

Partners Yemen and Partners Bulgaria

Enhancing Women's Engagement
in Track II Peace Processes
Gender and Context Analysis

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Executive Summary

The Enhancing Women's Engagement in Track II Peace Processes, a project run by Partners Yemen in collaboration with Partners Bulgaria and supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Yemen will enhance the role of the second generation of women leaders in the peace process at Track I and Track II in order to increase women leadership and visibility at the local and national levels and to establish communication mechanisms between women and decision - makers. As part of initial project activities Partners Bulgaria and Partners Yemen designed and conducted a gender and context assessment to understand the current context and explore what is the situation of women's political engagement and the underlying factors that create obstacles to women's public participation in Yemen. The analysis focuses on the opportunities for success, lessons learned and ways to enable the new generation of women. It determines more clearly the challenges and opportunities available in order to support a realistic approach to women's inclusion in Track II peace process in the four targeted governorates of Taiz, Aden, Hadhramaut and Marib.

This report is based on quantitative and qualitative data obtained through online questionnaire and through interviews and focus groups conducted with local and international NGOs, local officials, academics, judges, civil society representatives, and tribal leaders in the target governorates. Research was conducted between April and June 2024. In each governorate, two focus groups were conducted – one with female participants and one with mixed group of participants. A total of 259 respondents participated in the online questionnaire; 65 participants took part in the focus groups - 49 women and 16 men. In total, 308 people took part in this assessment.

The assessment begins with a context analysis, including the effect of changes in the regional and local dynamics on women and the wider population. This is followed by a section outlining how communities deal with civil conflicts and what is the women's contribution to conflict resolution. This section also provides an analysis of existing mechanisms which deal with conflicts and potential and existing roles of women in conflict resolution at local and national levels in Yemen. Special attention is given to changing gender roles and the effect of women's economic activities on family dynamics. Women's public participation is explored through various examples of women's engagement or lack of engagement in government and political process. The assessment looks into the level of political parties' openness towards women's engagement in politics.

The assessment concludes with three sets of recommendations: strategies for enhancing the new generation of women's participation in Track II peace process; lessons learned from national and international NGOs working in Yemen; and strategies and ways forward for the program.

Recommendations for enhancing new generation of women's political participation are related to applying a multi-sector approach to create enabling environment and overcome the existing obstacles, discriminatory practices and multiple marginalisation which deprives Yemeni women from social participation, economic opportunities and political engagement. Recommendations from participants in the assessment include: increasing community and family awareness; education and capacity building along with continuous support and protection of women activists; networking and mutual endorsement of women; empowering women-led organisations; promoting

gender equality in political process and in all areas of public life; engaging women in mediation and conciliation committees; and systematic efforts by various stakeholders to bring women to peace negotiations process.

In the final section of the assessment titled “Strategies and ways forward for the program” it is recommended that Partners Yemen has to consider the impact of their program on women and perform conflict and gender sensitive approach to understand how the program has a potential to change the family and community dynamics and consider mitigating any harmful consequences for women, if any. It is also important the team to build channels of communication between the new generation of women leaders and authorities and to apply instruments for women’s engagement such as networking, participation in communication platforms and consultative mechanisms, providing opportunities for women’s visibility, getting their voices across and bringing their prospective in the Track II peace negotiation process.

This assessment found that the overall and specific objectives of the Program are valid and necessary. The assessment reaffirms the urgent need for building freer and just environment for women to be able to assert their social, economic and political rights. The deterioration of public services and the absence or inefficiency of government strategies to address the humanitarian crisis and to deal with the ongoing conflict have left a gap which needs community mobilization, more active civil society and higher level of women’s involvement in public live – strategies which Partners Yemen is well-positioned to apply.

The Enhancing Women's Engagement in Track II Peace Process project intends to respond to the gap in women's underrepresentation in peace talks and political discussions. It will work to enhance the engagement of Yemeni women leaders (Second Generation of Women Leaders SGWL) in Track II peace processes. The new generation of women leaders is under focus due to their potential to influence and their willingness to participate and make change. The project contributes to promoting a just and inclusive peace by increasing social inclusion and meaningful participation of women and youth in the Track II process. It aims to strengthen women leadership in peace discussions by supporting women leaders to participate in the political process.

The goal of the project is to enhance the role of the second generation of women leaders in the peace process at Track I and Track II in order to increase women leadership and visibility at the local and national levels and to establish communication mechanisms between women and decision - makers.

The Gender and Context Analysis aims to explore what is the situation of women's political participation in the 4 target regions. The expectation towards this work is to get a better understanding of gender dynamics and the roles of men and women, especially in political parties. This context is specific and conflict sensitive, and therefore gender analysis will help validate the correlation between women's engagement and peace progress in Track II that impact Track I; the analysis will focus on the opportunities for success, lessons learned and ways to enable the new generation of women. This process will include identifying the existing women's access and available communication mechanisms to Track II.

The analysis will provide insights on the existing data and use it for further design of the proposed course of training and outreach activities under this project. More precisely, the Analysis in the target regions aims at:

- Examine the volatile context and the effect of changes in the regional dynamics in recent months (since October 2023);
- Explore the drivers of the current conflict and their impact on women and the wider population;
- Identify how the roles of men and women define the level and scope of participation in community matters and in the political parties;
- Examine factors which relate to new generation of women engagement in political parties;
- Identify the level of awareness of men and women towards the necessity of women participation in the Track II peace process;
- Explore opportunities for women to participate in the Track II peace process and existing efforts to increase women's participation;
- Describe lessons learned and ways to enable a new generation of women.
- Gather data on the mechanisms to manage the relationships and coordination between women leaders, higher authorities, and decision-makers with the ability to access Track II negotiations that lead to impacting Track I dynamics through advocacy and consultations
- Outline the level of preparedness and capacity of the next generation of women leaders to engage in the peace process.

