In October 2015, Tanzania held its fifth multiparty election – the most competitive in the nation’s history, which saw the ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi retain its large legislative majority and secure the presidency for John Magufuli. While polling was largely peaceful, the electoral period was marred by incidents, including violence and the annulment of the vote in Zanzibar and a crackdown on civil society and perceived opponents to the ruling party in different parts of the country, leaving space for future resentment. After the elections, demands for change and inclusive processes increased, especially among urban and young citizens. However, these demands have not been met and opposition groups have called for demonstrations, accusing the president of undermining the rule of law by pushing forwards reforms unilaterally, at the expenses of democracy and human rights. While the newly-elected president quickly gained popularity for some of the reforms that he launched against corruption or inefficiency in public service, his government faces a number of challenges that need to be tackled for Tanzania to remain a model of peace and stability in the region.

While the poverty rate has regularly declined in the past few years, the number of Tanzanians living below the poverty line has remained almost unchanged because of population growth. Every year, approximatively 800,000 youth enter the into labor force, putting pressure on the economy. In this context, the exploitation of natural resources has been a critical economic driver for the country. However, it has also been a major challenge, especially in remote and underdeveloped regions. In these areas, large businesses tend to be disconnected to local economic activities and disrupt traditional land and resource management mechanisms, while raising expectations without bringing about economic development. The exploitation of natural resources has triggered conflicts, particularly around land management, that have affected the social fabric of communities. Mineral resource and land use issues have been identified as two of the main drivers of instability in Tanzania, whose performance on the Resource Governance Index has been characterized as “weak.” Root causes include a lack of information among the population and civil society on these issues, and especially the questions of land rights, land compensation processes, and the management of resources and revenues. In the upcoming years, uncertainty within the sector and potential stagnation is foreseen, due to an increase in taxes and ambiguity regarding some of the country’s regulations for the sector. The decision of the government to support artisanal mining could create additional
tensions between companies, artisanal miners and communities, while the development of the oil and gas sector while the mining sector stagnates could lead to growing frustrations, as the former does not create as many jobs as the latter.

Another destabilizing factor for the country is related to an increase in violent Islamist-related activity in the past few years, putting Tanzania at risk of becoming a new center for violent extremism in the region.\(^3\) Violent extremist groups are leading recruitment efforts, using outreach and social media to reach out to vulnerable groups. They have been exploiting push factors such as political and economic issues, including high level of unemployment and corruption, lack of opportunities for youth participation, and the feeling of hopelessness and powerlessness, especially among Muslim youth. This perception of victimization of Tanzanian Muslims has been manipulated through pull factors, and transnational organizations have now emanated to a home-grown problem. Despite the country’s vulnerability, violent extremism issues are largely taboo and communities are reluctant and fearful to discuss them. As a result, communities and their leaders are ill-equipped to respond to risks of recruitment and radicalization, lacking understanding and opportunities for engagement. In addition, the use of harsh security measures and secrecy by the authorities rather than consultation and multi-stakeholder engagement has hindered the development of community-based and locally-owned approaches to the problem. This poses a serious threat to social cohesion, particularly in cities with religiously mixed and young populations, and in marginalized peripheries.

In this context, there is a need to address these underlying political and socio-economic issues, with a focus on conflict prevention, to increase resiliency and strengthen a culture of peace, constructive participation and inclusion in Tanzania.

**Strategic Response**

Leveraging its seven years working in Tanzania, Search for Common Ground, one of the largest conflict transformation organizations in the world, has developed its vision for the country: “In 2021, Tanzania is a peaceful and stable country, where all citizens, including marginalized groups, peacefully coexist, actively participate in governance processes, and collaborate to constructively address issues, and where positive leadership at all levels of society and effective natural resource management lead to sustainable development.”

To achieve this vision, and based on a series of consultations with key stakeholders in Tanzania, an analysis of key conflict issues and opportunities, as well as a reflection on gaps and our added-value, Search has identified three key strategic cross-cutting objectives, as well as a series of related outcomes:

1) **To increase space for constructive, inclusive and multi-stakeholder dialogue, information-sharing and two-way communications among institutions and communities.**

**Outcome 1.1:** Dialogue and information-sharing platforms involving multiple stakeholders and citizens are established and/or strengthened.

