

Key Findings and Recommendations: Stakeholder mapping of countering hate speech in Myanmar – External Report

Search for Common Ground

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This stakeholder mapping report was produced as part of a project entitled “The Impact of Freedom of Expression, Religion, and Belief: measuring results through online initiatives”, funded by the Netherlands Embassy.



Background

Despite positive steps towards freedom of expression, the last few years has seen an increasing use of online hate speech, primarily targeting religious minorities. Bouts of inter-communal violence have resulted from a rumor or a photo, which was spread widely online, and Myanmar has seen the development of echo chambers, where extremist views are easily propagated. At the same time, Myanmar has seen an unprecedented scale of connection and access to information and as a result, 29% of the population is now connected via smartphones. With low media literacy rates nationwide¹, escalated levels of hate speech particularly amongst established progressive voices create conditions for widespread acceptance of prolonged violence targeting minorities.

Recent severe escalation in violence in the country has coincided with a drastic rise in hate speech and nationalist fervor. Hate speech narratives of extremist actors that have at times had sway over mainstream society have worked their way into the discourse of some of the most progressive voices of Myanmar society. Political, religious and civil society leaders who have been long time advocates for democracy and justice commonly produce and share hate speech narratives.

A number of organizations are working to counter hate speech however little research exists on the impact of these initiatives and without evidence of impact, and a coordinated response to challenge macro level conflict narratives, it is challenging to measure and address the impact of the success of civil society efforts.

The overall aim of the project “The Impact of Freedom of Expression, Religion, and Belief: measuring results through online initiatives”, is to strengthen local civil society organizations in monitoring and evaluating the impact of counter hate speech initiatives (both online and offline). The project will result in increased knowledge and skills of local civil society organizations on monitoring methods and tools to successfully tackle the offline effects of online hate speech and increased best practice sharing and opportunities for lessons sharing among local civil society organizations, networks, and the international community to increase the impact of existing and future initiatives to counter hate speech.

As part of the project, a stakeholder mapping was undertaken to identify organizations conducting activities to counter hate speech, their strategies and their monitoring and evaluation processes and to come up with findings outlining key challenges and recommendations.

While no universally accepted definitions exist, to guide planning, data collection and analysis for this stakeholder mapping the following definitions of key terms were used:

Hate-speech: Speech that is intended to foster hatred against groups based on race, religion, gender, sexual preference, national origin, or other traits. At the least it fosters hatred and discrimination, and at its worst it promotes violence and killing.²

Dangerous speech: Speech acts that have a significant probability of catalyzing or amplifying violence by one group against another.³

¹ Search Myanmar, 2015, Community Information Flows to Reduce Inter-communal Violence in Burma, CIM Research Report

² United States Institute of Peace, 2011, Peace Terms: Glossary of Terms for Conflict Management and Peacebuilding.

³ This definition recommended in page 54 of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2015, Countering Online Hate Speech.



Stakeholder Mapping Overview

The objectives of this stakeholder mapping include:

- To identify organizations involved in efforts to counter hate speech, their strategies/activities and associated counter hate speech messaging.
- To capture the key results of the work they are doing and to identify current tools they use to monitor and demonstrate success.
- To identify their strengths, challenges and capacity building needs, and to identify gaps across efforts to counter hate speech.

Data collection for this report took place between 14 - 25 July 2017. The mapping team consisted of the lead research consultant and the SFCG project coordinator.

Data collection for this stakeholder mapping included three target groups:

1. The primary target group of this stakeholder mapping is organizations working both online and offline to counter hate speech or promote peace speech. The research plan and data collection focused predominantly on this target group.
2. Additionally, a secondary target group for data collection included organizations and projects engaged in advocating on laws of freedom of expression and stakeholders self-censoring due to fears for their security.
3. A third target group included is organizations and projects taking indirect approaches⁴ to counter hate speech, often times not using the term hate speech themselves.

