................................... 3  
List of Acronyms and Abbreviations ............................................................................................... 4  
Table of Contents ............................................................................................................................ 5  
Context ........................................................................................................................................... 7  
The Project ....................................................................................................................................... 7  
Evaluation Methodology .................................................................................................................. 8  
Relevance ......................................................................................................................................... 8  
Effectiveness .................................................................................................................................. 9  
Coordination ................................................................................................................................... 10  
Sustainability .................................................................................................................................. 10  
Gaps and lesson learned .................................................................................................................. 10  
1.1 Context ....................................................................................................................................... 13  
1.2.2 Key Theory of Change (TOC) ............................................................................................. 16  
1.2.3 Expected Results ................................................................................................................. 17  
1.2.4 Target Group and Areas ....................................................................................................... 17  
1.2.5 Primary Target groups ......................................................................................................... 18  
1.2.6 Audience ............................................................................................................................ 18  
1.3 Evaluation Methodology, Evaluation Criteria and Data Collection Tools ............................... 18  
1.4 Scope and Limitations of the Evaluation .................................................................................. 21  
2.1 Evaluation Findings and Summary ........................................................................................... 22  
2.1.1 Project Outputs .................................................................................................................... 22  
2.1.2 Evaluation Summary ........................................................................................................... 24  
2.2 Relevance .................................................................................................................................. 26  
2.3 Effectiveness .............................................................................................................................. 28  
2.3.1 Increased Social Cohesion Competencies among Target Stakeholders ............................ 28  
2.3.2 Improved Relationship between the Three Stakeholder Groups ...................................... 33  
2.3.3 Mainstreaming Social Cohesion-Sensitive Considerations ................................................ 38  
2.3.4 Formation of Community of Practice: ............................................................................... 39  
2.4 Coordination ............................................................................................................................ 41
2.5 Sustainability......................................................................................................................................................... 42
3  Gaps and Lessons Learned........................................................................................................................................ 43
4.  Conclusions and Recommendations......................................................................................................................... 46
Annex 1: Terms of Reference.......................................................................................................................................... 49
Annex 2: KII and FGDs Checklists ................................................................................................................................. 56
Annex 3: Mini-Survey Questionnaires............................................................................................................................... 60
Annex 4: List of People Interviewed ................................................................................................................................. 61
Annex 5: Evaluation Field Visit Schedule .......................................................................................................................... 64
Executive Summary

Context
There has been significant political development since the project started in early 2015. After six decades of military dictatorship, Myanmar transitioned to a partial democracy after a national election held in November 2015 which culminated in Myanmar’s first civilian led government led by the National league for Democracy (NLD) taking office in April 2016, and taking the responsibility of transitioning the country into a new era of peace and development.

However, the socio-political legacy of the country carries a complicated history of conflict, including, but not limited to, ethnic, religious, political, and resource-based violence, stemming ever since Myanmar’s independence from British Colonial rule. There have been numerous ethnic armed conflicts, since the military government came to power in the 1960s, and until recently Myanmar had the world’s longest running civil war in Kayin State. Recent outbursts of religious violence and the resulting fear and mistrust between them have deeply affected the nation’s already fragile social fabric. The dynamics of conflict remains tenuous in many parts of the country and the country faces the immense challenge of managing people’s political and socio-economic expectations in the wake of political transition. Thus, Myanmar stands at a crossroads and the action of the government will indeed determine its future.

The Project
Search for Common Ground Myanmar, with financial support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Myanmar, implemented a 20-month project "Strengthening Local-level Social Cohesion Competencies through Training and Support" from January 2015 through September 2016. The project directly engaged three target groups – government institutions at the township level, Non-State Actors, and civil society organisations (CSOs) to support them to rebuild their relationships and to collaborate with each other in order to achieve the common good and peaceful coexistence for their communities in the target areas.

The initiative complemented UNDP’s three-year Country Programme Document (CPD) for Myanmar (2013-2015), especially the objectives of Pillar 1: Effective and Responsive Local Governance for Sustainable, Inclusive Community Development. More specifically, the project contributes to “strengthened capacity of local governments" (Output 1) and (partially) “strengthened capacity of local CSOs and media institutions” (Output 2) of Pillar 1. The project design was shaped around the following three core objectives:

i) Increase social cohesion competencies (knowledge, skills, tools) among local government, Non State Actors (NSAs), which are ethnic armed groups, and civil society actors participating in development, governance, and peacebuilding work;

ii) Increase level of trust between local government, NSAs, civil society, and the communities; and,
iii) Enhance the mainstreaming of social cohesion-sensitive considerations across all sectors of local government, NSA, and civil society engagement.

Using the Common Ground Approach (CGA)\(^1\), SFCG worked with Government officers, NSA members and CSOs to first understand and honour their differences, and second, to work together for the common causes of reconciliation and social cohesion. The project is anchored in the following core **Theory of Change**: If Local Government Actors, Non-State Actors, and Civil Society Actors enhance their social cohesion knowledge and competencies through workshops, trainings, and exchange visits, then it will promote trust and cooperation between them. Improved trust and cooperation, will, in turn, support a more socially cohesive society at the township and village level.

**Evaluation Methodology**

SFCG’s Institutional Learning Team’s Asia Regional DM&E Specialist conducted the evaluation internally, in July 2016. The evaluation team visited five out of six project states (namely Shan, Kayah, Kachin, Mon and Kayin) and brought participants from the three townships from each state. The evaluation utilized Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and a mini survey for the interviewees, in order to collect data for the evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, coherence and coordination, and sustainability in line with the three project objectives. The evaluation interviewed 63 project participants (a mix of CSO participants, trainers and trainees) for both FGDs/KIIs as well as to complete the Mini-Survey. The Mini-Survey involved only seven questions drawing directly from the project indicators.

**Findings**

**Relevance**

The project implementation coincided with an important time period in the political and social history of Myanmar. The project period bore witness to the democratic election and subsequent transfer of government power from the six-decades of military dictatorship to a democratically elected government. This scenario underscores the importance of this project for the peace and social harmony in a divided nation. The participants interviewed unanimously echoed the relevancy and importance of this and other similar initiatives for the people of Myanmar. The relevance of the project is highly justified because of its ability to bring together participants from the government, NSAs and CSOs together into one training platform, which never happened in the past in the target areas. In light of these statements and the prevailing conflict dynamics, especially across religious and ethnic identities, the evaluation found that the project is highly relevant and needs long-term engagement and saturation across geographical and broader demographics of the country, should SFCG and UNDP aim for a phase 2 with a larger and sustained impact.

\(^1\) The Common Ground Approach is Search for Common Ground’s signature conflict transformation approach.
Effectiveness
The effectiveness of this endeavour has been assessed based on three objective areas and the Theory of Change articulated for this project.

- The project has been successful in improving awareness and understanding of social cohesion and other concepts among local government officials, CSO representatives and the NSA members. The pre- and post-tests conducted during the trainings revealed a significant increase of knowledge among participants (64 per cent of participants having excellent knowledge during the post-test compared to only six per cent during the pre-test). Similarly, 43 per cent of participants could list the four concepts of social cohesion as discussed in the training.

- An overwhelming majority of participants said that they had never attended such trainings. All the 63 participants reported that they had applied the knowledge and skills gained from the training into their personal or professional work. Similarly, 48 out of 63 said that they have been involved in designing and implementing activities that promote social cohesion and community harmony in their community and township.

- The project brought participants from CSOs, government offices and NSAs together into one platform, which no other trainings have done before. This is a unique achievement in and of itself in the current socio-political context in Myanmar where there have been entrenched dividing lines between all three-stakeholder groups.

- The training manual has been a useful document among participants. They have been using the manual while facilitating other trainings.

- The evaluation revealed that the project has helped bring relational changes among the participants, especially the CSOs and government officials. Almost two-thirds (62%) of the respondents interviewed said that they are highly comfortable working with the other two stakeholder groups after participating in the project.

- The project has been successful in providing new opportunities and spaces for interaction, cooperation, and learning between local governments, NSAs, Civil Society groups. 87 per cent of respondents said that they have worked with at least one other participant across the stakeholder group dividing lines after the training.

- The objectives of mainstreaming of social cohesion-sensitive considerations across all sectors of local government, NSAs, and civil society engagement however was found to be a bit too ambitious within design itself.

- Since most of the participants from government sector were junior officers and clerks with very limited knowledge and understanding on social issues, they had little influence on organisational decision-making processes to support long-term internal and institutional sustainable change.

- SFCG and UNDP Myanmar took a process-based approach to lay the foundation of the formation of the Community of Practice (CoP) resulting in a community of practice workshop, and formation of in person CoP meetings in Taunggyi and Paung townships. However, this hard work of laying the foundation of the CoP lacked strategic approach and intention on how to operationalize the CoP in its informal form and how to bind the individual and groups scattered across many states and townships.
• The evaluation team noticed a willingness and commitment among the participants, including the government officials, to remain in the COP groups so that they can learn and share things from which they could benefit.

Coordination
• SFCG and UNDP Myanmar strategically worked together to bring three different stakeholder groups together into one single training platform and Cultural Exchange Programme leveraging their different organisational strengths and relationships.
• The coordination between the CSO partners and SFCG was found to be based on mutual understanding and cooperation. The coordination between SFCG, UNDP and the CSO partners in organising the follow-up workshop was well organised.
• Most of the participants appreciated the role of SFCG as the mentor and facilitator of the programme. However, there were at least two CSO partners said that the coordination could have been better in planning and coordinating financial reporting.
• The Community Assessment, CSO workshop, TOT, advanced TOT, rollout training, exchange visits and the follow-up meeting were in coherence with each other and complemented the activities to follow each other in a logical manner.

Sustainability
• The project has developed a pool of trainers on social cohesion and various aspects of peacebuilding in all six states. Some of the trainers have a huge potential for practising this skill wherever they go, and others need more training, nurturing, and mentoring before they can act as independent trainer. The project took a significant approach in training ethnic resource trainers, of which there are few skilled technical trainers in Myanmar, a result of the inequity of educational opportunities.
• Formation of a Social Cohesion Consortium/Network each in Taunggyi and Paung Townships and implementation of community level trainings by some of the individual trainers and these networks are contributing to sustain the gains of the project for the short term.
• Since, the project lacked a clear exit strategy and post-project outlook, these smaller efforts would only work as a short-term reaction and may not last longer because of the lack of technical support and financial resources.

Gaps and lesson learned
The project was not without shortcomings or gaps. Some of the shortcomings observed by the evaluation are listed below.
  i) One of the important gaps noticed was linked to project design. The project aimed to build social cohesion competencies, relationships between government, CSOs, NSAs and communities, which was not fully supported by the design itself, because of the lack of follow up activities that allows participants to apply the knowledge and skills gained from the training into practice.
ii) The project design envisioned the formation and operationalization of a community of practice and SFCG and UNDP supported the CSOs to develop their own state based action plans. However, the state-based CSOs could not carry this initiative forward as intended. This was also hampered by a major accident that happened during the partners’ workshop (a situation beyond the control of SFCG).

iii) Some of the trainers were not fully equipped to work in that capacity. Not all of the trainers selected for the rollout trainings had enough knowledge and confidence to facilitate the training.

iv) The intention of institutionalising the social cohesion-sensitive consideration across all section of governments, NSAs and CSOs suffered because of the militarized hierarchy of Myanmar bureaucracy, which does not provide easy access to stakeholders outside of their structure.

v) The CSO partners were able to invite only a few NSA members from only the selected states (as NSAs in a few states have not signed Peace Agreements with the government and they are still considered outlawed) and they had little influence within their organisations.

vi) Despite the participants’ appreciation of the exchange visit, there was little practical clarity on the organisation of this event and it did not produce specific results that could have been linked to promotion of social cohesion.

Conclusions and Recommendations

One of the biggest achievements of this project is that it was able to bring participants from local governments, NSAs, and CSOs together, which was not happening prior to its implementation with deeply entrenched divides between all three stakeholders groups. The evaluation revealed that capacity building on peacebuilding, social cohesion, and interfaith relationships are very important programmatic interventions that could significantly contribute to the peace and development of the country. The project has made a good beginning in building inter-group relationships, collaboration through a common platform of capacity-building, exchange visits, and collaborative works at local level, and has fostered a pool of ethnic trainers. If this initiative continues for a long-term, reaching greater geographical areas and a larger demographic, this will be a stepping stone for building a peaceful and socially cohesive society in Myanmar resulting in development dividends for the progress and prosperity of the country.

The evaluation offers the following (selected) recommendations, should they wish to implement similar initiatives in the future:

- SFCG and UNDP need to ensure that future initiatives are accompanied by outreach activities and small projects that provide opportunity for the participants to apply the knowledge and skills and support a larger public engagement.
- The foundation stone laid for the formation of the Community of Practice (CoP) should accompany a specific operationalization plan and follow up activities.
- SFCG, UNDP and the CSO partners need to build strategic relationships with senior government officials and the leaders of the NSAs, should they wish to work with them in the future.
Future efforts in organising activities like exchange visits should be planned and strategized carefully so that such initiatives could produce some specific results.