Methodology

The assessment included quantitative and qualitative research through focus groups and interviews.

The quantitative research included a questionnaire distributed online mostly to women leaders; as well as to men, including authority figures in positions of power and decision-making.

The total number of respondents, who anonymously filled the questionnaire, was **259**. In terms of gender, **207** of them were women (%79.9); **52** participants were men (20.1%).

Most of the respondents were civil society activists (65.6%), while 13.1% declared that they were members of political parties. Only 5% of the respondents represented a local authority. 16,2 % did not point out their affiliation.

Participants were located in various regions of residence but the majority were from Aden (22,4%), Hadhramaut (20,5%), Taiz (16,2%) and Sana'a (14,7%). The rest of respondents were from various locations, including Marib, Abyan, Ibb, people living abroad and others.

Table 1 Quantitative Sample per Agency Of Participants and Gender

Do you consider yourself as?	Femal	Male	Grand Total	%
Civil Society Activist	134	36	170	%66
Local Authority	10	3	13	%5
None of the above	33	9	42	%16
Political Party	30	4	34	%13
Grand Total	204	52	259	%100

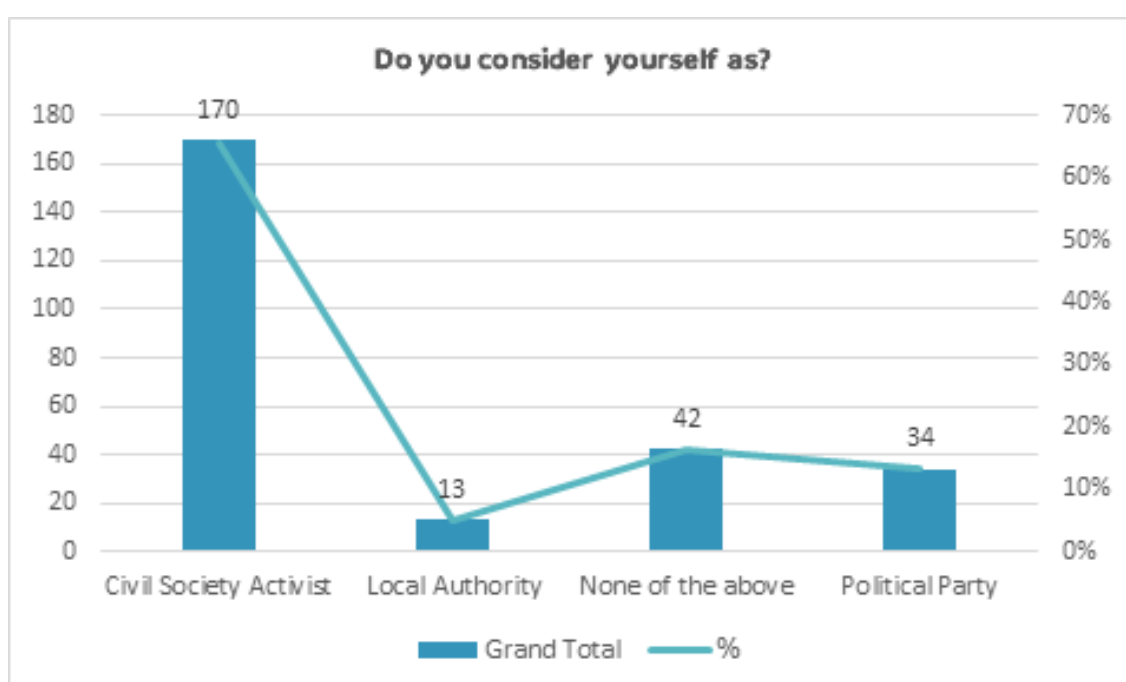


Figure 1 Quantitative Sample per Agency of Participants

Participants were located in various regions, with the majority from Aden (22.4%), Hadhramaut (20.5%), Taiz (16.2%), and Sana'a (14.7%). The remaining respondents came from other locations, including Marib, Abyan, Ibb, and those living abroad.

Table 2 Quantitative Sample per Location

Do you consider yourself as?					
Residence	Civil Society Activist	Local Authority	None of the above	Political Party	Grand Total
Abyan	4				4
Aden	40	2	5	11	58
Al-Dhale'e	1				1
Al-Hudaydah	1				1
Al-Jawf	1				1
Amanat Alasimah	8			1	9
Hadramawt	29	4	16	4	53
Ibb	5		6		11
Lahij	1			1	2
Mareb	28	2	1	8	39
out of Yemen	5		1		6
Sanaa	17	1	9	2	29
Shabwa		2			2
Taiz	30	2	4	7	43
Grand Total	170	13	42	34	259

The qualitative assessment included seven focus groups and 9 individual interviews. Six focus groups engaged participants from Hadhramaut, Taiz and Aden. One focus group was conducted with representatives of international organisations. Two focus groups were conducted in each region - a women's group and a mixed group (males and females). All focus groups were conducted in presence. Individual interviews were conducted online or in-person. The number of all participants was 65 - 49 women and 16 men.

Table 3 Qualitative Sample

Governorate	Mixed FGD		Women only FGD	Individual interview	
	Women	Men		Women	Men
Taiz (2 Focus groups)	5	3	8	2	1
Aden (2 Focus groups)	5	2	7	2	1
Hadhramout (2 Focus groups)	4	4	8	1	2
INGOs (1 Focus group)	7	3			
Total	21	12	23	5	4

Thematic areas

Based on the objectives of the analysis, several themes related to women's political participation have been identified to explore within the research framework, namely:

1. Context and conflict analysis

Questions in this area explore the participants' perception of various aspects of the conflict situation in Yemen and their impact on women and girls, men and boys. Participants can share their opinion about measures that can be taken to improve the situation, including women's role in these efforts. Various aspects of consequences of the conflict on human security are explored: economic, food, health, community, personal, ecological and political security; media freedom and ways to address disinformation. This section looks further into the conflict situation, the actors involved and the underlying factors that reinforce conflict and frozen development. The questions include analysis of existing resources (programs and mechanisms for dealing with conflict at local and national level), exploration of challenges, and available opportunities for supporting a realistic approach to conflict resolution in the four regions in Yemen, strategies and ways forward.