The methodology used for the research included desk research, preliminary interviews and structured key informant interviews. Organizations profiled in the internal version of this report were identified through a snowball methodology of sampling from key informant interviews.

Limitations for the research included:

- Findings from this report predominantly reflect the experiences and perspectives of organizations with a presence in Yangon who have a strategic focus on countering hate speech. Considering their collective efforts critical to countering hate speech, findings do include some inputs from organizations involved in countering hate speech but with no strategic focus on it, as well as grassroots organizations based outside of Yangon and organizations taking indirect approaches.
- Also note that this report is a stakeholder mapping of actors countering hate speech, and not in any way a conflict analysis or analysis of hate speech messaging, strategy or actors. To gather more full information about hate speech actors, strategies and messaging a more comprehensive and focused conflict analysis would need to be conducted.

⁴ Indirect approaches are covered on page 7 of this report.



Findings

This section covers findings of the stakeholder mapping including a brief note on primary sources of hate speech, a description of key actors countering hate speech, an analysis of strategies taken to counter hate speech and an overview of notable challenges faced by actors involved in efforts to counter hate speech.

Box 4: Social media platforms

The predominant social media platform that facilitates the spread of hate speech in Myanmar also used by civil society actors to share counter narratives and peace narratives is Facebook. Few respondents also noted some additional usage of twitter, Viber and we chat.

Sources of hate speech

While not the focus of this research, during the data collection process respondents shared some relevant information about sources of hate speech. Key learning is provided below:

- Hate speech is conducted online predominantly through Facebook and offline via DVDs, pamphlets, signboards, books, speakerphone carts and other methods.
- There are approximately 150 Facebook pages producing and sharing hate speech content, and of these 120 are the most active producers while 30 of them predominantly just share hate speech produced by others.⁵
- Hate speech commentary on news articles and hate speech attacks on Facebook pages/posts promoting democratic values, respect for diversity and civic/political rights are significant.

Key actors involved in direct efforts to counter hate speech

Key actors involved in direct efforts to counter hate speech fall into three categories:

Organizations with strategic focus on countering hate speech: Some organizations in this group were dedicated fully to countering hate speech while others included countering hate speech as one program area within a more comprehensive strategic framework. Research included detailed feedback from eight of these organizations, all of which were either based in Yangon or have a presence in Yangon.

Organizations countering hate speech, but with no strategic focus on it: Many organizations in this group had conducted at least one project or activity they considered as countering hate speech. While these organizations did not have a strategic focus on countering hate speech, their overall aims and ongoing activities were relevant to countering hate speech. Many of these organizations also noted that they became involved in efforts to counter hate speech because they became targets of hate speech as a result of their work promoting civic engagement, democratic values and interfaith understanding.

Grassroots organizations based outside of Yangon: Grassroots actors are of critical importance in efforts to counter hate speech and within the Myanmar context where civil society groups are vibrant and often operate with low visibility, grassroots actors countering hate speech can be expected to be prevalent in all geographic locations around the country. Some are involved more directly in countering hate speech while others take indirect approaches. Most organizations from

⁵ Numerous respondents cited this number. PEN Myanmar identified and monitored 153 Facebook pages for their report- PEN Myanmar, 2015, Hate Speech: A Study of Print, Movies, Songs and Social Media in Myanmar. C4ADS identified and monitored 100 pages for their report C4ADS, Sticks and Stones: Hate Speech Narratives and Facilitators in Myanmar.



this group have little contact with donors and are less connected to formal networks involved in countering hate speech or promoting interfaith/inter-communal harmony.

Approaches and strategies for countering hate speech

This section provides an overview both direct and indirect approaches taken to counter hate speech, and within each of these two main approaches numerous strategies can be taken. Often organizations take both direct and indirect approaches, taking on a range of strategies.