SFCG and UNDP should work on developing a project exit strategy prior to the project completion so that the initiative started during the project cycle and the knowledge and skills imparted from the training will sustain over time.

SFCG and UNDP should think of saturating similar initiatives in the future across larger demographic and geographic areas, as requested by most of the participants.

Considering the sensitivity associated with religion, particularly between Buddhists and Muslims, SFCG should include in future trainings religious leaders as well as young people.

The project has been implemented in a timely fashion considering the democratic transition, where governance plays a crucial role in succeeding the transition toward democratic stability. Thus, working with government agencies and reconnecting them with service-seeking citizens should be continued.

Considering the gravity of the conflict dynamics, on the one hand, and, the opportunity provided by the recent democratic transition, on the other hand, the social cohesion work in Myanmar needs to be framed with the framework of larger peacebuilding work, with special focus on promoting leadership capabilities among youth, women, and minority groups to support and sustain community relationships and social cohesion.
CHAPTER – ONE

1.1 Context

In November 2015, after six decades of military dictatorship, and government suppression of human rights, Myanmar transitioned to a (partial) democracy after a national election, culminating with the assumption of office by a democratically elected civilian President in April 2016, the first for over 60 years. However, the socio-political legacy of the country carries a complicated history of conflict, including, but not limited to, ethnic, religious, political, and resource-based violence even since Myanmar’s independence from British Colonial rule. There have been numerous ethnic armed conflicts since the military government came to power in the 1960s, and until recently Myanmar had the world’s longest running civil war in Kayin State. Divide and rule policies have resulted in a multitude of ethnic armed groups, as well as militias in the ethnic states, and particularly along the border regions. Recent outbursts of religious violence (especially between Buddhist and Muslim communities) and the resulting fear and mistrust between these embroiled groups have deeply affected the nation’s already fragile social fabric. These dynamics continue to threaten an emerging democratic culture and process of peace in Myanmar.

The six states where the project was implemented are undergoing different conflict dynamics, with varying degrees of conflict. Each state has a strong presence of Ethnic Armed Groups fighting with the Tatmadaw, Myanmar’s State Army (particularly the Military Government until March 2016) as well as numerous militias. There has been significant political development since the project started in early 2015. The country has witnessed a historical democratic election and assumption of power by the NLD. The recent democratic transition has opened unprecedented possibilities of peace and development in the country. The Government has called for dialogue among all contesting groups. The Armed Groups’ Representatives have yet to provide concrete responses to an increasing call for the peaceful resolution of grievances by the newly elected government, headed by the National League for Democracy (NLD). The Representatives of the Ethnic Armed Groups are undergoing a constant dialogue with a government peace negotiation team led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the State Councillors. The Government of the Union of Myanmar is also striving to make the forthcoming Panglong Conference as inclusive as possible and is working to ensure a dialogue and consensus-based peace process for a smooth democratic transition and to establish a strong foundation for transforming the multifaceted and extremely complex conflict dynamics in Myanmar. They are holding multiple discussions between government authorities and political leadership, as well as the ethnic groups so that a multitude of the country’s diverse stakeholders will attend the conference and feel that they are taking ownership of the peace process and its outcomes.

Despite these positive developments in the nation’s political history and peacekeeping efforts, Myanmar still lives with multiple instabilities across ethnicity, religion, region, and social class, which creates deep divides. The religious violence, in particular between Buddhists and Muslims as well as past state-sponsored violence against the minority Muslim population, with religious hate speech, damaging rumours, and subsequent
incidents of religious violence, especially in Rakhine, Shan, Mandalay, Kayin States, have created extreme mistrust. The Christian community has also suffered religious discrimination and encroachments of their holy sites. Recent (post-election 2015) incidents of a Buddhist Pagoda being built inside their Mosque and Church compounds in Kayin State underscores the interreligious intolerance in the country\(^2\) linked in part and which outplays through the ethnic armed identity groups. Similar religious tension was observed in Kayah State with competition to build either a Pagoda or a Church in one of the hilltops adjacent to Loikaw, the local State Capital. The prevalence of armed groups' activities in Kachin State and on going war between rebel groups and the Myanmar Military in the Northern Shan State is also a cause to worry, regarding the future of democracy and peaceful progress of the country. In summation, the dynamic of conflict remains tenuous in many parts of the country. Many citizens continue to call out for the newly elected Government of the Union of Myanmar to address these in a suitably sensitive manner. The government and its leadership also face the immense challenge of managing people’s expectations in the wake of political transition. The newly established government must balance such aspirations and expectations with the availability of resources and their current ability to deliver. Myanmar stands at the political and conflict crossroads, and the word and action of the government will indeed determine its future.

1.2 The project

1.2.1 Introduction to the Project
Search for Common Ground Myanmar, with financial support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Myanmar implemented a 20-month (18 months + 2 months no-cost extension) project "Strengthening Local-level Social Cohesion Competencies through Training and Support" from January 2015 through September 2016. The project directly engaged three target groups – government institutions at the township level, non-state actors, and civil society organisations (CSOs) to help them rebuild their relationships and collaborate with each other to achieve the common good and peaceful coexistence in the target area.

The project was intended to reframe the core narratives that contribute to deeply rooted divisions in Myanmar that have often led to violence. Working with local CSOs, local government, and community members, SFCG utilised capacity development to contribute to social cohesion by transforming the way in which these stakeholders perceive and interact with people across various dividing lines, particularly between the three groups with which the project was directly engaging and which have a history of deeply entrenched mistrust towards each other.

\(^2\) Revealed and verified through interviews with multiple participants.
The initiative complemented UNDP’s three-year Country Programme Document (CPD) for Myanmar (2013-2015), especially the objectives of Pillar 1: Effective and Responsive Local Governance for Sustainable, Inclusive Community Development. More specifically, the project contributes to “strengthened capacity of local governments” (Output 1) and (partially) “strengthened capacity of local CSOs and media institutions” (Output 2) of Pillar 1.

The SFCG initiative complemented the ongoing capacity development activities being implemented by local government and CSOs with the help of UNDP Myanmar that started as early as 2013. The project was further expected to create opportunities for strengthening the interface between these two local actors. The project was conceptualized after UNDP led a social cohesion training in 2013, which led to requests for more of such trainers by the participants.

The project design was shaped around the following three core objectives:

- Increase social cohesion competencies (knowledge, skills, tools) among local government, Non State Actors (NSAs), and civil society actors participating in development, governance, and peacebuilding work;
- Increase level of trust between local government, NSAs, civil society, and the communities; and
- Enhance the mainstreaming of social cohesion-sensitive considerations across all sectors of local government, NSA, and civil society engagement.

SFCG’s various conflict analyses carried out in the last two and a half years showed that a lack of skills for fostering social cohesion among the concerned groups has been one of the primary driving forces of conflict. It is here that the challenges of decentralised government, practical resolution of ethnic grievances, and the on-the-ground realities of transitioning ceasefire agreements into sustainable peace processes need to be sensitively managed and supported. To address this, SFCG, in accordance with UNDP’s objectives, worked with the government and civil society at different levels to help them achieve an understanding of their individual roles and responsibilities in fostering social cohesion and to support shifts in mind sets (stereotypes and prejudices) towards each other.

The project included capacity building of key target groups with knowledge and skills about social cohesion, conflict resolution, governance, and human rights as well as their nexus to the larger conflict dynamics in the country. It tried to primarily accomplish this using the Common Ground Approach (CGA). SFCG helped infuse CGA in the workings of the CSOs and local government in the target areas where ethnic, linguistic, and

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4 NSAs refer to ethnic armed groups independently operating in different states in Myanmar. Some of them have already signed Peace Agreement with the Government of Union of Myanmar whereas some others are yet to do so, thus hard to access.
religious complexity provide ample fault lines for conflicts to devolve into violent outbreaks. Using the CGA, SFCG tried to navigate through conflict and identify possibilities that have not yet been apparent to the target groups. Through this method, SFCG supported the target groups to first, understand and honour their differences and second, to work together for the common causes of reconciliation and social cohesion, the content elicited and envisioned by the target beneficiaries, with the help of a conceptual framework document that was locally contextualized and a training manual developed with the aid of a local consultant and adapted to local cultural contexts and examples.

More specifically, SFCG implemented the project in a three-step process:

1. **Creating the conceptual framework and core training tools:**
   SFCG designed the capacity development programme and its conceptual framework in close consultation with UNDP and target groups. During these meetings, SFCG identified the target groups’ specific needs and any gaps concerning necessary knowledge and skills around the core subject areas. Drawing on its existing resources and other successful training modules used in similar locations, SFCG finalised the training module to suit the local context and needs.

2. **Building core competencies of partners and key target groups:**
   After the CSO partners were selected, they identified the trainers, and supported SFCG to organize and oversee the capacity development training, including the training of trainers (ToTs) and the cascading trainings. Upon agreement with UNDP, SFCG created and selected the state-based CSO partners to participate in the TOT. The post-training follow-up meeting brought together SFCG, UNDP and the CSO partners, and later the trainers to lay the foundation of creating the community of Practice, which helped to foster township-based social cohesion groups. SFCG and UNP are organising a lessons learned workshop at the end of the project period to craft some strategies for the future.

3. **Creating a Community of Practice:**
   As a third process, SFCG tried to facilitate the creation and strengthening of platforms, to provide the CSOs with opportunities to come together and share their experiences regarding their trainings on reconciliation and social cohesion.

### 1.2.2 Key Theory of Change (TOC)

The project did not explicitly identify or articulate Theory of Change for this initiative. However, the Theory of Change embedded in this project encompasses the infusion of knowledge and skills on social cohesion through Common Ground Approach (CGA) in the workings of the CSOs and local government in the target areas where ethnic, linguistic, and religious complexity provides ample fault lines for conflicts to manifest as violent fissures. SFCG believed that by using the CGA and other tools around social cohesion, SFCG could build the capacity of the project stakeholders, navigate through conflict, and identify possibilities that have not yet been apparent to the target groups.

The project is anchored in the following core **Theory of Change:** If Local Government Actors, Non-State Actors, and Civil Society Actors enhance their social cohesion
knowledge and competencies through workshops, trainings, and exchange visits, then it will promote trust and cooperation between them. Improved trust and cooperation, will, in turn, support a more socially cohesive society at the township and village level.

1.2.3 Expected Results
This project expects to achieve the following results during and after its implementation phase:

1. Enhanced knowledge, skills, and tools in social cohesion among local government, non-state actors (NSA), and civil society in six ethnic states.
2. New opportunities and spaces for interaction, cooperation, and learning between local government, NSAs, civil society, and communities.
3. Increased efforts to promote social cohesion within and across all engagement groups and local communities.

1.2.4 Target Group and Areas
SFCG implemented the initiative in six states of Myanmar including Rakhine, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Shan, Chin, and Mon. However, as advised by UNDP, for phase two onwards, SFCG implemented this project only six out of the originally proposed seven States. Four out of these six project states (Kayah, Kayin, Chin, and Mon) have ceasefire areas. Kachin and Shan still face violent armed conflict; Kayah and Kayin have also seen skirmishes in the recent past. The major target groups in these six states needed and had requested capacity building to prevent the re-emergence of violence and addressing social cohesion as one of them.\(^6\) The target groups of the other two states (Shan and Kachin) also need capacity and confidence building to reduce violence and promote reconciliation. While ensuring that coverage is state-based, SFCG reached target groups in the townships currently targeted under UNDP’s Pillar 1 Local Governance Programme.

The initiative benefited SFCG’s current interventions in five of the seven states, including Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, and Mon States, where it is currently using cultural awareness to bridge divides and promote reconciliation. During the life of this project, SFCG carried out conflict analyses, under its other initiatives, in Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, and Mon States, as well as a rapid conflict assessment in Shan State, the results of which have aided the development of the design and implementation of this initiative. And a rapid conflict assessment was carried out as part of phase 3 and 4 by the CSOs with support from Search and UNDP.

\(^6\)As per the Local Governance Programme Document of UNDP, the remote border areas (mainly populated by Myanmar’s ethnic minority groups) have higher poverty rates. These are areas, which are emerging from conflict. It states that the proliferation of civil society in these areas requires a surge in capacity development, especially to work effectively.
1.2.5 Primary Target groups  
The project focuses on two broad target groups:

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<tr>
<th>S.N</th>
<th>Target groups</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Government institutions at local level</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Non-State actors and civil society organisations</td>
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1.2.6 Audience  
The primary audience of this evaluation includes:

- The staff and members of SFCG Myanmar and partner organisations for drawing out reflections and lessons learned from the project and to use the recommendations for future project design.
- The United Nations Development Program, the funding agency, for assessing the effective and efficient use of the funding to achieve the stated goals and results of the project.
- Myanmar peacebuilding communities, interreligious and interethnic leaders, including government authorities, amongst others.