2. Gender roles

These sets of questions are designed to find how the roles of men and women define the level and scope of participation in community matters as well as their access to political participation. Traditional roles of women are explored in relation to factors such as economic decline, violations, exploitation and abuse, sectarianism and ideology. It is important to know how the conflict affects life at home and how women cope, including their ability to influence men leading up to, and during, the conflict.

3. Women engagement in political parties

This section aims at exploring women's political participation and factors that facilitate or create obstacles to their access to the political process. A special focus is given to the new generation of women and their motivation to engage in politics, the availability of family and community support, the cost and benefits of such political engagement. Information is gathered about how open the political parties are for women, what conditions they create to attract women and what roles women take in existing political groups.

4. Participation in Track II peace process.

This section looks at the awareness about the necessity of women's participation in the Track II peace process. Opportunities for women to participate in peace negotiations are explored as well as the existing efforts to increase women's participation. Collecting lessons learned and ways to enable a new generation of women will provide insights for creating an enabling environment for involvement of a new generation of women leaders in the peace process.

5. Mechanisms for coordination and communication

Participants share information about existing mechanisms to manage relationships and coordination between women leaders and higher authorities and decision-makers with the ability to access Track II negotiations. They generate ideas how such mechanisms can be improved or created and what support can be given to women who are capable and motivated to participate in the political process and peace negotiations.

6. Capacity building needs

The aim of this section is to explore the capacity building needs of the new generation of women leaders. The responses to these questions will help design a customised training program for women leaders in order to increase their knowledge and skills, so they can better engage in the political processes and participate and provide valuable contribution to Track II diplomacy.

The study was conducted in April – June 2024.

Context Analysis

Participants in the online questionnaire were asked to evaluate the situation in their area in Yemen in the last 6 months thinking of various aspects of life and using a -5step scale ranging from “much better” to “much worse”.

While many participants do not find any improvement in the situation in their area, many more respondents think the conditions of life have been (somewhat or significantly) worsening during the last 6 months.

More than half of the respondents believe the state of households is unbearable and this includes basic elements of life such as the “capacity of a household to meet their needs”, “access to food and people’s capacity to pay for their food”, “a private sector that is flexible and takes into account the hardship of living” and “means to livelihood”.

Half of respondents perceive that the infrastructure (housing, electricity, roads) is also worsening.

Substantial number of people think providing people with humanitarian assistance has become more problematic (%48); school access is more difficult (%46); community safety gets compromised (%45); and access to health services and medicines is worsening (%43).

There are similar negative tendencies with regard to environmental challenges such as flooding and drought (%41); judicial and administrative services (%41); sanitation system (%40); childcare services (%38) and access to clean water (%35).

For %39 of respondents official strategies to prevent exposure to diseases are failing (%31); the overall community resilience becomes weaker (%39), as well as mechanisms for resolving conflicts (%31).

Only a few respondents found big improvements in some aspects of the situation. Around a quarter of respondents declared some improvement especially in areas such as availability of mediation and conflict resolution mechanisms (%26); community resilience (%23); access to clean water (%24) and child care services (%24).

How would you evaluate the situation in your area in Yemen in the last 6 months? (N=259) (%)