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\(^3\) UNDP has classified Tanzania as an “at-risk” country in terms of violent extremism in Africa.
Outcome 1.2: Decision-making processes affecting communities are informed by and connected to local dynamics.

2) To enhance citizen awareness, participation and engagement in sustainable development.

Outcome 2.1: Citizens, including marginalized groups, have the knowledge, skills and opportunities to participate in decision-making processes that affect their development.

Outcome 2.2: Increase in active citizenship, fostering a sense of self-agency among communities.

3) To promote positive leadership and collaboration between a diversity of stakeholders.

Outcome 3.1: Local capacities for positive leadership and non-violent collaboration are increased among a diversity of stakeholders.

Outcome 3.2: Collaboration among leaders from different backgrounds to address shared issues is increased.

Search has identified two key themes to be addressed as priorities in the scope of these objectives:

1) Promoting Sustainable Business Practices

Recognizing the high impact that extractive industries have on affected communities, Search is committed to promoting sustainable business practices in Tanzania, leveraging its Common Ground approach to stakeholder engagement. Our approach is focused on creating and strengthening effective mechanisms for communication, dialogue and collaboration around a common vision for local development, bringing together communities, companies and local authorities. Recognizing the unbalance that can exist between citizens and other key stakeholders, Search aims to inform and empower local communities to be more participative and take charge of their own development. We will equip communities and their leaders with the knowledge and skills necessary to ensure that they can meaningfully participate in efforts to shape their relationships with businesses and authorities, as well as the development of their community, in a constructive and positive manner. At the same time, Search will work with companies, local authorities and law enforcement to foster transparency, accountability and upholding human rights while ensuring that these key stakeholders do not only focus on security for extractive companies but also on supporting local community development. Finally, Search will bring community, companies and authorities at the local and also national level to provide them with regular platforms to find constructive and innovative alternatives to address issues, using these platforms to share information, prevent rumors and manipulations, manage expectations and foster partnerships for peaceful coexistence and sustainable development. To achieve these objectives, Search will leverage the opportunity provided by existing frameworks such as the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, of which Search is a signatory, the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

2) Transforming Violent Extremism

To respond to the recent increase in violent extremism activities in Tanzania, Search has designed a prevention strategy to transforming violent extremism, with community empowerment and multi-stakeholder dialogue at its core. Though it makes international headlines, violent extremism is local. One of the main strengths of violent extremist organizations is their understanding of the local
context, cultural practices and community fabric. Search believes that the most effective, sustainable, and constructive approach to transforming violent extremism is to enable and empower communities vulnerable to recruitment to use locally-designed non-violent means to address their grievances and self-realize. To achieve this, we will engage communities and strengthen healthy relationships across dividing lines, leveraging the Tanzanian culture of peace and tolerance based on the ‘Ujamaa’ (brotherhood) model. We will promote both understanding and collaboration around concrete initiatives that will foster self-agency and dignity. We will also ensure the inclusion of vulnerable groups, and especially young men and women, to address marginalization and exclusion, main pull factors of recruitment. Throughout our interventions, we will encourage transparency and multi-stakeholder engagement, with the goal to enhance community relationships with local authorities and security forces, while using a gradual approach that take into account the sensitivities of the issue. Finally, we will aim to strengthen positive and constructive narratives. Search’s experience has shown that to promote peaceful coexistence and prevent violence, pushing forward positive narratives is more powerful than developing counter narratives or emphasizing the negative value in extremist narratives. Therefore, we will leverage our media expertise, including with social media, to amplify perspectives and ideas that reduce the appeal of violence as an option and increase the appeal of alternative, constructive pathways for addressing grievances and collaborative problem-solving.