1.3 Evaluation Methodology, Evaluation Criteria and Data Collection Tools  
The evaluation was conducted internally by the Institutional Learning Team’s Asia Regional DM&E Specialist in July 2016. The evaluation team visited five out of six project states (namely Shan, Kayah, Kachin, Mon and Kayin) and brought participants from the two townships, which included one township within each state capital and one township farther from the state capital in order to bring the perspective of the participants from both urban and rural communities. The evaluation team also consciously invited participants from diverse gender, religious and ethnic backgrounds to ensure that any data gathered was inclusive and representative of all stakeholder groups.

The evaluation utilized Key Informant Interviews (KIIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and a mini survey in order to collect data for the evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, coherence and coordination and sustainability in line with the three project objectives around building social cohesion competencies, and increased trust and collaboration among the project target stakeholders, especially between the government officials, NSAs and CSOs. The evaluation interviewed 63 project participants (a mix of CSO participants, trainers and trainees) for both FGDs/KIIIs as well as the mini-survey. The mini-survey involved only seven questions drawing directly from the project indicators. It was not meant to be statistically representative, rather to get a general sense of the project participants on various aspects of social cohesion competencies in quantitative terms. The data collected through the field visit was

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7 NSAs are Non-State actors, which refer to Ethnic Armed Groups in Myanmar.
supplemented by the monitoring data (both quantitative and qualitative) collected during the trainings and follow-up visits.

The evaluation focused on the following evaluation criteria taken from the OECD DACs Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities:

Relevance:
• How relevant is the project in the context of ongoing peacebuilding and democratic transition in Myanmar?
• To what extent were the project’s approach and interventions relevant in addressing social division and lack of intra/inter-group cooperation resulting from internal conflict along ethnic/religious divisive lines?
• How relevant were the training manual and training approach to the local need and capacity?
• How did the project design and implementation adhere to the conflict sensitivity and gender balance?
• Did the project add value to Myanmar society that others are not providing?
• How timely was the project intervention considering the conflict dynamics in Myanmar?

Effectiveness:
• To what extent has the project contributed to an increase in social cohesion competencies (knowledge and skills) among local government officials, Non-State Actors (NSA), and civil society actors in the project locations?
• To what extent did the project contribute to overcoming prejudices and increasing mutual trust between government authorities, non-state actors (NSAs) and civil society actors in the target locations? Are there any examples of increased mutual trust and collaboration that promote social cohesion in the community?
• To what extent did the project empower the target stakeholders into creating and fostering a community of practice to strengthen social cohesion at the local level? How have they put into practice social cohesion competencies?
• To what extent the project has enhanced (if so) the mainstreaming of social cohesion-sensitive considerations across all sectors of local government, NSA, and civil society engagement? Are there any specific examples of mainstreaming of Social Cohesion considerations?
• How has the “Conceptual Framework on Social Cohesion” helped in effective implementation of the project? How effective were the training manual and training approach from the participants’ point of view?
• What has been the key factors driving the project’s success?
• What unexpected positive or negative results did the project lead to?
• What are the major lessons learned from this project?
• What is the potential for scaling up of this project or similar other activities?

Coordination
• How well was the programme implementation process managed? What was the mechanism for programme quality assurance?
• How was the coordination between SFCG’s programme team, the partner organisations, the professional trainers and the participants in implementing the program?
• How coherent were the activities implemented? To what extent did the different categories of activities complement each other?

Sustainability
• What steps have been taken or planned to create long-term processes, structures and institutions for the continuation of good practices? How will these promote social cohesion at a local level?
• Have new mechanisms been designed to continue any work initiated by this project? If yes, will the initiatives sustain post-project?
• Have the efforts contributed to creating momentum for social cohesion by encouraging the participants and communities to develop independent initiatives?

The ethnic and state-based disaggregation of participants interviewed during the evaluation are presented in the following graphs:

![Figure 1: No. of respondents interviewed/surveyed disaggregated by state and gender (N=63)](image-url)
1.4 Scope and Limitations of the Evaluation

The evaluation covered five (Shan, Kayah, Kachin, Mon, Kayin) out of six states where the project was implemented. The evaluation team could not travel to Chin State due to persistent rainfall and landslides, factors that have hampered the project throughout its duration. Efforts to bring some project participants from Chin State to Mandalay were not successful because the participants could not make it to Mandalay when the evaluation team would be visiting.

Further, the evaluation was limited by the amount of time allocated for each of the states for the field visit. This restriction could only allow the evaluation team to carry out one FGD and a maximum of four KIIs considering the time investment required to travel to each of the states.

The evaluation team had to depend on the project team to select participants and townships. Most of the participants were drawn from the state capitals and only a few were from the rural areas. The majority of the participants interviewed were from CSOs followed by government officials and a few participants from NSAs. Thus, the responses and subsequent analyses are CSO heavy. This is generally reflective of the final weighting of participants of the project.

The evaluation also suffered from the evaluator not speaking Myanmar’s language and subsequent dependence on interpreters. Despite the interpreter’s best effort to accurately translate what was being shared by participants, parts of it was possibly lost in translation. The evaluator has written the examples given by the participants as well as their quotes and anecdotes based on what was interpreted by the interpreter.
CHAPTER – TWO

2.1 Evaluation Findings and Summary
This was an 18-month project with two months of no-cost extension. The project was comprised of the development of a conceptual framework, CSO partner selection, a capacity-building workshop, development of TOT guidelines and training manual, TOT trainings, advanced TOT trainings, and rollout trainings by the local partners. The project also consisted of exposure visits for selected participants of the rollout trainings in different states.

2.1.1 Project Outputs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>January 2015</td>
<td>Project Kick off</td>
<td>UNDP and SFCG planning workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>January – March</td>
<td>Consultative Workshops with experts</td>
<td>(workshops held in upper and lower Burma including Rakhine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>March 2015</td>
<td>Briefings in all states</td>
<td>With government, NSAs and CSOs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>May 2016</td>
<td>Briefing of project to Ministry of Border Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>January – July 2015</td>
<td>Selection of CSO partners</td>
<td>Six CSOs selected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>January – October 2015</td>
<td>Development of Conceptual Framework and training manual</td>
<td>One document on Conceptual Framework on Social Cohesion developed with the help of a consultant, a former Searcher, now independent, who has spent substantial time in Africa with Search, and who also worked in Asia for many years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>October 2015</td>
<td>Training for Ministry of Border Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw</td>
<td>Participants from Natala from all states and regions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>July 2015</td>
<td>CSO Workshop in Pyin Oo Lwin</td>
<td>- Introduction to the Project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- CGA Approach and conflict assessment training.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Finance management training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Analysis of results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Developing key criteria – Trainers, Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Identifying Needs and Challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>July 2015</td>
<td>Situation Assessment in Project States by the CSO Partners</td>
<td>Data collection carried out by the CSO partners based on SFCG orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>August 2015</td>
<td>CSO Workshop in Taunggyi</td>
<td>Data analysis discussed in the workshop and partners’ capacity built on how to use those data in identifying training participants. Identification of key criteria, needs and challenges for project implementation together with the CSOs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>September – October 2015</td>
<td>TOT Trainings</td>
<td>3 x TOT trainings organized with selected trainers from each target State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>October 2015</td>
<td>Advanced TOT Training</td>
<td>Advanced TOT was designed based on the feedback received from the TOT participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>November 2015</td>
<td>Refresher TOT x 1</td>
<td>To support content knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>January 2016</td>
<td>Refresher TOT x 2</td>
<td>To support facilitation skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>January – March 2016</td>
<td>Roll Out Training in all Six States</td>
<td>Roll out trainings organized by CSO partners with the help of trainers identified at the end of the advanced TOT training with participants from government, NSAs and CSOs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>April – May 2016</td>
<td>Social Cohesion Exchange Visits to participants</td>
<td>Selected outstanding participants from government, CSOs and NSAs participated in an inter-state exposure visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>Community of Practice workshop Mandalay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>April – May 2016</td>
<td>Follow Up Meeting Hosted by UNDP</td>
<td>The meeting was hosted by UNDP and selected partners, participants and trainers attended the meeting along with SFCG and UNDP participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>6 September 2016</td>
<td>Lesson Learned Workshop</td>
<td>Selected participants, CSO partners, trainers, SFCG and UNDP come together to craft a future course of action through the lessons learned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2.1.2 Evaluation Summary

The table above shows that the project was training-heavy with only a couple of post-training follow-up activities. This included a UNDP-hosted follow-up meeting for monitoring of activities for partners, trainers, and selected training participants; Exchange Visits, Exposure Visits and a Lessons Learned Workshop.

This project was situated within UNDP’s larger strategic framework - built on a pre-existing framework, and with consideration for potential next projects i.e. grants. Thus, the project design was built on UNDP’s larger development strategy rather than being project specific. Success of this project can only be better understood after looking at the wider UNDP strategy. Considering the gravity of the issue addressed by the project, a design template (provided by the UNDP call for proposals) limited SFCG to innovatively articulate the project approach and activities required to fully benefit the target groups that were just emerging from sixty years of military atrocities into a partial democracy. 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/ineffective). 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>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>Highly relevant</td>
<td>Considering the potential vulnerability of the project sites, prevailing inter-religious/ethnic mistrust and lack of knowledge about the “other” population, the project justifies its relevancy highly. Further, the recent political transition brings a genuine opportunity for consolidating the peacebuilding process and project with such nature are extremely timely and meaningful in order to support the government effort in promoting tolerance, reconciliation, social development in the country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness (Overall)</td>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Since the project was unique in its nature and attempted to bring government officials, CSOs and NSAs together into one training platform (which is an achievement in itself in the past) and enhance their understanding and awareness around social cohesion and relationship building, the project succeeded in achieving its desired results. However, considering the history of conflict dynamics, complexity of the conflict, decades of military suppression, politically motivated state indoctrinated religious foundation and very little</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
exposure and understanding of the participants on peace process and aspects of social cohesion in the past, the project has not been able to lay a strong foundation of social cohesion competencies among participants.

| Effectiveness (Objective 1) | Effective  
Increase social cohesion competencies (knowledge, skills, tools) | Distinct visibility of increased awareness and understanding of the concept of social cohesion and its benefit to the community. Lack of opportunities for participants to apply knowledge, skills and tool. However, the TOT participants, especially the trainers and few other roll out training participants applied those knowledge and skills to organize trainings to community youths. |
| Effectiveness (Objective 2) | Partially Effective / A Good beginning  
Increase levels of trust between local government, NSAs, civil society | There are examples and indications of improved relationships between the CSOs and participating government officials. However, due to the presence of NSA participants in only a few states and limited in numbers, this is only partially true with the government and NSA participants. This improved relationship did not flourish at the institutional level due to the lack of senior government officials participating in the project activities. The, hitherto, prevalence of Unlawful Association Act also negatively affected to achieve this result. |
| Effectiveness (Objective 3) | Moderately Effective  
Mainstreaming of social cohesion-sensitive considerations | The project design itself was not conducive to achieving this objective. The lack of post-training follow-up activities in the project design, only junior government officials participating in the training and their lack of decision-making access and inability to influence the senior government officials did not support mainstreaming social cohesion considerations in the government offices. Although the respondents said they were including social cohesion considerations into their work, all, but two CSOS, could cite examples of how,. Although they said |
| Coordination | Effective | The coordination between UNDP, SFCG and state-based partner CSOs was found to be effective. There was smooth coordination between them in organising trainings and exposure visits, except a couple of minor concerns. The effective coordination also resulted because of the working relationship of the UNDP with Government actors and good working relationship of SFCG With CSOs and that of CSOs with NSAs. The three stakeholders |
### Sustainability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainability</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The sustainability dimension was not addressed adequately. There is no project exit strategy developed and/or shared with partners till date. The plan of creating a community of practice was limited to organising a follow-up meeting among UNDP, SFCG, CSO partners and trainers, without further build-up. The social cohesion Group formed at Taunggyi and Paung Township of Mon State has not been able to plan and implement any actions that directly contribute to social cohesion or peacebuilding.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2.2 Relevance

The project implementation coincided with an important time period in the political and social history of Myanmar. The project period bore witness to the democratic election and subsequent transfer of government power from a six-decades-long military dictatorship to a democratically elected government. The country stands at a political and social crossroads, where it may continue to move towards lasting peace and socio-economic prosperity or decline towards political chaos, mal-governance and the vicious cycle of ethnic and religious violence. The outcome depends on how the NLD government carves out strategies in the next couple of years and how the military and its political allies such as USDP and Ma Ba Tha Movement play their role in strengthening the democracy or conspiring to destabilise the country and regain power.

The above scenario underscores the importance of this project for the peace and social harmony in a divided nation. Myanmar’s society not only needs projects on social cohesion but also broader peacebuilding projects that help transform their society from an adversarial mind-set to a mutually respectful, pluralistic society. Project participants interviewed also believe that the training on social cohesion was highly relevant to their society and lives.

Participants unanimously echoed the relevancy and importance of this and other similar projects for the people of Myanmar. Almost everyone shared stories of how they were able to see things after going through the training. Many people also told stories of how they previously thought that their ethnic group was the most superior of all the ethnic groups in Myanmar.