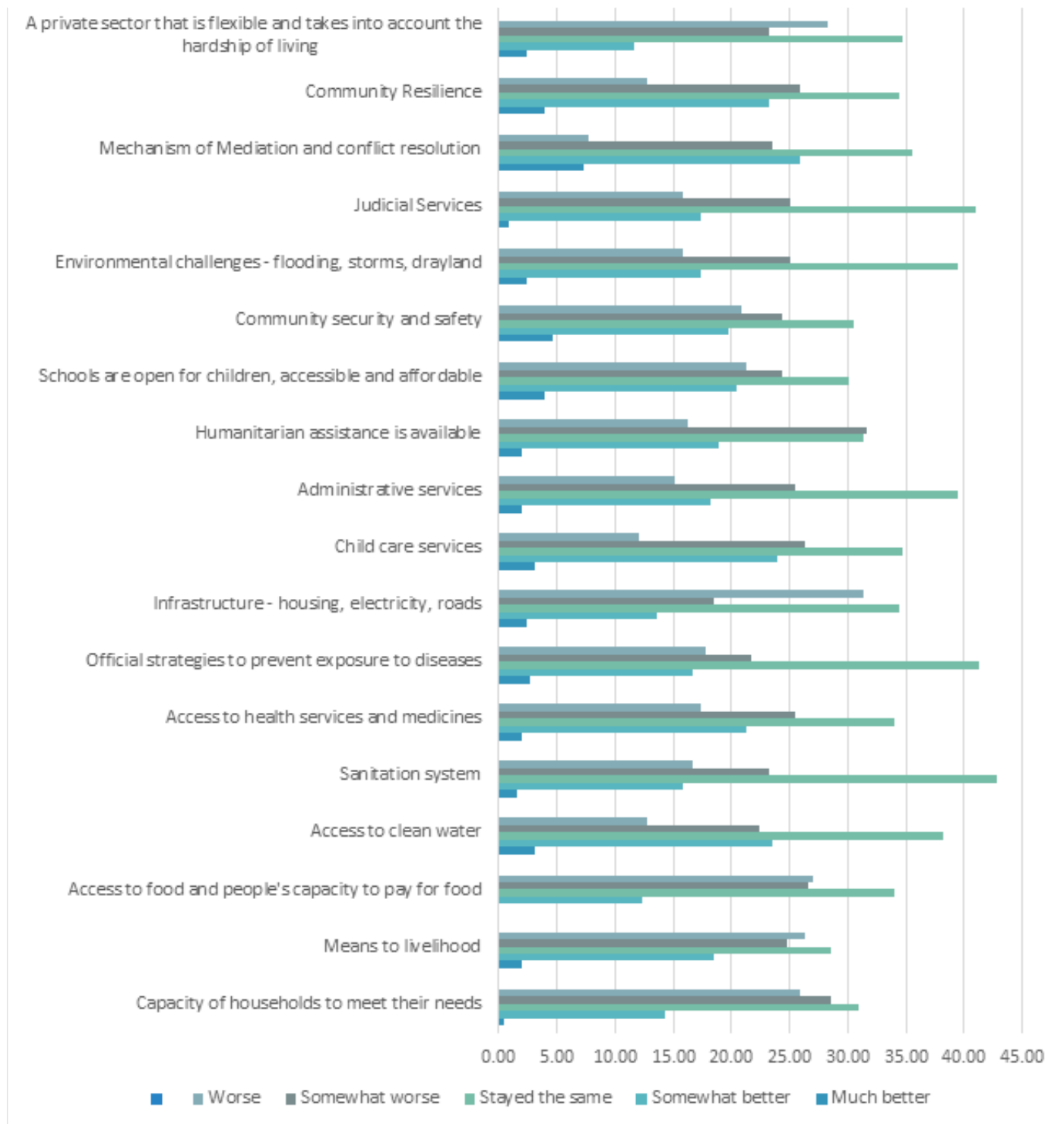


Figure 2 Perception of the situation in Yemen

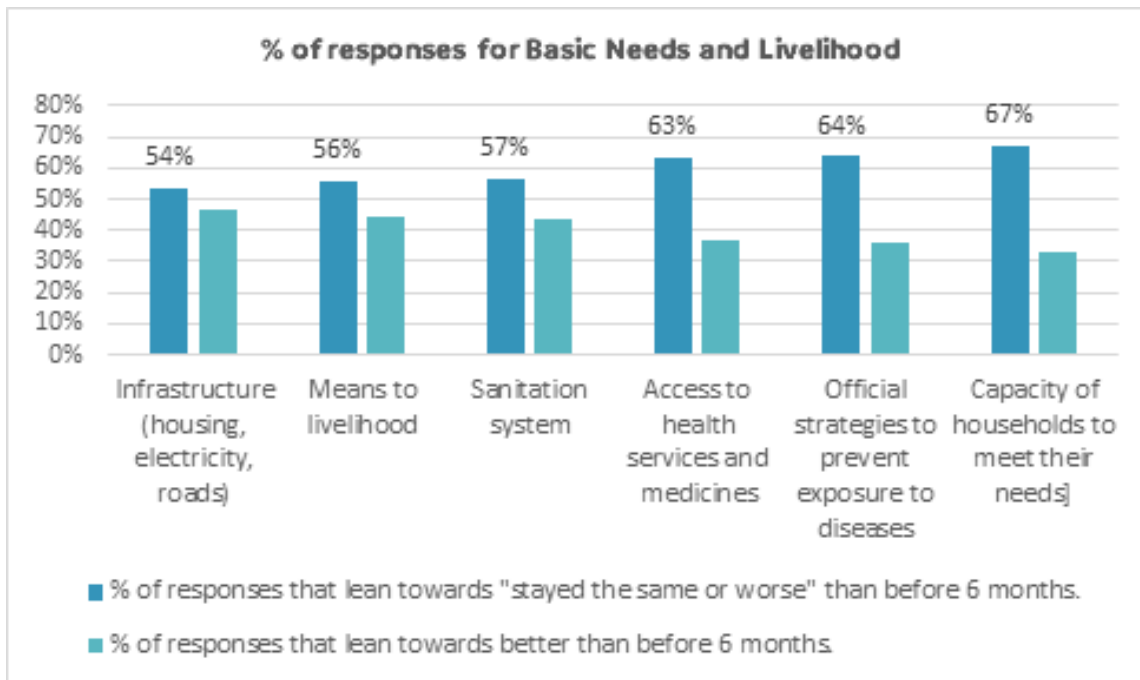


Figure 3 Aspects of life worsening in the last months

The situation in Yemen over the past six months reveals significant challenges across various aspects of life, as illustrated by recent survey results. A considerable percentage of respondents indicated that infrastructure—including housing, electricity, and roads—has either stayed the same or worsened, with 54% of responses reflecting this sentiment. In terms of livelihood, 56% of respondents reported that their means to earn a living have either remained stagnant or declined. The sanitation system also presents a significant concern, with 57% of respondents stating it has not improved. Access to health services and medicines is another critical area, with 63% of respondents indicating that conditions have worsened. Moreover, 64% of respondents noted that official strategies to prevent disease exposure have either stagnated or deteriorated. A staggering 67% of respondents expressed that their households' capacity to meet basic needs has declined.