Direct approaches

Hate speech monitoring and response

Strategy	How it works
1. Hate speech monitoring	Most organizations monitoring hate speech online have identified specific Facebook pages online, coded common hate speech terms and phrases and then hired staff to check Facebook pages on a regular schedule manually marking hate speech using codes. Many organizations also monitor hate speech offline and have persons on the ground tracking the flow of hate speech flyers, DVDs, hate campaign banners. Some organizations monitor both online and offline hate speech.
2. Rumor mitigation	Some organizations involved in hate speech monitoring also included rumor mitigation activities. Some trained staff and partners to investigate and gather facts pertaining to the rumor then publish informed reporting in local or social media to dispel rumors. Some organizations worked with local officials, some with journalists and others with bloggers and persons with social media presence/following in certain geographic locations in efforts to mitigate the influence of rumors and limit their potential to spark violence.
3. Building response mechanisms	Organizations working with rapid response tended to work within a geographic area with community and civil society leaders as main focal points. They coordinate with and collect contact information for local police and officials, parliamentary representatives for said area, bloggers and persons of influence on social media, and others to provide a list of people who may be contacted on a moments notice to respond when an incident occurs that may turn to organized violence.

Media and counter messaging

Strategy	How it works
4. Social media campaigns	Some organizations were involved in the development of social media campaigns to counter hate speech and/or promote peace speech. Some of these were grassroots efforts and others were developed by larger and more established organizations. In many cases these campaigns were a product of collaborative processes and received input and support from many actors.
5. Peace and counter hate speech media	Some organizations included the production of movies, books, documentaries, reports, commercials, TV/radio programs and other materials to promote narratives of peaceful coexistence; some organizations also produced reports on hate speech actors and dynamics.



Legal approaches

Strategy	How it works
6. Taking legal measures	A network of organizations were taking legal measures, previously to counter the 'Protection of Race and Religion Laws' of 2014/15, and now are working to draft an 'Anti-Hate Speech Bill'

Indirect approaches

While these actors do not often consider their efforts as 'countering hate speech,' many organizations, groups and individuals take an indirect approach to countering hate speech. These are considered to have a profound influence on mitigating the effects of hate speech and addressing its root causes thereby reducing the influence of hate speech in the long-term.

Amongst a vast multitude of strategies they take that address economic, political and social root causes of inter-communal conflict, indirect strategies for countering hate speech identified in this stakeholder mapping include:

- Promoting critical media/information literacy.
- Civics and citizenship education.
- Peace and multicultural education.
- Responsible investigative journalism.
- Interfaith activities and facilitation of shared experiences amongst diverse populations.
- Collaborative development projects.

How organizations evaluate results

Findings showed that organizations take various approaches, both formal and informal, to evaluate results of their projects and activities. While no organization included had specific indicators they used to evaluate long-term results of their projects and activities, patterns were noted as to how organizations evaluate results in line with aforementioned strategies.

Evaluating results of hate speech monitoring and response

Strategy	Common approaches to evaluate results
1. Hate speech monitoring	Most organizations interviewed who use this strategy track the number of reports produced accurately documenting hate speech on identified sites or offline in identified geographic locations. Many organizations also measure results by how many individuals and organizations accessed their reports.
2. Rumor mitigation	Organizations using this strategy identify results by how many rumors were identified, investigated and mitigated within a given period of time and geographic location. While techniques for mitigation varied, organizations identified success stories from interventions by police, counter-reporting by journalists, or other mitigation means.
3. Building response mechanisms	Few organizations in this stakeholder mapping were involved in this type of activity; however, those that were had two ways of demonstrating results: 1) demonstrating their ability to utilize their networks to setup such response mechanisms in target communities and the expected readiness of local communities to respond to potential incidents, and 2) informal telling of success stories of how they responded to violence by successfully leveraging community response mechanisms.



Evaluating results of media and counter messaging

Strategy	Common approaches to evaluate results
4. Social media campaigns	Organizations involved in launching social media campaigns used social media analytics to show the reach of their post, number of likes, etc. as a predominant method of demonstrating success. Some also noted stories of individuals influenced by a campaign who have expressed changed attitudes as a result of their campaign.
5. Peace and counter hate speech media	Organizations producing peace media and reports on hate speech also noted the reach of their media and reports, specifically how many people their reports and media were sent to, or how many people viewed or downloaded their reports/media online. Some organizations collected pre and post questionnaires to measure attitudes before and after watching a video promoting inter-communal harmony.