One of the female participants from Mon State said, “Before the training, I thought that the Mon ethnic group was the best ethnic group in the country. All others are second to us. However, the
Social Cohesion Training helped me realise that there is nothing black and white as such, and no one ethnic group is superior, and no ethnic groups are inferior. It is only the stereotypes and prejudice prevailing in our society. We need to look into ourselves before looking down on others. This is the biggest lesson I have learned from this training. I am applying this learning from this training into my life. This clearly justifies how relevant this training is for the many people in Myanmar because I know many people think the way I used to think. I really think this programme needs to involve more and more people and cover as many townships as possible.”

One of the participants in Shan State said, “Our Community is highly divided. Shan State is too big and diverse in ethnicity, culture, religion and politics. There is so much we could do through similar projects on social cohesion. Even with the political and democratic transition, things are still the same. The change in government is at the higher level only. Nothing has visibly changed at the local level with same context and same people running the government affairs, especially at local level government agencies”.

Highlighting the important contribution of the social cohesion training, one of the participants interviewed in Hpa-An, Kayin State said, “I attended many trainings in the past which were not very useful for me. However, the social cohesion training was very useful for me as I can share something back with my community that relates to the problems they face in their everyday life. They directly benefit from it.”

She further identified five specific benefits from the training, which are:
- Concept of social cohesion is very useful for society, and they can benefit from it.
- Identifying sources of conflict is very useful for resolution
- Problem-solving skills help us to take leadership roles
- It also helps us to be psychologically strong
- Prejudices are nothing but the expression of negativity within ourselves that we learned from our family, community, and leaders.

Most of the participants said that this is the first
The relevance of the project is further justified because of its ability to bring together participants from the government, NSAs and CSOs together into one training platform, which never happened in the past in their community.

The participants thought that the project is very relevant considering the conflict dynamics in Kayin State. A (Christian) township administrator said, “It has been quite difficult for people to live in harmony in town, in a ward, or even in a village. The concept of social cohesion needs to be understood by everyone living in this conflict zone”. This was further supported by the FGDs participants. One of them said, “The new government comes with a motto of ‘it’s time to change’. If only the government changes and people do not change, then nothing happens. This training could be the vehicle for people to change their mind and attitudes. So, I believe this is the right time to conduct such trainings in our state.”

In light of these statements and the prevailing conflict dynamics, especially across religious and ethnic identities, the project is highly relevant and needs long-term saturation across wider geographic and demographics, should SFCG and UNDP aim for larger and sustained impact.

2.3 Effectiveness
The project’s overall goal was to contribute towards the process of mainstreaming social cohesion in Myanmar. Considering the limited timeframe as well as the vast geographic and demographic breadth, the evaluation did not, and was not intended to, predict any significant results towards this goal. However, the evaluation produced results that might have longer-term implications to create an intersection of awareness, attitude shift, and behaviour changes among target stakeholders for better progress toward a socially cohesive society in certain locations and populations. Those results will be discussed in the Effectiveness section followed by an analytical discussion on the validity of the Theory of Change articulated for the project.

The effectiveness of this endeavour has been assessed based on three objective areas and the Theory of Change articulated for this project. The following section will present findings based on three objective areas.

2.3.1 Increased Social Cohesion Competencies among Target Stakeholders
Myanmar continues to evolve after sixty years of complex ethnic and religious violence. The violence and military suppression resulted in the violation basic human rights for
several ethnic and religious minorities. The suppression from the military regime and the insecurity among the ethnic and religious minorities were so palpable that people still have very low level of political awareness, understanding of peacebuilding dynamics, and hesitate to share their perspectives. The evaluation found that most of the stakeholders were not familiar with social cohesion before taking part in the project. The project has achieved its objective of improving awareness and understanding among these groups (especially local government officials, CSO representatives and the NSA representatives, who participated in capacity-building activities and the exchange and exposure visits.)

The combined pre- and post-test surveys carried out with 1,027 participants in five out of six states\(^8\) show that the training has contributed in increased knowledge and understanding around various aspects of social cohesion concepts and skills. The combined graph below shows that 46 per cent of participants had “fair” (<5 correct answers out of 12 questions) knowledge, 39 per cent had “good” (between 5 and 10 correct answers) knowledge and only 15 per cent had excellent (>10 correct answers) knowledge of various aspects of social cohesion. However, the post-test data shows that the “fair” and “good” categories decreased by a substantial margin (“fair” dropped from 46 to 6% and “good’ dropped from 39 to 30%) whereas the excellent category increased from six per cent to 64 per cent, demonstrating a strong influence of those rollout trainings on the knowledge and understanding of the participants. This quantitative data derived from the pre-tests and post-tests was also supported by the qualitative responses listed by evaluation respondents to explain their application of the knowledge and skills gained from the training:

- Organised a meeting among CSOs
- Worked with local CSOs to organize community events
- Prepared a development plan for the township
- Mainstreamed Social Cohesion in planning works
- Writing a proposal for CSO sustainable project submitted to UNDP
- Organised a SSS Women Network.
- Organised a training for the general population
- Teaching Social Skills at summer school programs for kids
- Helped resolve demotic dispute and succeeded in reuniting the family.
- Facilitated a meeting to form a village committee
- Organised and participated in interfaith dialogue and meetings

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\(^8\) The training in Mon State was conducted without pre and post-test questionnaires, as it was not yet approved by UNDP. The result of pre and post-test only includes five other states.
gathered during evaluation interviews (see Text Box 1 for further details). Similarly, a mini survey was carried out with 63 respondents of the evaluation interviews and the survey. One of the survey questions asked the participants to write the four components of social cohesion as discussed in the training. The survey data showed that 43 per cent of people interviewed during the evaluation still remembered all four components of social cohesion, 16 per cent remembered three out of four components, and 5 per cent each remembered only one or two components out of four, whereas 32 per cent did not remember any of them. This data still correlates with the data received from the pre- and post-tests, which also shows a 49 per cent increase of knowledge from the pre-test (15%) to the post-test (64%).

Text Box: 1
During the FGD in Taunggyi, the evaluator asked the nine participants to share one new competency that they learned from the training they attended without repeating the knowledge mentioned by other participants. The following were the responses from the eight participants. Only one person could not recall any new knowledge.

1. Conflict styles and win-win approach of conflict resolution
2. Problem-solving skills and how to manage anger
3. Coordination skills and their benefits
4. Stereotypes and prejudices
5. Knowing one’s position and interest when addressing a conflict situation
6. How to manage tension
7. Project design (which was included in the training)
8. Conflict analysis, especially the problem tree/conflict tree and the stakeholder analysis

Figure 5: Participants' Knowledge on Four Components of Social Cohesion (N=63)

- Remembered all four
- Remembered Three out of Four
- Remembered only Two out of Four
- Remembered only one out of Four
- Don't Remember any of Them
The training provided by SFCG was the first of its kind for most of the participants. An overwhelming majority of who said that they had never attended such trainings about conflict resolution, social cohesion, relationship building, and governance. The mini survey data revealed that all 63 participants reported that they had applied the knowledge and skills gained from the training into their personal or professional work. The activities they mentioned are listed in the text box below.

Out of the 63 participants interviewed during the evaluation, 48 (76 per cent) said that they had been involved in designing and implementing activities that promote social cohesion and community harmony in their community and township. The activities in the list are some of those activities that directly or indirectly contribute towards this cause.

All but one participant said that that they would incorporate measures of equality and inclusion into their existing/upcoming work as much as possible. They said that even if they are not always successful in incorporating such measures, they are always conscious of this issue and raise it in all possible meetings and discussions within their organisations, or at the community level.

One of the participants interviewed in Myitkyina, Kachin State said, “I have attended many other trainings in the last few years on various topics. However, I found this training quite different in four major aspects: First, it brought participants from CSOs, government offices and NSAs together into one platform, which no other trainings have done. At least, I have not seen this to date. Second, this training dealt with the issues that so closely relate to self-respect, security and the very survival of the community people regardless their identity. Third, it uses an approach that provided a lot of sharing, discussion, and group work, rather than a classroom-based lecture model, where you tend to remember very little at the end. And, fourth, the training format that spread over six weeks provided opportunities for government people to attend the training fully. Had it been for six consecutive days over a week, it would have been difficult for [the] government, as well some other people, to fully participate”.

Talking about the application of the knowledge and skills learned from the training, one Agriculture Officer in Kayah State explained how he was able to communicate with farming groups and convince them to cooperate with one another for the enrichment of agriculture in their community (see Text Box 3).
One female CSO member in Hpa-An explained how the training on social cohesion helped her transform her way of thinking and see things on black and white. She explained, “I had a strong adversarial approach towards the military in the past because they did too many bad things such as land grabbing, abusing men and women. I hated military generals and other military officials. After attending the training, I realised that this is not going to help me. I realised that directly confronting with people and seeing things from an adversarial approach, does not bring a solution but rather deteriorates things. Through the training, I found a way not to directly confront them. I also tell young people to evaluate themselves and before fighting blindly. We need to find an alternative way to deal with them strategically”.

Participants have valued the Myanmar version of the training manual given to them during the evaluation. Many said that they have referred to this manual while facilitating other trainings. However, some trainers have reported that the Myanmar translation of the training manual has been translated so literally that some of the words are quite uncommon, and they struggle to make sense of it. They advised that the Myanmar version of the manual be revised so that everyone understands clearly. One of the trainers in Taunggyi said she failed to understand the manual in a few places and therefore struggled to facilitate those sessions. The section on conflict transformation
and human rights are confusing as many of the participants have undergone longer training on human rights and are not satisfied with the brief content covered vaguely in the training, whereas the session on conflict transformation is too advanced to understand, especially using literally translated words into the local language. However, everyone echoed that the manual, despite few complications, is still a valuable resource and will remain an important resource with minor updates over time.

2.3.2 Improved Relationship between the Three Stakeholder Groups
One of the objectives of this project was to bring together participants from government authorities (township level), CSOs and NSAs into one platform and help build relationships among them by overcoming stereotypes, prejudices, past fears, and a prevailing sense of disrespect between groups. This was not an easy task. The UNDP was working with the Government of Myanmar starting during the Military rule and has been perceived negatively by the CSOs and, of course, by the NSAs. Similarly, SFCG, as an international NGO, at project start did not have working relationships and easy access to the government. And the NSAs were hard to reach due of the nature of their confidential operations and, hitherto, prevalent 1908 Unlawful Association Act. In this case, the UNDP and SFCG complemented each other for reaching out to CSOs (by using SFCG credibility among CSOs) and the government (through UNDP’s credibility). Further, both of them worked with local CSOs, which have better access to the NSAs, regardless of whether they have signed a peace agreement with the government or not. However, even if they had a good relationship with the NSAs, they were unable to fully integrate them into dialogue process, unless they had already signed a peace agreement with the government authorities. The effort resulted in the project obtaining approval from the Ministry of Border Affairs following a half-day high-level meeting with the Minister in Nay Pyi Taw. As a result of this UNDP and SFCG was also able to organise a Social Cohesion Training for State based Ministry Officials from the Ministry of Border affairs in Nay Pi Taw.

However, the mini survey, KIIIs, and FGDs carried out during the evaluation revealed that the project has helped bring relational changes among the participants, especially the CSOs and government officials. Few examples of improved relationships between NSA members and government officials were reported during the evaluation interviews. Two such cases were heard in Kayah State (an Agricultural Development Officer building a relationship with an NSA member) and in Kayin State (a government official from the township office building a good relationship with an NSA member.
The agriculture officer interviewed in Demoso said, “I used to be questioned by an NSA Leader every time I visited the village where I was providing technical support. He even used to ask me unrelated questions like why a particular Pagoda was built in a particular place, where did I get the permission to visit the village. He used to call me the spy of the Bamar Government, as I belong to the Burmese Community. However, when I joined the training, I met the same person as one of the participants. We did not talk to each other in the beginning, but slowly started to interact and talk as we grew close to each other. We discussed many aspects that helped build relationships and understanding about the problems and challenges we face. By the end of the training, we were quite close as we were related to the same village. Now every time I visit the village, he welcomes me, supports me in my work and even invites me to his place for snacks. I credit this progress to the social cohesion training”.

Text Box 5: Improved relationship between NSA and Government Officer in Kayin State
(Narrated by the Trainer)

In Kayin State, the relationship between government officials and the members of NSAs is generally very strained. Both parties do not want to acknowledge and respect one another. When the local CSO partner organised the rollout training, they invited the government officials from the township office as well as the members of NSAs operating in the State. Since the NSA has already signed a Peace Agreement with the government, it was possible for the NSA members and the government officials to share a platform, despite feelings of discomfort. There were two participants each from the NSA group and the township administration, who hailed from Kokre Township in the state. However, they never spoke to or trusted each other as both had prejudices against the “other”.