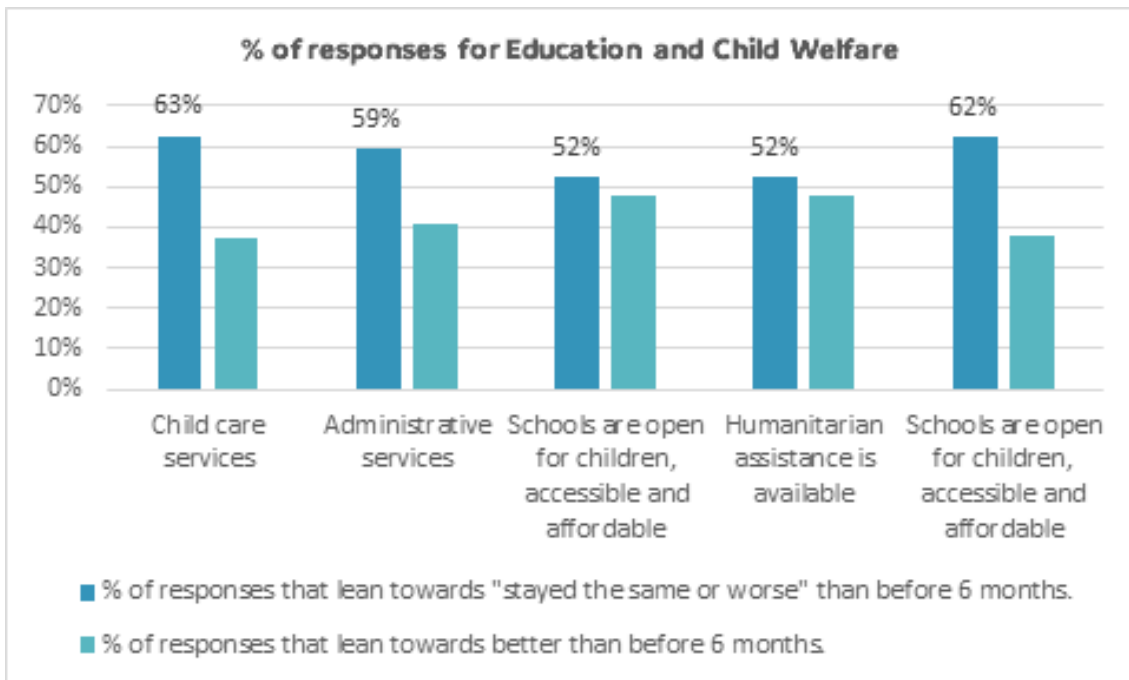


Figure 4 % Of responses for Education and Child Welfare

The situation regarding education and child welfare in Yemen has shown concerning trends over the past six months, as reflected in the survey results. A significant 63% of respondents indicated that childcare services have either stayed the same or worsened, highlighting a critical area in need of improvement. In terms of administrative services, 59% of respondents reported that conditions have not improved, suggesting a need for better governance and support systems. The accessibility and affordability of schools for children also remain a challenge, with 52% of respondents indicating that the situation has either stagnated or declined. This indicates a pressing need for initiatives that ensure schools are both accessible and affordable to all families, which could include subsidies or community-based education programs. Humanitarian assistance is another vital aspect, with 52% of respondents stating that its availability has not improved. A notable 62% of respondents expressed concerns about the status of schools, reiterating that access and affordability are significant barriers. The data underscores a troubling trend in education and child welfare, with many aspects showing little improvement or worsening conditions.

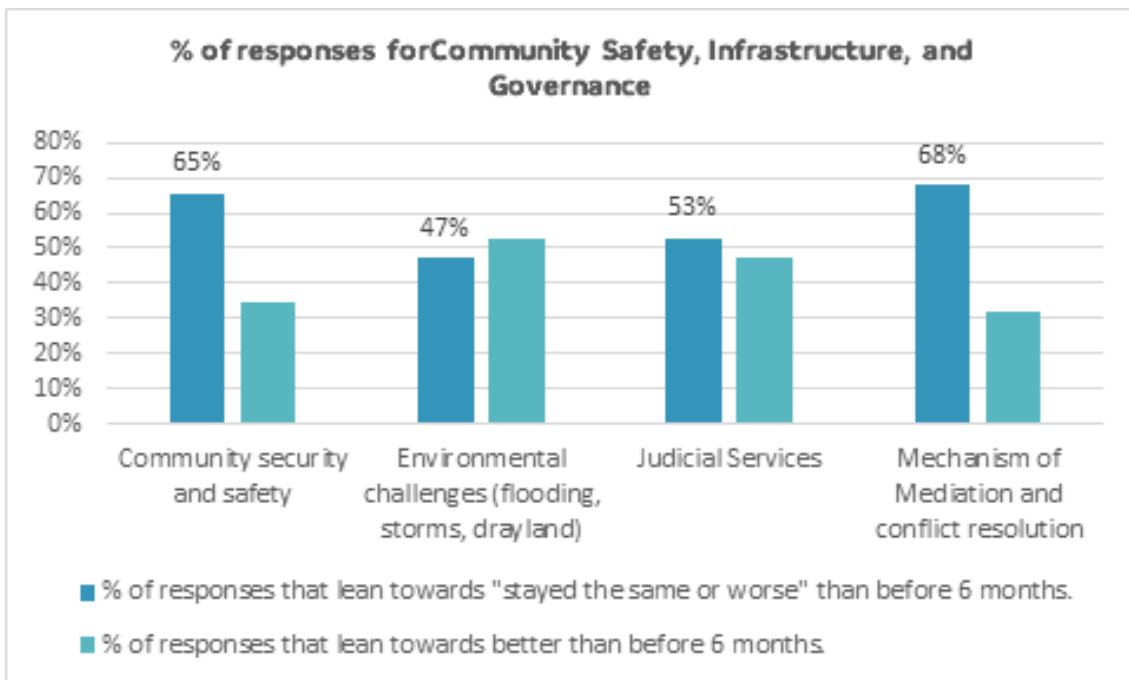


Figure 5 % Of responses for Community Safety, Infrastructure, and Governance

The current state of community safety, infrastructure, and governance in Yemen presents a challenging picture, as indicated by recent survey results. A substantial 65% of respondents reported that community security and safety have either deteriorated or remained the same over the past six months, highlighting a critical need for enhanced safety measures and community engagement. Additionally, while 47% of respondents noted environmental challenges, such as flooding and storms, have worsened, a slight majority of 53% felt that these conditions have improved, suggesting some progress in addressing these issues. Judicial services also reflect a concerning trend, with 53% of respondents indicating that they have not improved, underscoring the need for reforms to strengthen the legal system and ensure better access to justice for all citizens. Furthermore, a striking 68% of respondents noted that mechanisms for mediation and conflict resolution have either stagnated or declined, pointing to a significant gap in conflict management strategies that could help foster peace and stability within communities. The data reveals persistent challenges in community safety and governance, with many areas showing little to no improvement.