Evaluating results of legal approaches

Strategy	Common approaches to evaluate results
6. Taking legal measures	Organizations working to produce the 'Anti-hate Speech Bill' will measure their success on their ability to advocate for the bill in parliament and get it adopted into law. Later perhaps they may evaluate the usage of the law, but no plan was demonstrated to implement this as the main focus is editing, reviewing and completing drafts of the bill.

Notable challenges faced by actors countering hate speech

General challenges for all actors involved in efforts to counter hate speech

Safety and security

Almost all respondents, even those not directly engaged in activities explicitly countering hate speech, commented about how they have been the target of hate speech attacks on social media. Some respondents reported threats, cyber-attacks and physical attacks. Hate speech is at times an implicit call to violence and at others an explicit call to violence; therefore, it is not surprising that actors countering hate speech feel threatened, and in many cases receive direct threats.

Lack of a cohesive definition of hate speech

Respondents noted how the lack of a cohesive definition of hate speech amongst actors involved in efforts to counter hate speech makes coordination of hate speech monitoring across organizations difficult and limits the potential for collaborative action.

Without consensus on what hate speech is, actors monitoring hate speech have difficulty coordinating their actions and it is challenging to measure change over time if there is no agreed definition of hate speech or classification of what hate speech includes. There has been some progress to define and categorize hate speech by groups working on the Anti-hate Speech Bill and other partners; however, in these cases and others the definition and classification of hate speech has been conducted for specific purposes and is limited without wider collaboration/consensus.

Challenges to develop creative and strategic approaches

Many respondents noted how they and others have difficulty developing creative and strategic approaches to counter hate speech. Some respondents discussed how it is easy to identify the problems they seek to address, but given the prevalence and intense nature of hate speech it much more difficult to come up with creative ideas that are viable and address issues in a strategic



manner. Many organizations further noted that they have difficulty formulating strategies for how ICT⁶ can be utilized most effectively to counter hate speech online and how they lack technical skills to get exposure on social media.

Lack of collaborative strategies for action

Many respondents also noted that collaboration amongst diverse actors interested in countering hate speech is low. Some respondents noted that the low levels of collaboration contribute to the difficulty many civil society actors have to produce creative and interesting strategies to counter hate speech. Respondents noted particularly low equal status collaboration between CBOs/NGOs based in Yangon and grassroots CBOs outside of major urban cities as well as low involvement of actors outside of the CBO/NGO sector.

General coordination

Many respondents noted that they felt that their actions were effective, but that there was much replication of efforts and little coordination. Coordination is particularly relevant for actors working to monitor hate speech, mitigate rumors and respond to potential outbreaks of violence. Existing coordination mechanisms are provided in Box 6.

Box 6: Coordination Mechanisms

Relevant mechanisms include:

1. The Inter-Communal Harmony Working Group
2. The Metta Setwaing Consortium
3. The working group of civil society groups producing The 'Hate Speech Bill.'
4. The Hate Speech Working Group⁷

While respondents noted that actors that produce hate speech are highly coordinated and strategic, many challenges to coordination were found amongst actors involved in efforts to counter hate speech. Many respondents noted how each organization operates their own project and may have networks with other groups involved in efforts to counter hate speech, but no formal system for sharing of information has been found amongst those involved in efforts to counter hate speech. Respondents generally noted a need for improved coordination and expressed interest in it; however, many also noted how they are quite busy with their work duties and have often missed coordination meetings as a result.

Evaluating results

Some respondents further noted that most civil society groups have low capacity to develop effective strategies and in a related manner to evaluate results against a clear strategy, so that they may produce learning that will inform more strategic action. Challenges to evaluating results are related to challenges in developing strategic plans. Evaluation should be included in the planning process, as well-planned interventions make it easier to develop evaluations systems.