In the beginning, communication was limited and they avoided each other as much as possible. Since the training was spread over six weeks (one day a week), they had ample time for reflection and internalisation of the trainings and other conversations happening there. Slowly, they started to come closer and talk. As the training progressed, they started to share their opinion, ideas, grievances, challenges, and many other things. These continued conversations helped them to better understand each other and respect each other. When the training finished, they had become as close friends as a result of sharing a forum over the course of six weeks. However, the trainer was still not sure whether this relationship developed over the course of six weeks would be able to overcome the long-standing prejudices and stereotypes between these two individuals representing two entirely different organisations.

After a few months of the training, the trainer needed to invite the NSA member to a meeting in Hpa-An. But, she lost his contact number and she was not sure how to contact him to invite him to the meeting. At this point of time, she remembered that the person had developed a good relationship with the government officials. The she called the government official in the township office, explained her situation, and asked if she could pass the message to the NSA member. She was not sure whether this would work or not. However, to her surprise, the next morning, the government officer, personally visited the NSA member in his house, delivered the message, and advised him to attend the meeting in Hpa-an.

This is one clear example of how the participants’ relationship are developed and sustained even after the training is completed.
A mini-survey carried out with 63 project participants, also indicates increased relationships between the three stakeholders groups. The respondents were asked how comfortable they were working and collaborating with the other two stakeholder groups, if needed, compared to the time before the training. Almost two-thirds (62 per cent) of respondents said that they are highly comfortable working with the other two stakeholder groups, whereas slightly more than one-fourth (27 per cent) said that they are only relatively comfortable. However, a small per cent (3 per cent) still felt uncomfortable while 5 per cent chose not to answer the question.

One of the results desired by the project intervention was “new opportunities and spaces for interaction, cooperation, and learning between local government, NSAs, Civil Society, and communities”. Though the results were neither fully convergent with Objective 2 (which focused on building a relationship among the three stakeholders groups) nor supported by the project design (which did not have follow-up activities to facilitate collaboration), it was too ambitious for the evaluation team to look for extensive collaboration among the project participants.

However, there are few examples of collaborative work engaging the training participants. One specific example was noticed in Puang Township of Mon State, where the Social Cohesion Group formed with the pro-active leadership of the trainer, which involved around 40 training participants from the township. The group explained how they came together as a group to collaborate with the Township Transportation Department to address the drinking water shortage in one of the villages within the township (See text box 6).
The Social Cohesion Group in Paung Township also reported about holding a meeting with Parliamentarians and state ministers to discuss various issues facing their communities. They met with the Members of National Parliament Representing Mawlamyine, and Member of State Parliament representing Paung Township (who were former leaders of CSOs in Mon State) and the State Minister to discuss health service challenges, land conflicts, and access to education.

The groups also organised training for community people, where they trained 15 participants from the Paung Township. The members of the groups voluntarily facilitated the training, and the logistics were provided by the CSO partner, MSDN, in Mon State.

**Text Box 6: Collaboration among participating stakeholders to address drinking water scarcity**

When the Social Cohesion Training was completed in Paung Township of Mon State, the organizer proposed forming a Social Cohesion Group involving participants from the government and CSOs (there were no NSA participants). The group endorsed this proposal, and they formed an informal group called “Paung Social Cohesion Group”. The trainer was very active and she continued to touch base with the participants. In one of the meetings, they discussed the problem of drinking water scarcity in one of the villages in the township. They discussed this problem and decided to approach the Transportation Department. The meeting was very good and the Transportation Department provided a truck for ferrying water from the nearby rivers to supply the draught-affected village. The members of the Social Cohesion Network worked voluntarily and this collaboration helped the villagers meet their drinking water needs. The Transportation Department was also very happy that they were able to contribute to meet the needs of the affected community. They informed the Social Cohesion network that they were willing to provide the truck for future similar work as long as they inform the department three days in advance so that they could get permission from the senior officials. This is one example between CSOs and Government Departments that resulted as the byproduct of the training.

Similarly, the participants were asked through the mini survey that if they had done any sort of collaboration with other stakeholders. A large majority of respondents (87 per cent) said that they have worked with at least one other participant across the stakeholder group dividing lines after the training. However, in the lack of specific examples, it is difficult to say whether these collaboration were contributing towards promoting social cohesion or not. Only 10 per cent of participants surveyed said that they have not collaborated with anyone after the training. This data cannot be generalised, but it does give an indication of increased interaction and cooperation among CSOs and government officials, as demonstrated by the evidence generated through KIIs and FGDs.
Despite not demonstrating extensive collaboration and cooperation across stakeholder groups, there are a few locally driven initiatives, which could be sustained with some technical support from SFCG even if the project formally ends.

However, the objectives of enhancing the level of trust between the community and the local government, civil society, and NSAs in a larger context was successful, the objective of mainstreaming social cohesion was too ambitious and was not supported by the project design which did not plan any follow-up activities to ensure community engagement. However, the fact the training platform provided them with opportunity to connect with ‘other’ stakeholders is a significant achievement in itself, which opened the door for interaction and increased trust among those specific individuals. Further, some indirect benefits such as the drinking water supply to the draught-hit communities by the Paung Social Cohesion Group in Paung Township were noted. No other visible sign of benefit reaching to the communities were reported during the evaluation.

The exchange visit was appreciated by the participants who took part in it. Most of the participants interviewed said that they enjoyed the visit as they got to know many people from different backgrounds, cultures, and areas. The exchange visit was principally guided by contact theory. It was reported by SFCG program team that the exchange visit illustrated how the depth of the relationships developed. There were requests coming from participants to spend time together outside the classroom and to explore. These are all indicators of individuals wanting to learn about the other. The participants did not articulate this well during the evaluation.

I met Jessica from Shan State Army in the training. However, we were not close enough during the training. When I participated in the exchange visit, Jessica was also part of the training. The visit helped us become closer and we became friends.

-A female participant in tangy.

One of the government officers in Mytkyina (Kachin State) said, “I got a chance to participate in the exchange visit, and I liked it very much. It provided me with the
opportunity to meet with many participants from different regions, diverse language groups, different cultures, faiths, and religions. It is really important that we interact with each other and understand each other well because we live in a multicultural society. This was one of the right opportunities for me to apply my knowledge and skills with many of the people that I never met before”.

Similar stories were told by a number of participants of the exchange visit including those from NSAs. These corroborations indicate that the exchange visit was helpful to building relationship among people from different geographical spaces with different sociocultural identity.

2.3.3 Mainstreaming Social Cohesion-Sensitive Considerations
One of the objectives of the project was to enhance the mainstreaming of social cohesion-sensitive considerations across all sectors of local government, NSAs, and civil society engagement (through CSOs). As mentioned in the previous section, this objective was also a bit too ambitious in the lack of supporting activities to institutionalise the social cohesion considerations. Despite a significant number of CSOs from all six states participating in the project activities, especially the trainings, none of the CSOs were able to formally mainstream the social cohesion considerations in their work. All the CSO representatives and programme coordinators interviewed reported successful completion of trainings and the exchange visits, however, their explanation did not move beyond incorporating their learning into programming so that every action they do includes the social cohesion considerations automatically. This is probably too early to expect them to do so as they have not had enough opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills about social cohesion into their organizations work. Considering that the concept peacebuilding, conflict transformation and social cohesion is quite new, it might take relatively longer time for those CSOs to proactively integrate social cohesion sensitive considerations into their organizational work. However, there are a few examples of participants being more respectful to government officers and people from other ethnicities and religions as well as having a more positive outlook towards others and being self-reflective, but no specific mention of institutionalisation of any aspects of social cohesion considerations in their organisational work.

The case is the same for the government officers. Most of the participants were junior officers and clerks with very limited knowledge and understanding on social issues. They had little influence on organisational decision-making processes as the administrative bureaucracy is power-centric and hierarchal and the senior officers did not even fully communicate with the juniors, thanks to a legacy of decades of military autocracy. Some of the Township Planning Officers mentioned that they talked about what they learned from the training during the Township Development Plan formulation, but no other significant steps were highlighted. The evaluation noticed that there were strategic weaknesses with engaging government agencies in this project. The CSO partners did not engage with the senior officers well in advance so that they understood the project objective, take ownership of the intervention, and assign senior officials to participate in the trainings. The interviews revealed that this is a larger cultural and political challenge in Myanmar as the senior government officers are hard to reach for
most of the people outside government mechanisms, including those from CSOs. As a result, most of the senior officials did not know the importance of the project activity and sent their junior officials just to respond to the request of the respective CSOs. The evaluator felt that had the project engaged with the government agencies through a strategic approach and convinced them that the presence of senior officials in the training would have brought slightly bigger (if not more) influence in government plan and programmes. However, the evaluator also realizes that it is a daunting task for both CSOs and SFCG in the prevailing context, where the government bureaucracy is still operating with militarized hierarchy.

The presence of the NSA members was very limited in the training as only 36 (20 male/16 female) NSA members attended in some of the states where they had signed a Peace Agreement with the government. The evaluator managed to talk to only three of them (one each in Kayah, Shan and Hpa-An). However, their small presence, lack of exposure to such issues and concepts, and less influence in decision-making also did not help to achieve the objective. One NSA participant in Hpa-An said, “I am controlled by my organisation, and they watch me very closely and monitor my work like a spy. My organisation is monitoring how I am doing, where I am going and what I am doing. If they notice anything suspicious or if they did not like anything I do, I will be in big trouble within my organisations. So, I keep quiet most of the time, and I could not actively participate in the training. Rather, listened to the conversation silently. I cannot closely engage in any work, especially work that involves government and other civil society actors. This is risky for me. My senior officers mostly deal with the government. I do not get involved in any dealing with government officers and organisational decision-making”. The three NSA participants interviewed during the evaluation were not senior within the organisation and could not contribute to mainstreaming social cohesion considerations within an organisation that has recently signed a Peace Agreement with the government and has a long history of violent war. Within an organization that operates through militarized hierarchies, it is always difficult to integrate any initiatives coming out of their tightly controlled structure. However, they could recall the knowledge they learned from the training, but clearly expressed that they have not gotten any chance of applying that knowledge in institutional practice. However, there were minor examples of applying those concepts in personal lives.

2.3.4 Formation of Community of Practice:
UNDP Myanmar and SFCG wished to form a community of practice on social cohesion in the six states and the townships. According to UNDP Myanmar, “Community of Practice (CoP) is attributed to an informal group of people who come together around a shared craft, skill-set, or interest and continue learning through regular contact. CoPs usually serve as platforms for people to share knowledge in order to influence practice, with the act of learning itself often an unintentional consequence of social interaction. As such, real-time and virtual CoPs are being frequently used in the development sector to facilitate knowledge-sharing”. UNDP and SFCG Myanmar had a noble intention of

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creating a Community of Practice, as a by-product of this project initiative and this could have contributed in promoting a socially cohesive society and social and political reconciliation at various levels with proper mobilisation of the CoP members in the six states. In order to fulfil this noble intention, SFCG and UNDP Myanmar took a process-based approach (see full process description on Annex 6) to lay the foundation of the formation of the CoP. The process looks very impressive and could have resulted into a strong operational CoP by now. The evaluation team commends the effort made by the UNDP, SFCG, and other partners to achieve this feat. However, this hard work of laying the foundation of the CoP lacked strategic approach and intention on how to operationalize the CoP in its informal form and how to bind the individual and groups scattered across many states and townships. An example of strategic approach could include (not limited to) Probably a formal announcement of the formation of such a COP at state level or Township level and series of activities to ensure community engagement, like meetings, interactions, and other activities in religious places, which do not incur cost.

SFCG’s Head of Programmes reported that they had formed a Facebook Group on Social Cohesion, which SFCG administers. However, most of the participants interviewed in the five states did not know about the existence of such an online platform. Most of them said they are interested in joining such a group, if they are informed of such initiatives. SFCG should have communicated this to all the participants as soon as it was created and invited them to join this platform. It was later informed by SFCG that the Facebook page was intended to the trainers only, and not the participants.

However, two locally initiated CoPs were reported during the evaluation, one in Taunggyi (Social Cohesion Consortium) and the other in Paung Township of Mon State (Social Cohesion Network). The first was proactively facilitated by the CSO partner, RCSS, whereas the latter was facilitated by the trainer out of her commitment to do something for her community. Despite the presence of the two CoPs in two different places, their focus has not been on promoting social cohesion. The first is focusing more on environmental issues, on which the CSO in Taunggyi has expertise, and the second is focusing on community development work, which they think is the major
problem of their community. The evaluation team noticed a willingness and commitment among the participants, including the government officials, to remain in the group so that they can learn and share many things from which they could benefit. However, despite not being able to operationalize the CoP until now, SFCG and UNDP has a good opportunity during the Lessons Learned Workshop, where they can develop strategies, mechanisms, and processes to operationalize the CoPs at the national level as well as the state level. This could be a huge opportunity to sustain the results of the entire project beyond the life of the project.