The situation of families has worsened recently due to the high cost of living and inability to cover basic needs. "Unemployment rate is high and it affects the access to food, water, services and children's ability to attend school because many of them have to be engaged in activities to provide for their family basic needs", shared a female participant from Taiz.

Access to food and water

Focus groups participants shared that there was a sharp increase of prices of rice, wheat and flour during the last months and families had to reduce their consumption of most essentials. Average families, not only the poor, are struggling, especially larger ones with many members. They eat twice a day instead of three (breakfast and dinner) while poor families reduced consumption to one meal a day. According to a female participant in the focus group from Hadhramaut, the meals often consist of poor quality rice with a bit of onion and tomato.

Malnutrition rates among children, pregnant women and the wider population are increasing, forcing authorities to open more centres to treat malnutrition.

Food becomes such a problem that some families are buying flour and other goods past their expiration date. A person from Hadhramaut shared that some families in Mukalla buy a chicken and share half of it with another family due to high living costs and low incomes. Fish and meat have become unaffordable due to their high cost. "There is an issue even with bread"- said another participant from the Hadhramaut region; she explained that the cost of a loaf of bread is about 90 YER and a family of five would need about **45000** YER only for the monthly cost of bread. At the same time the salaries of employees are around **50000** YER – completely inadequate to meet the family needs.

Water scarcity remains a main problem in Yemen due to the ongoing war and the difficult access to natural water resources. Agriculture has been severely affected leading to decrease of food production, increase in the cost of fertilisers and due to their import fees.. Rural areas have even more difficulties to access safe clean water and the cost of a tank of water (18000 – 28000 litres) becomes harder to afford. In Hadhramaut clean water does not reach some areas, leading to the purchase of commercial water (trucked water) which, according to one focus group female participant, costs (16000 to 18000 YER). The pressure comes also due to population density caused by displacement and refugees and there are no real solutions from the state. "**Water is available but not sufficient**" – said a woman from Hadhramaut.

In Taiz the economic situation deteriorated because of rising prices of food items and scarcity of water. "Families cannot provide sufficient and clean water. For example, in my neighbourhood (Al-Masabah neighbourhood), there is no water supply from any source, and all the residents rely on purchasing water", shared a female participant from Taiz.

Humanitarian organisations are trying to improve the situation in many areas but they lack efficiency at surveying, identifying and targeting people who are most in need.

According to a participant from CARE, which has been operating in both the Northern and Southern regions, the long duration of the conflict has a significant impact on the level of food security and on the health situation. It has resulted in the spread of diseases such as cholera and dengue fever.

Services

The urban expansion, creation of slums and overall overpopulation in cities such as Mukalla, which tripled after the beginning of the war, caused deterioration of the water supply, sanitation and sewage systems which have not been expanded and updated.

In Marib the influx of internally displaced persons and internal migrants caused further pressure on the existing weak services provision. The 2004 census recorded a population of 267,000, but due to war-induced displacement since 2014, the population has surged to around 2 million, mostly concentrated in Marib City and Marib Al Wadi districts. Despite Marib possessing oil and natural gas fields, a vital resource for the legitimate government and the local authority, the war has halted oil exports and, until a year and a half ago, domestic gas exports to northern Houthi-controlled areas. The World Food Programme (WFP) was providing food aid to approximately 75,000 displaced and affected families. However, due to funding cuts, aid distribution in northern Houthi-controlled areas stopped, delaying aid in Marib and threatening displaced people who rely on WFP assistance. Despite promises, aid distribution has been delayed for three months, creating a severe food crisis.

Additionally, war remnants and landmines have impacted agricultural areas, especially in Houthi-controlled regions. Mines planted in or near fields have drifted due to floods, preventing farmers from utilising their land.

In many areas the health situation is dire due to contaminated water resources, leading to the spread of epidemics.

Health centres in the neighbourhoods support health care but they have limited working time and thus force people to go to hospitals. Government hospitals work under pressure, services are not at high level and strikes often occur. At the same time maternal care and child care are still functioning due to special support from some entities. According to one participant, a significant issue is the lack of mental health services.

In Taiz a repeated complaint is the lack of pharmacies opened at night and unavailable service for emergency situations. Those who live in areas such as near Khaled Camp old airport are having security constraints since there are snipers at night and they cannot go out even if they need to look for urgent medical care. People living in the frontline area in Taiz are deprived of services, transportation and some people are lacking access to food and clean water.

girls than for the boys.

In Taiz there are schools left without teachers who had to quit their positions to look for other job opportunities, according to a Taiz female participant. The absence of teachers is another significant reason for children dropping out of schools as well as families' inability to provide their children with school items such as pens, notebooks and other supplies.

In Aden, like in other areas, power outages affect children's education, among their other devastating impacts on households and businesses. Children cannot study for school or exams when electricity is not available and not many families can afford alternative energy sources because of high costs.

Schools are available for children in Hadhramaut area but the cost of transporting children to schools is high, resulting in significant increase of expenses. In some neighbourhoods there are no seats for children outside the area. UN and other humanitarian assistance has provided biscuits to children in schools to address child nutrition issues.

New schools in rural areas in Hadhramaut have been built by individuals or by certain entities, not by the state. The problem is that there is a lack of control and monitoring over these schools because children in these schools are instructed the whole day without any oversight.

University students' expenses also doubled in recent years and became unaffordable especially for students coming outside Mukalla.