Reach of technical and capacity building trainings

Some respondents also noted how the technical skill and capacity building training that is conducted usually takes place within the same networks of the same people attending multiple training and thus seldom reaches further beyond these circles. In this situation, the issue is that while some people/groups are accessing technical skills training, peacebuilding training and capacity development opportunities, numerous others who are motivated to counter hate speech and create/promote peace narratives, and who may have unique and creative ideas are missing the opportunity to develop the skills they need to implement their ideas effectively.

⁶ Information and communications technology

⁷ Many respondents mentioned the Hate Speech working Group, noting that the group may not use this name formally (the group has yet to choose a suitable name). This group is relatively new and meets infrequently.



Challenges of hate speech monitoring and response

Overlap and gaps

Respondents involved in hate speech monitoring noted how there is a lot of overlap of monitoring activities across Facebook pages, news media sites, and geographic areas, while at the same time there are gaps in monitoring coverage. On a practical level this means that many groups are monitoring the same Facebook/media sites and geographic locations while some Facebook/media sites and geographic locations are not covered.

Manual monitoring processes difficult and resource dependent

Respondents noted high turnover of staff who monitor Facebook pages as monitoring Facebook pages all day and manually categorizing hate speech posts is boring work with low pay. The cost of training keeping the numbers of staff needed to manually monitor Facebook pages is equally high.

Challenges to classification of hate speech terms and phrases

Aside from having no cohesive definition of hate speech, noted challenges to further categorization of hate speech terms and phrases include predominantly difficulties categorizing written Burmese script. Respondents discussed how the meaning of many hate speech words in Burmese language is often discerned in relation to other words surrounding it. Additionally, respondents noted how the way Burmese is spoken and written in one area is different from another.

Much of hate speech monitoring to date and automation tools in production focus on words, but don't take into account the context they are written in. Many respondents noted how simple coding and tracking of language can misidentify derogatory words like 'kalar' as this word is also used in other non-derogatory ways like kalar-tain (chair) or kalar-beh (lentle bean), or how hate speech can contain words not identified or coded as hate speech words depending on the context or nuance in the written content.

No automation tools available

To resolve the numerous difficulties of manual hate speech monitoring some organizations have tested hate speech monitoring automation tools, but with little success. To date no fully operational software exists that is able to automate the process of hate speech monitoring (see Box 7).

Box 7: Automation Tools

Research identified a few automation tools piloted by hate speech monitoring actors. Most notable was Bindez Insights, developed in collaboration with Bindez and a local partner. While much progress was made in the initial pilot of Bindez Insights the catalogue of hate speech words and phrases integrated into the software is not comprehensive nor did it involve enough of a level of stakeholder collaboration to make it usable for all civil society groups involved in hate speech monitoring. Additionally, the software was developed and tested and needs some further development to work through issues identified in the initial pilot phase.

Challenges of media production and counter messaging

Low technical skills for developing social media campaigns

With the recent rapid expansion of mobile internet services in a country where internet usage was until very recently extremely low, respondents noted that interfaith and other civil society actors are generally weak on technical skills for countering hate speech online.



Low peacebuilding competency and skills for developing counter-messages

Some respondents discussed how that while there are high levels of civil society interest in producing counter messages and peace media, in addition to technical skills as a barrier, many groups also lack experience and skills for developing and delivering strategic messages. Unique from technical skills, capacity development in this area is more related to peacebuilding expertise that is useful for developing and delivering strategic messages for peace.