2.4 Coordination

SFCG and UNDP Myanmar strategically worked together to bring three different stakeholder groups together into one single training platform and cultural exchange programme. UNDP Myanmar, with its experience in working with the Myanmar Government and its power-centric Bureaucracy, collaborated with SFCG, which had built a good reputation and relationship with the CSOs in Myanmar to implement the project. While UNDP did not have strong penetration among CSGs in Myanmar, SFCG did not have enough credibility within the government circle. So these two organisations collaborated and complemented each other to lay a strong project implementation platform where they can use their positive influence on multiple stakeholders to bring them together. Highlighting the importance of the collaboration and coordination of UNDP and SFCG in this project, one of the participants said, “The success of this project lies in the fact that it was able to bring together participants from CSOs, NSAs and government officials, which was unthinkable before this project”. The strategies of using organisational influences on different stakeholders to bring them together on one platform and build their capacity to promote understanding and relationships amongst themselves to overcome stereotypes and prejudices against each other.

The coordination between the CSO partners and SFCG was found to be based on mutual understanding and cooperation. The SFCG Programme Manager, along with his team, coordinated well with UNDP as well as the implementing CSO partners in organising the community assessments, workshops, TOTs and rollout trainings at township level. Similarly, the coordination between SFCG, UNDP and the CSO partners in organising the follow-up workshop was well organised. All three stakeholders were found to be complementing each other based on their expertise and credibility among different target stakeholder groups.

Most of the participants appreciated the role of SFCG as the mentor and facilitator of the programme. However, there were at least two CSO partners said that the coordination could have been better in some of the aspects, in some of the smaller planning and financial guidance.

One of the CSO partners in Shan State said, “SFCG gives short notice for organising activities. We did not get enough time for preparations. The instructions were not very clear, and the detailed agenda was not provided on time. Hasty Planning negatively affects programme quality. When we worked with other organisations in the past, they had clear agendas”. This gives a message that there was lack of clarity on whether
SFCG based in Yangon or the locally based CSO partner takes a leadership role in developing activity agendas.

The CSO partner in Kayin State said, “We did not get clear instructions and guidance on financial record keeping and reporting. We were required to submit a monthly financial report. We wrote those reports in our own format and submitted to SFCG, but we never got feedback from SFCG finance team. I even went to the Yangon Office and met the then Finance Manager but could not get proper help.” However, SFCG said that they provided a finance training and went through the format with them at the first CSO workshop. Despite SFCG holding finance reporting sessions at the first CSO workshop, the CSO partners were still confused with financial reporting process and systems. Despite a general praise for the SFCG coordination and planning, these were some smaller, yet very important, pieces of work that SFCG could have planned and delivered better. SFCG should take this as a lesson learned for the future.

The Community Assessment, CSO workshop, TOT, advanced TOT, rollout training, exchange visit and the follow-up meeting were in coherence with each other and complemented the activity to follow in a logical manner. However, there was almost an abrupt end after the rollout training in the lack of any follow-up activities after the training where the participants could have got some opportunities to practice the knowledge and skill learned from the training. Despite the follow-up activities not included in the project design due to its restricted template, SFCG, UNDP and CSO partners could have worked together to identify a few follow-up activities without any major cost implications. There were only a few community-level trainings organised by the CSO partners and trainers, which is not significant enough to support the sufficient application of knowledge into practice. Although, the training manual was designed to put knowledge into practise through homework assignments, which were not always assigned and practiced.

2.5 Sustainability

The sustainability dimension of this project links with objective three and the intention of forming a Community of Practice after the completion of the project. The evaluation noticed that the project has developed a pool of trainers on social cohesion and various aspects of peacebuilding in all six states. The evaluation found that there is a mixed group of trainers. Some of them have a huge potential for practising this skill wherever they go, and others need more training, nurturing, and mentoring before they can act as trainers independently.

The Taunggyi workshop of CSO partners in August 2015, the TOT, Advanced TOT, and the follow-up meeting to consolidate the COP all contributed to the sustainability dimension of the project. However, SFCG and UNDP, until the time of evaluation, have not come out with a project exit strategy to consolidate these multiple facets of the project that could have collectively contributes in developing a clear, sustainable mechanism to continue the gains of the project in the post-project period. There is still potential for this as SFCG and UNDP could still devise a project exit strategy that would
articulate clear outlines on how the project’s achievements could be mainstreamed and operationalised in the future.

However, the project evaluation team acknowledges that the efforts in Taunggyi to form a Social Cohesion Consortium (see text box on this consortium above in page 36), formation of Social Cohesion Network in Paung Township in Mon State and community level training organised by some individual trainers and these networks are contributing (directly/indirectly) to sustain the gains of the project for short term. However, in the lack of clear exit strategy and post-project outlook, these smaller efforts would only work as a short-term reaction and may not last longer because of the lack of technical support and financial resources. For example, the Consortium in Taunggyi is collecting 1,000 KYs from each member during each monthly meeting, but there is no long-term commitment from all members to continue to contribute to this amount. Similarly, in the lack of clear technical support and advice, these groups have not been able to do any work that contributes towards promoting social cohesion in society, despite having so much opportunity to work across religious, ethnic, and governance divides in each state. Even the Facebook group formed at Yangon level has not been shared with the participants effectively as most of the people interviewed were unaware of such a platform. A Viber group was formed among the Trainers, which they occasionally use for sharing news and information among themselves.

3 Gaps and Lessons Learned
The project has been successful in generating many interesting results in building awareness and knowledge around social cohesion, facilitating the process of relationship building and enhancing trust among CSOs, government officers and NSAs who participated in the trainings and the exchange visits. There have been ample stories and examples about how these differing stakeholder groups shifted their perception and attitudes about others and how they were able to overcome prevailing prejudices and stereotypes. On top of all these achievements, the biggest success of this project is that it successfully brought together government agencies, CSOs, and NSAs together into one platform and learning and sharing and opened a door for further cooperation and collaboration.

However, the project was not without shortcomings or gaps. Some of the shortcomings observed in the evaluation are listed below.

   vii) One of the important gaps noticed was linked to project design. The project aimed to build social cohesion competencies, relationships between government, CSOs, NSAs and communities was not fully supported by the design itself. The training programmes were not supported by the follow-up activities to allow participants to apply the knowledge and skills imparted in the trainings, and the learning was limited in the awareness and general understanding about social cohesion concepts and has not been able to contribute in increased social cohesion competencies, which need strong application and practice. One important lesson learned here is how important it is to be mindful in linking the project objectives and results into the project activities and to see the gap beforehand. Another takeaway FROM this project is that capacity-building alone does not produce
desired results in social change programming. They need to be accompanied by activities that provide participants with opportunities to apply knowledge and skills gained from the capacity-building events into practice.

viii) The project design envisioned the formation and operationalisation of a community of practice. There was preliminary groundwork carried out including building the capacity of the target stakeholders, organising exchange visits, and providing a social cohesion training manual in Myanmar language. SFCG is still working on translating those manuals into two regional languages as requested by CSOs. SFCG and UNDP also organised a follow-up meeting to bring selected participants, trainers, and CSO partners together to reflect on the whole process and strengthen the concept and institutionalisation of community practice. SFCG reported that they worked with State based CSO partners to develop action plans. However, this did not come out in the interviews with the CSO partners during evaluation. Thus, the plan to operationalise the community practice and the noble intention of CoP remained in the abstract form only, and no further development has happened. Even the existence of the social cohesion Facebook page is not communicated to the participants at the township level. It is important to devise a strategy beforehand, when the project wants to achieve something specific.

ix) Some of the trainers were not fully equipped to work in that capacity. Not all of the trainers selected for the rollout trainings had enough knowledge and confidence to facilitate the training. One of the trainers said, "I myself am not clear on many contents included in the manual, especially human rights, governance, conflict transformation, etc. and I was not able to describe these things in the training comprehensively. I had very limited capacity as a trainer." She further said, "I had some training experiences in the past too. When I facilitated the training in Hpa-An, I was a bit worried thinking that some senior government officials could join the training. But, to my relief, only junior officers from the government joined the training and I managed to facilitate the training without any challenge."

x) The project had the intention of institutionalising the social cohesion-sensitive consideration across all section of governments, NSAs and CSOs. However, this intention suffered by two major facts. First, the CSO partners did not work out strategies and advanced grounds work to introduce the project to senior government officials and get their buy-in of the project to ensure they would participate in the trainings and exchange visits. However, most of the CSO participants took an informal approach to inviting government officials, and most of the officers sent junior officers or office clerks to participate in the trainings. Many of them did not even have a basic understanding of social issues. Their ability to analyse the social, political and conflict dynamics were almost zero as they had spent their professional life working under military rule and following order from 'above'. Their professional lives were quite mechanical and therefore, they could not contribute to or absorb much from the training. Their participation was limited to building personal relationships with few other participants, but they didn’t contribute to influencing the decision-making process within their institutions. Thus, the project’s intention of incorporating social cohesion-sensitive consideration into programming of government agencies did not materialise.
xi) Similarly, the CSO partners were able to invite only a few NSA members from only the selected states (as NSAs in a few states have not signed Peace Agreements with the government and they are still considered outlawed). The evaluator was able to interview only three junior individuals from NSAs in Taunggyi, Demoso and Hpa-An. They said, their influence within their organisations was very limited, and they were not in a position to influence the decision aiming process within their organisation. Their participation was limited to gaining some understanding social cohesion and building personal relationships with few participants, both government and CSOs. This was also not easy for them as their participation in this training was also closely scrutinised by their organisations. One participant said, “My organisation was closely monitoring me and I could not actively participate in the training and engage in the discussion as I was always scared to express my opinion”. Had the CSOs built a rapport with leadership of concerned NSAs, the participants would have been in a position where they could have actively participated and brought different perspective in many of the discussions.

xii) The evaluation did not encounter any specific examples or evidence of incorporating social cohesion considerations by the CSO partners as well as other participating CSOs. They reported having better understanding of social cohesion and contributing to addressing some social problems such as the water crisis, resolving some domestic and community conflicts, and organising meetings. They did not mention any effort in the institutionalisation of social cohesion considerations into their organisational approach and programming.

xiii) When SFCG and UNDP, along with local CSOs, help build the capacity of CSO partners and other local stakeholders, they should have developed mentoring mechanisms and follow-up mechanisms alongside them. This was required in order for the results of the initiatives to be sustainable.

xiv) The exchange visit was appreciated by the participants because it helped them to see new places and meet new people. However, there was not practical clarity on the organisation of this event and it did not produce specific results that could have been linked to promotion of social cohesion.
4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The project was a unique initiative in the Myanmar Context. No other organisations were found to be working on the broader concept of social cohesion, except a few organisations implementing some projects around peacebuilding and inter-faith relationships. Since Myanmar was ruled by its military for the last six decades and people especially minority ethnic and religious groups) were living under suppression and a strong sense of insecurity, concepts around peacebuilding and social cohesion were unknown for most of the people, regardless of who they are. Further to this, the state-sponsored religious indoctrination, strong favouritism for one religion, and a high level of discrimination against religious minorities have created strong divides and of mistrust among people from all identity groups. The presence of armed ethnic groups and their continued war with the State Military have contributed to human rights violations of minorities and against women -- a symptom of a regressive society. In addition, the Buddhist-Muslim violence, atrocities against Muslim populations, and forceful encroachment onto the holy places of minority religions by the proponents of majority religions have sharpened the divide deeper into the ordinary people.

The long-term military dictatorship also alienated the government bureaucracy and its officials from the reach of ordinary people. People have lost trust towards government institutions and the government officials also do not find themselves connected to people who they are supposed to be serving. The project aimed at bridging this gap and helping build relationships through the project. However, the project was implemented in such a crucial time period of the political history of the country, where the country and its leadership is gearing up towards consolidating the democratic principles and values in governance and leadership, addressing all long-standing ethnic and religious grievances, and carefully curtailing any sorts of extremism and violent behaviour. This project lays the cornerstone for such work by working with communities and groups, which are setting high expectations for the new government and its leadership.

One of the biggest achievements of this project is that it was able to bring participants from local governments, NGAs, and CSOs together, which was not happening prior to its implementation. It is not possible for a project to bridge such a huge and long-standing gap, but, it has been able to make a beginning, which could be taken forward with larger initiatives.

The project revealed that capacity-building on peacebuilding, social cohesion, and interfaith relationships are very important programmatic interventions that could significantly contribute to the peace and development of the country. However, they need to be accompanied by outreach activities that engage the participants and the general public so that the trickle-down and multiplier effects contribute to peace writ large.

Despite not being able to develop a higher level of social cohesion competencies among the target stakeholders, the project has successfully enhanced awareness and understanding of participating stakeholders on peacebuilding skills and tools and social cohesion concept and its larger role in individual and community life.
SFCG and state-based CSOs have established their relationship with government agencies and officials for future collaboration and coordination. They have alumni of this project in many government offices, even if they are juniors. This will provide easy access to these organisations and the government in the future. These people could play a role of facilitators within their organisations.