In Marib many schools have been damaged or destroyed due to the conflict, forcing students and teachers to seek refuge in other areas. At the same time, there is a large influx of internally displaced people from other governorates across Yemen to Marib city. This has led to overcrowding in existing schools and disrupted learning environments. In some cases, children dropped out of school to work and support their families.

Environmental risks and agriculture decline

Climate related hazards in Yemen are sea level rise, inundation, and erosion of the coastline; increased flooding across all of the main regions which is predicted to continue occurring with greater intensity and frequency. At the same time drought and related water scarcity still pose major ongoing risks.

Hadhramaut governorate has experienced devastating floods in recent years causing destruction in infrastructure, disrupted power supplies, cut of roads between areas, physical injuries and loss of lives. Homes have been damaged in the Arbaeen Shuqah area, health centres have been destroyed in Hajar and Qusaia areas and playgrounds have been filled up with water every year during the floods in Shab Al-Badia in Mukalla, resulting in child casualties.

"We now live in a state of fear and anxiety during times of heavy rains and floods"- shared a female participant in a focus group discussion.

Floods caused erosion of agricultural lands in Harshiyat area and other regions which is one of the most significant effects of climate change. The lands have become unsuitable for agricultural production due to the lack of groundwater and exposure to drought. As a result, the prices of local fertilisers have increased significantly, forcing farmers to purchase imported fertilisers, which are of a different quality than the local ones. There has been a decline in the availability of certain crops in local markets compared to the past. For example, maize crops are no longer readily available.

Cyclonic storms which hit the country in recent years destroyed agricultural crops and caused prolonged power and communication outages.

Desertification, drought, and a shortage of groundwater, especially in Wadi Hadramout worsened the livelihood of many families. Most of the damaged agricultural lands need yet to be rehabilitated. According to a female respondent, many farmers turned to other professions to make a living because operating farming costs rose excessively while agricultural production remained weak, no longer covering expenses. Another participant pointed out that the erosion of agricultural land led to urban expansion and building upon these lands. Farmers are selling these lands to convert them into residential areas.

State response

State interventions to reclaim agricultural lands have been insufficient, delayed and limited. Most projects addressing the issues have come from civil society organisations but they have failed to address the problem fundamentally or cover it significantly because it needs a general long term state engagement and strategy. As a result there is a significant decline in agricultural production.

It is clear that the ongoing political conflict has had a devastating impact, significantly affecting the population and the country's economic situation, including the deterioration of currency and essential services. Citizens struggle to afford basic necessities like rice, flour, and oil due to inadequate salaries that haven't increased despite inflation and currency devaluation. There is an obvious deficiency in governance, insufficient measures and policies to respond to the challenges, with citizens unable to access their basic rights.

According to an interviewee from Hadhramaut, corruption has affected the judiciary and government institutions; there are a number of ministers without clear and open selection criteria; the government is perceived as weak, which does not play its role to provide basic services and does not seem committed to its obligations to work for people. As a consequence, there is a little trust in the government; in the Presidential Leadership Council and in the public institutions. Women are absent from the government and lack empowerment.

“The state’s regulatory bodies have been absent, corruption has increased, and there is no accountability. I read a report stating that government employees are smuggling their money abroad. Additionally, all resources are being routed to Saudi Arabia”, shared a female participant from Hadhramaut.

“The intensity of political tensions, external interventions, and polarizations is very high without a strategic vision that unites all political parties and civil society organizations. Is there a strategy that controls these international organizations and benefits from them properly? Today, billions are spent on the governorate, and we only see the situation of those in charge of the organizations improving”, shared a male participant from Hadhramaut.

The local authorities and the government face many challenges due to the ongoing conflict in Yemen, including political, economic, social, health, educational, and service-related challenges. As most of the respondents noted, the situation had worsened in the last months (from October 2023) and the local authorities are unable to turn this trend. They have a minimal positive influence in addressing the wide range of issues and their efforts seem rather inadequate in relation to real needs.

“Capabilities of the local authorities have been severely compromised and undermined by the ongoing conflict therefore worsening their capacity to perform essential tasks in providing services to citizens... There is no significant impact or evidence of activity from the local, executive, or governmental authorities” - said interviewee from Taiz

Taiz governorate has been affected more severely than other governorates, particularly regarding the lack of essential services such as electricity and water and the complete siege on the city, which has significantly impacted the citizens.

In Aden the UAE-backed Southern Transitional Council (STC), which governs the region, admitted that they are in fact under a foreign guardianship over the southern provinces. The local authority has undoubtedly been affected, its capabilities weakened, their work limited:

“The local authority used to be an example of development in the country, but now we notice that reconstruction has not even been done. We have been at war for nearly nine years, and not even a single building has been rebuilt or renovated. There are impacts on the government, and this is due to the influence of foreign interventions in the country”, shared interviewee from Aden

Participants from Aden believe that the government and local authorities do not do enough to achieve peace, despite their engagement in international meetings and negotiations “their actions in the ground tell a different story...they seem to hinder the peace process, rather than support it”. The government and political parties claim to be victims of the conflict but people start to perceive them as part of the problem due to the lack of visible political will to achieve peace.

Despite the severe political and economic challenges such as the halted oil export, crucial for the Yemen economy, or the constant Ansar Allah threats, still local efforts have been made to repair roads, plant trees, ensure cleanliness, and support organizations in implementing strategic plans of the local authorities.