**Geographic Focus**

In light of the themes that Search will prioritize, we will focus our interventions on areas at-risk of violent extremism and areas with high presence of extractive industries. In terms of violent extremism, Search has identified four areas as particularly vulnerable: Arusha, Dar es Salaam, Tanga and Zanzibar. These areas are seen as at-risk due to their young and religiously mixed population and for Tanga and Zanzibar their geography: marginalized peripheries in geographic proximity with Kenya, Somalia and Islamist logistical hubs of the Arab gulf. In terms of promoting sustainable business practices, Search will focus on areas where natural resources can be found, but that are also some of the most marginalized and unstable regions of the country (North Mara, shores of Lake Tanganyika, Nyasa, and Malawi, etc.).

**Organizational Background and Added-Value**

Founded in 1982, Search is an international conflict transformation organization dedicated to transforming the way the world deals with conflict, away from adversarial approaches, toward cooperative solutions. Search’s core principles include reaching out to all parties and encouraging them to cooperate with those they disagree and to focus on positive opportunities and commonalities. Search has been working in Tanzania since 2010 to reduce violence against women, promote good governance, encourage objectivity in media, and overcome the differences that divide Tanzanians. Our program employs a multi-pronged approach focused on conflict sensitive and inclusive engagement to incorporate the perspectives of multiple stakeholders, including vulnerable groups such as women and youth. Through our engagement, we started the process of building local capacity for conflict transformation and protection, empowered women and youth and fostered peaceful coexistence among communities in both mainland and Zanzibar.
Our toolbox in Tanzania includes: interactive training material and experienced trainers in conflict transformation, media for peacebuilding and on security and human rights; *The Team*, a TV and radio series designed to engage men and women in empowering and proactive discussions around gender inequality, disseminated both via media outlets and mobile cinema screenings; *Umoja Peace Clubs*, youth-led structures positively engaging students; and participatory theater and other dialogue mechanisms designed to foster constructive interaction between a diversity of stakeholders. Search is also one of the few international NGOs signatory to the Voluntary Principles on Business and Human Rights, and has developed dedicated approaches to promote sustainable business practices and transform violent extremism.

Search has extensive experience working with civil society organizations in both mainland and Zanzibar, local radio stations, local authorities and law enforcement, and especially the police, and with extractive industries. Key partnerships developed by Search in Tanzania have included the Tanzania Media Women Association, (Re)Claim Women’s Space for World Heritage, the Zanzibar Legal Services Center, the Tanga Youth Development Association and Acacia, the largest gold mining company in Tanzania.

Leveraging its presence, toolbox and relationships, Search has achieved key successes that highlight the added value of Search to promote conflict transformation in Tanzania:

▪ Through our project “Promoting Healthy State-Citizen Relations in Africa,” we sought to promote positive models of multi-stakeholder engagement. We fostered partnership and bridge building between government and civil society, building their capacity to interact constructively and giving them opportunities to collaborate with each other. As a result, we contributed to reducing conflict and improving governance by reducing tensions and creating space for dialogue between the two parties.

▪ Search’s engagement in areas impacted by the presence of extractive industries has contributed to reducing violence and grievances while promoting human rights. In North Mara, both community members and the police reported that the relationship between officers and community members had improved following training and programs conducted by Search on conflict resolution and human rights. The relevance of our approach was also highlighted by efforts towards its institutionalization. Senior police officers have begun taking over from Search as lead facilitators for the training for other police officers, a critical step towards the police themselves taking an active role in improving their performance.

▪ Search has contributed to respond to growing interreligious tensions in Zanzibar, where we built the capacity of local journalists to cover these issues in a professional, constructive and interactive manner. With our support, Zanzibari journalists produced and broadcast radio programs promoting peace and coexistence, enabling citizens to address issues that were particularly sensitive.

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**Search’s Strengths**

One of the few NGOs working on peacebuilding in Tanzania, with an impartial reputation and a proven track record in conflict transformation;

A unique Common Ground Approach to peacebuilding and conflict transformation, applied to a variety of domains;

A unique media expertise that enables SFCG to speak to the realities of thousands of people;

A diversity of partnerships with civil society, government, law enforcement and the international donor community.