Further to this, approximately 1,500 participating stakeholders from across six states have been able to understand each other and build personal relationships that they can cultivate further in the future. This is highly significant in the prevailing Myanmar context. This is particularly noteworthy because, before the implementation of this project, most of the people did not imagine that a government officer and an NSA member could become friends. There are examples where that not only become friends, but are also helping each other in accomplishing their professional work and transforming their personal interactions.

Within a short timeframe of 18 months, it is not practical to expect a high level of collaborative works between these stakeholders. However, a few initiatives have been already started, and these have already helped them to understand that collaboration is possible, despite their different personal and professional identities, and such collaboration can yield positive results for greater common good in their community, township and state.

In summary, the project has made a good beginning in building inter-identity relationship, collaboration through a common platform of capacity-building, exchange visits, and collaborative works at local level. If this initiative continues long-term, reaching greater geography and larger demography, this will be a stepping stone for building a peaceful and socially cohesive society in Myanmar, where everyone understands and respects everyone and results into yields development dividends for the progress and prosperity of the country.

The evaluation offers the following recommendations, should they wish to implement similar initiatives for the future:

- **SFCG and UNDP need to be mindful of project design to ensure that the activities planned for the project directly contribute to the achievement of the set objectives and desired results. Future initiatives should accompany enough outreach activities and small projects that provide opportunity for the participants to apply the knowledge and skills and ensure large public engagement. This ensures that the benefits reach all desired direct and indirect stakeholder and contributes to achieving the long-term goal.**
- **The training manual translated into Myanmar’s languages should have been pilot-tested before actually using in the rollout trainings. The future plan to translate the manual into other regional languages should follow the process of pilot-testing before sharing with wider audiences.**
• SFCG and UNDP should have invested a little more in building the capacity of implementing CSO partners so that they could have played a pivotal role in organising follow-up activities at township level, forming informal network among training participants, and sustaining the momentum generated through the training and exchange visits.

• Future efforts in organising activities like exchange visits should be planned and strategized carefully so that such initiatives could produce some specific results, which did not happen in this case.

• SFCG and UNDP should have better planned the Community of Practice (CoP) envisioned through this project. The project worked with such a large group of people, many of whom did not even hear the concept of social cohesion before participating in the training. Merely laying the foundation stone for such work does not produce results unless accompanied with specific plan and activities unless it is institutionalised.

• SFCG, UNDP, and the CSO partners should have developed concrete strategies to get better buy-in from the senior government officials and the leaders of the NSAs. In the future, it is important that the project team develops concrete strategies to establish relationships with the hard-to-reach stakeholders well in advance while explaining the project objectives and activities and the potential benefit from the project clearly so that they will understand it well and take ownership of it.

• SFCG should work on developing a project exit strategy before the last date of the project so that the initiative started during the project cycle and the knowledge and skills imparted from the training will sustain over time.

• As requested by many, such initiatives should aim for reaching wider geography and larger demography so that the objective of bringing individual and relational transformation among larger mass can be achieved.

• Considering the sensitivity associated with religion, particularly between Buddhist and Muslim religious followers and political manipulation of religion, social cohesion or peacebuilding programming should develop specific activities to address the interfaith dynamics. Activities like interfaith dialogue among religious leaders as well as young people, capacity IEC campaign on religious tolerance at a mass level such as schools, colleges and religious places and respect for holy sites could be effective tool for promoting social cohesion.

• The project has been implemented in a timely fashion considering the democratic transition, where governance plays a crucial role in succeeding the transition toward democratic stability. Thus, working with government agencies and reconnecting them with service-seeking citizens should continue.

• Considering the gravity of the conflicts dynamics, on one hand, and, the opportunity provided by the recent democratic transition, on the other hand, the social cohesion work in Myanmar needs to be framed with the framework of larger peacebuilding work, with special focus on promoting leadership capabilities among youth, women, and minority groups.
ANNEXES

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Final Evaluation of the Project
“Strengthening Local-level Social Cohesion Competencies through Training and Support (SLSC)”

Search for Common Ground Myanmar is looking for an experienced evaluator to carry out the Final evaluation of its project “Strengthening Local-level Social Cohesion Competencies through Training and Support (SLSC)” a programme aiming to contribute to the process of mainstreaming Social Cohesion in Myanmar society.

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

Background

A. Organisational Background
Search for Common Ground (www.sfcd.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 peacebuilding work and cultural expressions. SFCG Myanmar has ten staff members with a presence in four provinces across the country and works with youth, women, cultural actors, media, government authorities, and other civil society actors.

B. Project Summary
Social Cohesion is an important determinant of a peaceful, democratic, and prosperous nation. It creates stronger bonds within and across different groups, and fosters greater trust in the institutions of government. It is even more important where there is a history or situation of conflict, hostility, or mistrust between different identity groups or the people and the state.

As a country undergoing significant and rapid change while confronting multiple socio-ethnic-religious fault lines and hostilities, Myanmar faces a pressing need to create and
sustain a cohesive society equipped to withstand and embrace the changes and challenges ahead. It is therefore critical that across society, particularly at the local level, Social Cohesion becomes an integral component of policies, strategies, and programmes to manage conflict, build peace and democratic governance, and develop the country in an equitable and inclusive manner.

Within this context, Search for Common Ground (SFCG) is implementing an 18-month project titled *Strengthening Local-level Social Cohesion Competencies through Training and Support*. The intervention will contribute to the reframing of core narratives that contribute to deeply-rooted divisions in Myanmar that have often led to violence. The project is being implemented in 18 townships across six target ethnic states, namely Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Mon, and Shan States. Working with local CSOs, local government, and community members, SFCG will utilize capacity development to contribute to Social Cohesion by transforming the way in which these stakeholders perceive and interact with people across various dividing lines. The project has three objectives:

1. Increase Social Cohesion competencies (knowledge, skills, and tools) among local government, Non-State Actors (NSA), and civil society actors participating in development, government, and peacebuilding work;
2. Increase levels of trust between local government, NSAs, civil society, and communities; and
3. Enhance the mainstreaming of Social Cohesion-sensitive considerations across all sectors of local government, NSA, and civil society engagement.

SFCG is taking a three-step strategy to achieve the above goal and objectives, including:
   i) Creating a conceptual framework and training manual;
   ii) Developing core competencies of partners and key target groups; and
   iii) Fostering a community of practice across stakeholders.

The project is anchored in the following core *Theory of Change*: If Local Government Actors, Non-State Actors, and Civil Society Actors enhance their Social Cohesion knowledge and competencies through workshops, trainings, and exchange visits, then it will promote trust and cooperation between them. Improved trust and cooperation will in turn support a more socially cohesive society at the township level.

This project expects to achieve the following results during and after its implementation phase:

5. Enhanced knowledge, skills, and tools in Social Cohesion among local government, Non- State Actors (NSA), and Civil Society in six ethnic states.
6. New opportunities and spaces for interaction, cooperation, and learning between local government, NSAs, Civil Society, and communities.
7. Increased efforts to promote Social Cohesion within and across all engagement groups and local communities.
Target groups
The project focuses on two broad target groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target groups</th>
<th>Targeted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Government institutions at local level</td>
<td>State/regional government officials, township administrators, Village heads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Non-State Actors and members of civil society</td>
<td>CSOs, religious leaders, NSA leaders, Ethnic leaders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I. The Evaluation
A. Organisational Goal
SFCG as an organisation is committed to conducting evaluations project basis in order to maximise the effectiveness of our programming and engage in continuous improvement and learning within programmes and across the organisation. The overall goal of this evaluation is to assess the contribution of the project in developing capacity at the local level to contribute to Social Cohesion by transforming the way in which key local stakeholders perceive and interact with people across various dividing lines.

The SFCG approach to evaluations is grounded in the guiding principles of our work: participatory; culturally sensitive; affirming and positive while honest and productively critical and valuing knowledge and approaches from within the context. SFCG will apply this approach to the evaluation of this project, which will be carried out in consultation and in participation with key relevant stakeholders, appropriate community groups or key civil society individuals.

B. Evaluation criteria and key evaluation questions
The final evaluation will be carried out in July 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 future projects on strengthening Social Cohesion in the country.

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 relevant is the project in the context of on going peacebuilding and democratic transition in Myanmar?
- To what extent were the project’s approach and interventions relevant in addressing social division and lack of intra/inter group cooperation resulting from internal conflict along ethnic/religious divisive lines?
- How relevant were the training manual and training approach to the local need and capacity?
- How did the project design and implementation adhere to the conflict sensitivity and gender balance?
- Is the project adding value to Myanmar society that others are not providing?
• How timely was the project intervention considering the conflict dynamics in Myanmar?

Effectiveness:
• To what extent has the project contributed to increased Social Cohesion competencies (knowledge and skills) among local government officials, Non-State Actors (NSA), and civil society actors in the project locations?
• To what extent did the project contribute in overcoming prejudices and increasing mutual trust between government authorities, Non-State Actors (NSAs) and civil society actors in the target locations? Are there any examples of increased mutual trust and collaboration that promote Social Cohesion in the community?
• To what extent did the project empower the target stakeholders into creating and fostering a community of practice to strengthen Social Cohesion at the local level? How have they put into practice Social Cohesion competencies?
• To what extent the project has enhanced (if so) the mainstreaming of Social Cohesion-sensitive considerations across all sectors of local government, NSA, and civil society engagement? Are there any specific examples of mainstreaming of Social Cohesion concerns?
• How was the “Conceptual Framework on Social Cohesion” helped in effective implementation of the project? How effective were the training manual and training approach from the participants’ point of view?
• What has been the key factors driving the project’s success?
• What unexpected positive or negative results did the project lead to?
• What are the major lessons learned from this project?
• What is the potential for scaling up of this project or similar other activities?

Coordination
• How well was the programme implementation process managed? What was the mechanism for programme quality assurance?
• How was the coordination between SFCG’s programme team, the partner organisations, the professional trainers and the participants in implementing the program?
• How coherent were the activities implemented to achieve the goal/objective set by the project? To what extent did the different categories of activities complement each other?

Sustainability
• What steps have been taken or planned to create long-term processes, structures and institutions for the continuation of good practices of promoting Social Cohesion at a local level?
• Have new mechanisms been designed to continue the work initiated by this project? If yes, will the initiatives sustain post-project?
• Has the effort contributed to creating momentum for Social Cohesion by encouraging the participants and communities to develop independent initiatives?

C. Audience
The primary audience of this evaluation includes:

- The staff and members of SFCG Myanmar and partner organisations for drawing out reflections and lessons learned from the project and to use the recommendations for future project design, and
- United Nations Development Program, the funding agency, for assessing the effective and efficient use of the funding to achieve the stated goals and results of the project.
- Myanmar Peacebuilding communities, interreligious and interethnic leaders, including government authorities, among others.

D. Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation will be carried out in five (out of six) project locations engaging participants from all six ethnic states involved in the intervention.

The evaluation will follow a qualitative approach in order to collect evidence on causal linkages between the intervention and impacts, based on the actions and experiences and perceptions of stakeholders involved. It will include the following tools for data collection: Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Groups Discussions (FGDs) and documentation of case studies, narratives, quotes, and photos as evidence of the change presented or observed. However, besides, these qualitative tools, the evaluation will also carry out a Mini Survey among the participants of KIIs and FGDs to get their perspective and assessment of the project intervention. This project may not be representative of all target groups of the project, but will provide an indication of the participant’s evaluation of the project.

The evaluation will be carried out with the direct involvement of the Institutional Learning Team (ILT) and will follow a systematic evaluation approach to ensure high standards of quality and accountability towards global evaluation standards. The evaluator will develop the methodology and tools of the evaluation and finalize the evaluation report in consultation with SFCG management and DM&E staff.

I. Scope of Work

A. Location:

The evaluation will take place in one township in five of the six intervention ethnic states:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Participant’s Townships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shan</td>
<td>Taunggyi</td>
<td>Taunggyi and Hopone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kachin</td>
<td>Myitkyina</td>
<td>Myitkyina and Wine Maw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayah</td>
<td>Demoso</td>
<td>Loikaw, Demawso and Phruso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>Mawlamyine</td>
<td>Mawlamyine, Paung and Chaung Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayin</td>
<td>Hpa-an</td>
<td>Hpa-an, Hlaing Bwe and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. Deliverables:
Before arriving in-country, the consultant will submit the Inception Report, which clearly defines the evaluation methodology such as the clearly outlines FGDs and KIIs checklist, case study development template, and evaluation timelines with specific deadlines for each deliverable. 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 30 pages (excluding annexes). It should be submitted electronically in an 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. 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 a final edited report at the end. The report will be credited to the evaluator and potentially placed in the public domain at the decision of SFCG.

C. Duration & Deadlines
The duration of evaluation will be a total of **six weeks** between July 10th and August 17th, 2016. The deadline for the final report will be on August 26th, 2016.