Low diversity amongst counter hate speech messengers

Some respondents noted how most civil society groups producing media and messaging to counter hate speech lack diversity amongst actors delivering the messages (ie. interfaith NGOs/CBOs and other similar types of organizations deliver the messages themselves). Delivery of counter-messages is often as important as the message itself. While it is important to have messages coming from NGOs/CBOs themselves, it was found that when there is little diversity amongst those who are seen delivering counter messages, results can be limited. In analysis of the findings, four major types of actors are under-represented amongst actors delivering counter-messages:

1. **Political leaders:** With political leaders so often involved in promoting hate speech it is critical that political leaders be at the forefront of counter-messaging and peace speech. Political leaders in many contexts deliver messages promoting an inclusive national identity.
2. **Religious leaders:** Likewise, with religious leaders often at the forefront of creating and promoting hate speech it is critical that they be at the forefront of counter-messaging and peace speech, to counter act more extremist voices.
3. **Cultural icons:** Cultural icons are shown to have deep influence on national cultures. Their involvement in delivering counter-messages and promoting peace speech can have profound positive influence on cultures. Cultural icons may include artists, musicians, media personalities, comedians and other persons of influence.
4. **Those formerly involved in groups promoting hate speech:** In many contexts it has been shown that individuals already influenced by hate speech are more responsive to messages from 'ex combatants' or 'persons formerly involved in extremist groups.'

What is working

Ultimately, there are wide array of deep and longstanding economic, social and political issues at play that Myanmar as a country must transform if the influence of hate speech is to be dissolved. It will take a diverse array of actors using a range of approaches simultaneously to ensure that the society and its leaders wholly reject hate speech and associated violence.

Individually, respondents generally felt that their efforts were effective; however, it was common that they felt their efforts were not enough. It is when civil society actors coordinate their actions and when they collaborate to develop creative solutions that the deepest impacts are realized.

Panzagar's flower speech campaign is a great example. From its collaborative beginnings this campaign has had a visible and profound influence on the context. As with the example of Panzagar, when a broad range of civil society actors come together in a process of collaboration not only are creative ideas developed, but the unique skills and talents needed to bring them to life, spread their messages and sustain their efforts are available.

While there is no shortage of actors working to counter hate speech and transform deeper underlying issues, it is those that have access to the technical capacity and utilize collaborative spaces that are able to see the best results. In many cases the most innovative and influential projects are developed when civil society actors with deep knowledge of the context collaborate with and are supported by actors that have particular technical expertise often in short supply. Innovation as a key pathway to bring societies beyond intractable conflict, collaborative efforts such as these are invaluable.



Planning considerations and recommendations

Planning considerations

Plan ahead for an expected rise in hate speech and dangerous speech

Consider the likelihood of a rise in hate speech and potential for increased levels of violence in the run-up to the 2020 election. Political campaigns often drive division and amplify hate speech. In reference to findings from this stakeholder mapping report it is expected that hate speech actors are planning for the runup to the 2020 election. Actors promoting peace and tolerance, particularly in countering hate speech and promoting peace speech should too.

Plan ahead when considering organizational strategies for countering hate speech. When reviewing the following recommendations consider the timeframe required to complete recommended activities (example- Recommendation 9: Development of a hate speech lexicon). If actors intend to utilize any of the following recommendations, then consider what needs to be done in advance, so that the intended results come to being prior to the election season or are prepared for election season. Likewise, consider social media campaigns or other strategies/activities that would be effective in the election season, plan ahead and prepare for them now that they may be fully operational by election season.

Consider diversity. Be inclusive!

With the focus of counter hate speech efforts predominantly responding to high levels of hate speech targeting the Muslim community, it is important that peace actors consider hate speech targeting other faith communities, other groups like women, the LGBTQ community, and others. The definition of hate speech from USIP that was used to guide this stakeholder mapping identifies hate speech as speech that is intended to foster hatred against groups based on “race, religion, gender, sexual preference, national origin, or other traits.”

Be inclusive! Efforts to counter hate speech should be inclusive of different types of hate speech and the groups they target. Consider gendered perspectives on inter-communal conflict and hate speech targeting. Until a definition exists that has wide agreement across civil society actors in Myanmar the definition of hate speech used in this report can be used to support inclusive approaches to countering hate speech.

