With the partnership of Nyein Foundation (Shalom) and the Yangon Film School (YFS), Search for Common Ground used media, arts, and culture – television, radio, documentary film, and participatory theatre – to support the national peace process in Myanmar. Search aimed to strengthen relationships among interethnic and interreligious groups; to build the capacity of local CSOs, media professionals, and cultural actors to integrate cultural content that promotes intercultural dialogue and reconciliation; and to increase greater awareness among the population about cultural diversity and expression representative of all ethnic and religious groups.

The project ran for 32 months during a critical time in Myanmar, which saw a transition towards a democratic government with landslide elections and the signing of a nation-wide ceasefire agreement.

"If writers, dramatists, and filmmakers work together to create stories – with cultural content that humanizes the ‘other’ and with role models who seek relationships with people from across dividing lines – audience members will emulate the attitudes and behaviors portrayed. When attitudes and behaviors transform, it promotes tolerance and value for a multi-ethnic society on a broader societal scale, ultimately creating cultural drivers of peace."

The evaluation showed, overwhelmingly, that the project was successful in bridging societal differences and broadening participants’ perspectives.
RESULTS

#1 The project was successful in strengthening relationships among interethnic and interreligious individuals and groups.

44% learned something new about culture or religion

64% participated in discussion about friendship, identity, and respect.

80% indicated making new friends from different cultures and religion.

“I’m Kayin Christian and when I joined the project I didn’t want anything to with the Kayin Buddhists. But then I got to know them, and now we’re making films together.” – Saw Eh Doh Poe (Aero)

#2 The project was successful in increasing the capacity of civil society, media professionals, and cultural actors to integrate cultural content for the promotion of intercultural dialogue and reconciliation.

“When I first started speaking and performing in public, my hands and legs would go cold. This project has given me the confidence to speak in public and to collaborate with people from many different cultures and religions.” – Ma Thu Thu Htwe

#3 The project was successful in increasing awareness among the greater population about cultural diversity and expression representative of all ethnic and religious groups.

Although it can be difficult, people from different religions and ethnic groups can work together and achieve peace. You need a good leader and good skills to succeed just like they dad on the football field. And you need to be satisfied with who you are. That’s the best way to make a contribution and to create unity.” – Daw Naw Than Nu

78% learned about inspiring leaders and the importance of teamwork.

77% were inspired to talk to and make friends with people from other cultures and religions, as well as to discuss issues of identity, respect, and friendship.

64% learned that men and women from different cultures and religions have important roles to play.