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 programme 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.
II. **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;
- Analyse 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: KII and FGDs Checklists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>Key Questions</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Checklists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|    | **What do you understand by Social Cohesion?**  
What is the state of Social Cohesion (interethnic and interreligious relationships, trust and collaboration) in your community and the township?  
What are the positive factors that promote good relationship across divides and what are the risk factors that deteriorate the state of Social Cohesion? |                                                                             |                                                                                                                      |
|    | **Relevance**                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                             |                                                                                                                      |
| 1  | How relevant is the project in the context of on going peacebuilding and democratic transition in Myanmar? How timely was the project intervention considering the conflict dynamics in Myanmar? | All (LG, CSO, NSA, Trainers, partners)                                      | Do you believe this project and its activities are relevant to your community? Is this project being implemented in right time considering the political transition and conflict dynamics? If yes, why? And if not why not? |
| 2  | To what extent were the project’s approach and interventions relevant in addressing social division and lack of intra/inter group cooperation resulting from internal conflict along ethnic/religious divisive lines? | All                                                                        | Do this types of activities promote peace and harmony in Myanmar society like yours? If ye show? If not, why not? Were the types of activities and approach used by the project appropriate to promote Social Cohesion in your society? |
| 3  | How did the project design and implementation adhere to the conflict sensitivity and gender balance?                                                                                                          | Evaluators’ analysis and Interpretation                                     | Did the project try to address the concern of all community groups, including minority communities?  
How inclusive was the project from gender and minority perspective?  
Did it took into consideration of local conflict sensitivity during design and implementation |
| 4  | Is the project adding value to Myanmar society that others are not providing?                                                                                                                                 | All                                                                        | Do you believe that this project is doing something new that others have not done so far in your community and the township? If not who else is doing similar work and what are they doing? |
| 5  | How relevant and useful were the training manual and the training approach?                                                                                                                                     | TOT and rollout Trainers, CSO representatives, Participants                 | Do you think that the capacity-building on Social Cohesion through training was the right approach for promoting Social Cohesion and community harmony in your locality?  
How user-friendly and understandable were the training manual? Did they help you to learn new things? |

**Effectiveness**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Target Group</th>
<th>Additional Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To what extent has the project contributed to increase Social Cohesion competencies (knowledge and skills) among local government officials, Non-State Actors (NSA), and civil society actors in the project locations? How effective were the training manual and training approach from the participants' point of view?</td>
<td>All training participants</td>
<td>Did you like the training? What are the new things you learned from the training? Are you able to explain the meaning of and different approaches of Social Cohesion to others in your community? How effective and user-friendly were the training approach and training manual in your opinion? Were they helpful for you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To what extent did the project contribute to overcoming prejudices and increasing mutual trust between government authorities, Non-State Actors (NSAs) and civil society actors in the target locations? Are there any examples of increased mutual trust and collaboration that promote Social Cohesion in the community?</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Do you believe that this project helped you in shifting attitude, overcoming prejudices or improving relationship with LG, CSOs, NSAs and other community groups in your community? If yes, can you give me one example of increased trust collaboration between different stakeholder groups participating in this project? How has it promoted Social Cohesion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To what extent did the project empower the target stakeholders into creating and fostering a community of practice to strengthen Social Cohesion at the local level? How have they put into practice Social Cohesion competencies?</td>
<td>Participants in rollout trainings and CSO leaders</td>
<td>How did you apply the knowledge and skills on Social Cohesion that you gained from the training into practice? After participating in the training and or exchange visits, have you been part of any forum or platform created to promote Social Cohesion in your society? Has this formal or informal network, if any, developed any plan of action or something similar to promote Social Cohesion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To what extent the project has enhanced (if so) the mainstreaming of social cohesion-sensitive considerations across all sectors of local government, NSA, and civil society engagement? Are there any specific examples of mainstreaming of Social Cohesion considerations?</td>
<td>SFCG, Partner CSO, Trainer,</td>
<td>Have you noticed or observed that the training has positively influenced the participants that they put learning into action? Have there been any examples of designing and implementing activities by different stakeholders, which have incorporated the Social Cohesion considerations discussed in the training/workshops and or observed in the exchange visits into their ongoing and planned works?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>How was the “Conceptual Framework on Social Cohesion” utilised during the project?</td>
<td>SFCG, Partner CSO, Trainer,</td>
<td>How did you utilise the Conceptual Framework on Social Cohesion to...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

57
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Cohesion</strong>” helped in practical implementation of the project?</th>
<th><strong>TOT Trainer, TOT manual designer</strong></th>
<th>programme implementation, and developing training content?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>What has been the key factors driving the project’s success?</td>
<td>CSO, SFCG, UNDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>What unexpected positive or negative results did the project lead to?</td>
<td>SFCG, CSO partners, UNDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>What are the major lessons learned from this project?</td>
<td>SFCG, Tot Trainers, Rollout Trainers, UNDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>What is the potential for scaling up of this project or similar other activities?</td>
<td>SFCG, UNDP, Evaluator’s Interpretation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Coordination**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>How well was the programme implementation process managed? What was the mechanism for programme quality assurance?</th>
<th>SFCG, Partners, UNDP</th>
<th>How well was the programme implementation process managed? What was the mechanism for programme quality assurance?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>How was the coordination between SFCG’s programme team, the partner organisations, the professional trainers and the participants in implementing the program?</td>
<td>Same</td>
<td>How was the coordination between SFCG’s programme team, the partner organisations, the professional trainers and the participants in implementing the program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>How coherent were the activities implemented to achieve the goal/objective set by the project? To what extent did the different categories of activities complement each other?</td>
<td>Same</td>
<td>How coherent were the activities implemented to achieve the goal/objective set by the project? To what extent did the different categories of activities complement each other?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sustainability**

| 1 | What steps have been taken or planned to create long-term processes, structures and institutions for the continuation of good practices of promoting Social Cohesion at a local level? | SFCG, CSO partners, Participants | Is there any exit strategy developed for this project? If yes, how have you planned the exit strategy? Has there been any discussion and planning among local stakeholders and SFCG/UNDP on how to sustain this initiative? Is there a plan of action? Has there been a community of practice |

58
<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>formally/informally set up? How does it operate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Have new mechanisms been designed to continue the work initiated by this project? If yes, will the initiatives sustain post-project?</td>
<td>CSO partners, SFCG Trainers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Has the effort contributed to creating momentum for Social Cohesion by encouraging the participants and communities to develop independent initiatives?</td>
<td>CSO partners, SFCG Trainers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 3: Mini-Survey Questionnaires

Project: Strengthening Local Level Social Cohesion Competencies through Training and Support (MYA502)

Mini Survey Questionnaires for participating stakeholders

Please answer the questions below based on your knowledge, skills and experiences gained from your participation in the project activities including the training.

1. Have you applied the knowledge and skills on Social Cohesion gained from the training into practice/work?
   ○ Yes  ○ NO

2. Are you incorporating measures of equality and inclusion into their existing/upcoming work?
   ○ Yes  ○ NO

3. Are you involved in designing and implementing any activities in your community or township that promote Social Cohesion and community harmony?
   ○ Yes  ○ NO

4. Can you give at least one examples of such activities?
   i) 
   ii) 

5. How comfortable you are working with others (local government, CSOs, NSAs) compared to before participating in Social Cohesion Training and other activities organised by this project?
   ○ Still uncomfortable ○ Relatively comfortable ○ Very much comfortable

6. What are the four key components of a socially cohesive society?
   i) 
   ii) 
   iii) 
   iv)

7. As a project participant/stakeholder, have you collaborated with local government or NSAs or CSOs to facilitate or host activities that promote Social Cohesion during the last 12 months?
   ○ Yes  ○ NO
**Annex 4: List of People Interviewed**

**SLSC Project Evaluation (Key Informant Interview and Focus Group Discussion)**

**Organizations: UNDP, SFCG, KMSS, KBC, CPTC, MSDA, MSDN and Yoma Alinn**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Township</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mork Yoom Hsai</td>
<td>RCSS</td>
<td>Liaison office Staff</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Taunggyi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nang Mo Mo Theda</td>
<td>SS CSO Nw</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Taunggyi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Khin Saw New</td>
<td>Yoma Ahlinn</td>
<td>Assistant Coordinator</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Taunggyi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Phyo Mar Lar</td>
<td>Cherry Image</td>
<td>Trainer</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Taunggyi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>San Thidar</td>
<td>Namp Chone</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Taunggyi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Daw Ye Ye Thein</td>
<td>Multi Ethnic Women Organization</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Taunggyi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Daw Nyunt Yee</td>
<td>Multi Ethnic Women Organization</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Taunggyi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Daw Thida Aye</td>
<td>Five Strength Library</td>
<td>Focal</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Taunggyi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>U Aung Zaw Htwe</td>
<td>Justice Dream</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Hopone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
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<td>PNO</td>
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## Annex 5: Evaluation Field Visit Schedule

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Annex 6: A Blog on Community of Practice

Building a Community of Practice for Social Cohesion

In January 2015, UNDP and Search for Common Ground (SFCG) launched an 18-month process to increase capacities for social cohesion among local-level actors in Myanmar. The six-day foundation course that came out of this has reached 1350 people from government, non-state actors, and civil society in six states. It has increased their abilities to bridge gaps and improved the way they themselves work together.

At the heart of this process are 40 trainers and six Civil Society Organization (CSO) partners from Chin, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Mon and Shan States that make up the project’s Community of Practice (CoP). In their day jobs they are diverse community members—CSO presidents, state Planning Directors, and Ethnic Liaison Officers, amongst others. This mixture itself makes them a unique group in Myanmar, where mistrust between government, ethnic organizations, and CSOs runs deep and there are few examples where these groups build peace together.

What is a Community of Practice? The term is attributed to an informal group of people who come together around a shared craft, skill-set, or interest and continue learning through regular contact. CoPs usually serve as platforms for people to share knowledge in order to influence practice, with the act of learning itself often an unintentional consequence of social interaction. As such, real-time and virtual CoPs are being frequently used in the development sector to facilitate knowledge-sharing.

How do you build a CoP? For UNDP and SFCG it took months of work. We started by consulting with a broad range of government, ethnic organization, and CSO representatives to gauge their interest in joining a CoP and, once on board, had them undertake assessments for each state. This gave them a better idea of what social cohesion—or lack thereof—looked like in their townships, organizations and communities, and what competencies stakeholders needed most. The group then brought their insights back into the workshop to develop a
skeletal course. They worked with INK Strategy, a visualization firm, to produce pictorials for the course—an invaluable tool to get ideas across Myanmar’s multiple language groups. Intensive training of trainers (ToTs) followed, where the trainers delved into the course content while continuously improving their presentation, facilitation and group management skills.

Building a sustainable CoP can be a challenging task, but they are important forces for social change. For joint learning, the group visited a Community Information Management Committee (CIMC) in Amarapura, a multi-ethnic and inter-religious organization supported by SFCG aimed at defusing false rumours and hate speech that often trigger conflict. The CIMC uses social media platforms to both monitor conflict in their community and maintain frequent contact with a sister CIMC in Lashio, Shan State. Further afield, the group learned about the Youth Development Program in Tunisia, where youth councils from 14 regions from a national CoP that works to ensure youth have a voice in the country’s democratic transition. This CoP has sustained itself by building a network of receptive public officials and launching an online platform to serve as their virtual meeting space. As these case studies show, diversity, strong relationships and ease of communication are key elements of a successful CoP. The group intends to fully incorporate these lessons as they position themselves for the future.

For UNDP and SFCG, the process of building a CoP taught us that the group’s diversity is its biggest strength. Not only do they come from different professional backgrounds, they also range in ethnicity, language, education, experience and age. This makes for rich learning and personal reflection, as Saw Tha Doo, our Lashio trainer and a veteran community development leader, attests to: “The youngsters in the group have taught me so much. They’ve tempered my tendency to dominate groups. I came into this thinking it will be one more topic to add to my training portfolio. But this community has changed the way I myself interact with groups, my colleagues and family.” As trainers and facilitators, the group members have very different aptitudes. Some of them are natural-born facilitators, with the ability to adapt and inspire. Others are thorough and knowledgeable, but shyer in front of a crowd. The group’s diversity of personalities has sometimes meant teaming trainers up to emphasize their strengths. Ultimately, we have tried to strike a good balance between nurturing this CoP and stepping back to let their natural motivation and initiative take the lead. By facilitating regular opportunities for contact, both online and offline, we provided a platform for natural, organic connections to grow and foster locally-owned practice.

All group members experienced some personal growth through the budding CoP. Jali, our Bahmo trainer, explained: “I’ve learned that social relationships have a core value. In the past, I used to connect with others only when I needed them for something. This group has changed my attitude—if we want to build real and meaningful relationships we have to come together regularly as friends and like-minded citizens, even when there is no clear need.”

By now, these men and women have organized and facilitated the social cohesion course 54 times over the past six months. Nearly all are planning additional workshops for their organizations and communities. Over the past 18 months, they have physically met at different junctures in the process. The group is also active on their Facebook pages and Viber groups, using these platforms to pose questions, share tactics and celebrate successes. At their most recent meeting, the CoP developed continuity plans for staying together beyond the conclusion of this project.

This is how we are building our community of practice. How are you building yours?