Consider the unique strengths and challenges of grassroots actors

It is important to highlight the unique value and challenges faced by grassroots actors working to counter hate speech. Much hate speech in Myanmar continues offline and maneuvers within local contexts it is critical to support grassroots actors working in conflict prone areas.

Expecting that the sample is representative of grassroots actors around the country, grassroots respondents were found to have high motivation and deep knowledge of the context. They face unique challenges to access funding, gain exposure to donors and receive technical support. Many have low English language ability and low experience managing grants as well as low capacity in human resources, monitoring and evaluation, administration, etc. They are further at higher risk to be targets of physical attack by hate speech actors. Their networks don't often reach to coordination mechanisms based in Yangon and in many cases, they don't have much connection with larger national NGOs based in Yangon.

Consider direct strategies and indirect approaches

In review of the array of direct and indirect approaches to counter hate speech outlined in the findings section of this stakeholder mapping report actors should consider a range of approaches they may take (or support others to take) to address hate speech and associated violence.



Considering the range of direct approaches and indirect approaches in this report, actors may plan more comprehensive, coordinated and strategic efforts to counter hate speech.

Recommendations

General recommendations

1. Support cyber security for actors countering hate speech

As online security is an issue for the vast majority groups involved in data collection process for this stakeholder mapping and many groups have been targets of cyber-attack, any technical support to enhance the cyber security competency of civil society groups would be of great value. Training and technical support in this area would be effective and well received.

2. Develop a shared definition of hate speech, dangerous speech & associated terms

If there were a shared definition of hate speech and dangerous speech amongst civil society actors it would enhance their ability for coordination and collaboration. Even the process of creating a shared definition is an opportunity for collaboration and indeed necessary. If any actors were to take the initiative to facilitate a collaborative and participatory process that diverse civil society actors may agree on a shared definition of hate speech, dangerous speech and associated terms it would enhance the ability of all actors working to counter hate speech to coordinate their actions and develop collaborative strategies.

3. Produce a hate speech focused conflict analysis

Producing a hate speech focused conflict analysis that could be shared amongst key actors working to counter hate speech would support their ability to develop strategic projects and activities. It would further promote their ability to coordinate and act with a more cohesive strategy across organizations. Periodic updates would be needed.

4. Create/promote opportunities for formal and informal collaboration

Events and activities that bring diverse groups together who share aims of promoting interfaith harmony, countering hate speech and producing peace speech would enhance the ability of actors countering hate speech to come up with innovative and strategic interventions. The aim and utility of collaboration would be to produce new ideas and approaches to counter hate speech as well as formulate collaborative strategies for action.

5. Create/promote mechanisms and activities that enhance coordination

Promoting mechanisms for more coordinated action will enhance the ability of all actors involved in efforts to counter hate speech. Further, events and activities that bring diverse actors countering hate speech together allow groups to both formally and informally coordinate their actions. Some respondents further recommended investment in online coordination mechanisms (private servers) for countering hate speech, news verification, and rumor mitigation.

6. Support strategic planning/Monitoring and Evaluation capacity of actors countering hate speech

Noting that civil society groups taking a wide range of strategies and approaches to counter hate speech struggle with creating practical monitoring and evaluation systems and tools both to demonstrate their results and to produce learning that will increase the effectiveness of their interventions, any monitoring and evaluating skills training and support provided to these actors would be of great value. Actors intending to support civil society groups in this way should recognize that the needs of grassroots actors are often different from more developed organizations operating national programs. Some organizations operate with few staff members while others have dedicated monitoring and evaluation personnel. Actors conducting monitoring



and evaluation skills training and support should recognize unique needs of diverse civil society groups and adapt their interventions accordingly. Under the same project as this stakeholder mapping research, Search for Common Ground has been working with a number of key actors in the sector to develop the Myanmar Impact Toolkit to support organizations to monitor and evaluate their counter hate speech initiatives. This toolkit will be published soon and disseminated widely.

7. Invite more diverse stakeholders to technical and capacity building activities

Recognizing that many grassroots actors and other civil society groups around the country have motivation but lack capacity in a number of areas, inviting more diverse stakeholders to capacity building activities would increase the reach of efforts to counter hate speech. More diverse involvement would also contribute additional unique and creative interventions into the national efforts to counter hate speech.

Recommendations to enhance effectiveness of hate speech monitoring and response

8. Establish a coordination mechanism for hate speech monitoring and response

In review of existing coordination mechanisms, it is apparent that there currently exists no coordination mechanism for actors involved in hate speech monitoring and response. Furthermore, it was clear from respondents during data collection that this is a major gap for those involved in hate speech monitoring and response. If any actors took initiative to establish a coordination mechanism for actors involved in hate speech monitoring and response it would have a positive contribution to overall efforts in this area.

9. Map hate speech actors

Mapping conflict actors and producing a document shared amongst key organizations monitoring hate speech would help support coordinated hate speech monitoring across organizations, while reducing gaps and increasing effectiveness of their work. While no formal study has been done to clearly identify specific Facebook pages promoting hate speech, a hate speech mapping activity could be used to promote more cohesive and efficient hate speech monitoring and response. An activity such as hate speech mapping could be included in a hate speech focused conflict analysis or conducted separately analyzing actors, strategies and messages/narratives. Periodic updates would be needed.

10. Support the development of a Burmese language hate speech lexicon

If a lexicon of hate speech terms and phrases were produced (with wide participation), it would be easier for individual groups to track and monitor hate speech, to coordinate efforts to track hate speech, to measure change in levels of hate speech over time and to produce software to automate the process of tracking hate speech.

A prerequisite to this would be the creation of shared definitions of hate speech, dangerous speech and associated terms. Once shared definitions exist a collective of organizations could feasibly move forward to the production of a Burmese language hate speech lexicon. Such a lexicon could be made up of documents from Bindez and numerous organizations working to monitor hate speech who already have existing hate speech terms coded and documented. The hate speech lexicon would help actors to develop a universal coding system that would lay the foundation for hate speech tracking software (recommendation 10)

11. Make software for tracking hate speech fully operational

If a well-developed and quality lexicon of hate speech words and phrases were produced, then leading organizations could collaborate with Bindez to make Bindez Insights fully operational. Note that further work should not be conducted to develop this software until a shared definition of hate



speech and dangerous speech amongst actors working to counter hate speech (recommendation 2), and a hate speech lexicon is complete (recommendation 9). Automated hate speech monitoring with an updated Bindez Insights app would be more effective, and useful for hate speech monitoring, M&E and measuring long-term changes in hate speech.

Recommendations to promote strategic peace media and counter messaging

12. Support targeted technical skills training for conducting social media campaigns

As per recognized low capacity in technical skills for leveraging social media to counter hate speech, support should be provided to offer training to local organizations seeking to develop social media messaging and build social media campaigns. Workshops and trainings in graphics, analytics, video production/editing, techniques to boost content viewership, messaging/counter-messaging and other themes may be considered.

13. Support capacity development in peacebuilding and counter-messaging

Conducting trainings with civil society groups to develop their technical capacity in peacebuilding strategy and counter messaging will help campaigns to develop innovative peace media and strategic counter-messaging campaigns. It would be useful to include workshops about how best to deal with hate speech attacks flooding their Facebook posts, as this is an issue all groups deal with.

14. Involve diverse stakeholders as counter hate speech messengers

As key actors involved in producing and spreading hate speech are monks and political leaders, extra effort should be given to involving monks and political leaders in initiatives producing and sharing counter messages. Actors involved in producing peace media and counter messaging should further consider approaches to include the involvement of cultural icons and individuals formerly involved in groups promoting hate speech to deliver messages. Involving cultural icons such as artists, musicians, media personalities, comedians, bloggers, persons of influence and others can have a profound positive influence on cultural perceptions, norms and behaviors while involving those formerly associated with groups promoting hate speech ensures messages have stronger influence on those currently involved in such groups.