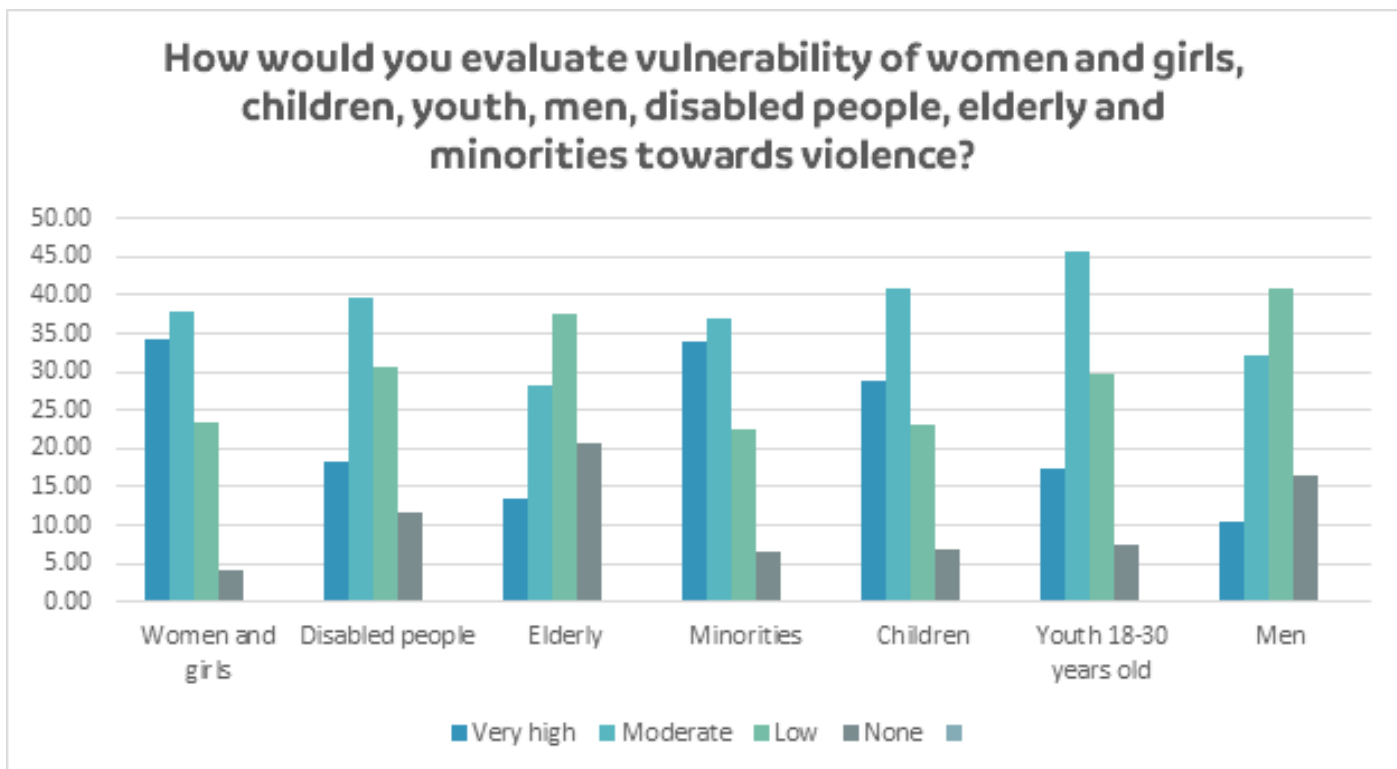


Figure 6 Vulnerability of some groups of population

In a state of war, some groups are unable or less able to protect themselves against significant harm, violence or from being taken advantage of. This includes children, youth or elderly people, those with mental health issues, physical disabilities, minorities or women.

Women and Girls. Survey participants identified women and girls as the most vulnerable segments of the population, with a striking 72% rating their vulnerability as moderate to high. This elevated risk is largely due to the ongoing conflict, which has led to increased incidents of gender-based violence, exploitation, and limited access to essential services such as healthcare and education. The unique challenges faced by women and girls—such as displacement and societal stigma—further exacerbate their vulnerability, making it crucial to implement targeted interventions to protect and empower them.

Children. Children also exhibit significant vulnerability, with 70% of respondents perceiving them as moderately to highly vulnerable, highlighting the serious challenges in safeguarding them from abuse and exploitation during wartime. The conflict disrupts their education and exposes them to violence, increasing the risk of trauma and psychological harm. This indicates a consensus that under current circumstances, adults and communities struggle to protect children from risks of abuse and exploitation.

Youth (Ages 18–30). Youth aged 18 to 30 are similarly viewed as having a vulnerability rate of 70%. This group faces unique pressures, including the risk of recruitment into armed groups and exposure to violence. Their transitional age often leaves them caught between childhood and adulthood, making them particularly susceptible to exploitation. Addressing their needs through targeted programs and interventions is vital to mitigate the risks they face and help them build a secure future.

Men. Men are perceived as moderately vulnerable, with 63% of respondents rating their vulnerability as moderate to high. While traditional gender norms often position men as strong and resilient, they too face significant risks in conflict situations. Issues such as forced recruitment, violence, and economic pressures can leave men vulnerable to mental health challenges and social isolation. Recognizing and addressing the unique vulnerabilities of men is essential for a holistic approach to support in conflict-affected areas.

Elderly. The elderly are viewed as moderately vulnerable, with 58% of respondents rating their vulnerability as moderate to high. This perception arises from concerns about their ability to defend themselves or access help when injured or abused. Many elderly individuals face physical limitations that increase their risk in chaotic environments, and their reliance on family or community support can be compromised during conflict. Ensuring that their specific needs are met is crucial for their safety and well-being.

Minorities. Minorities are also recognized as a vulnerable group, with 42% of respondents rating their vulnerability as moderate to high. This indicates that a significant portion of minorities faces risks of violence, exploitation, or abuse, often exacerbated by systemic discrimination and marginalization. This suggests that a significant portion of minorities face risks of violence, exploitation, or abuse, with limited capacity to avoid, resist, cope with, or recover from these threats.

Political Participation. Finally, only 42% of respondents believe there are enough opportunities for political participation for the population. This limited perception of political engagement underscores the challenges faced by many groups in exercising their rights and having their voices heard in decision-making processes. Enhancing political participation is essential for empowering vulnerable populations and fostering a more inclusive society.

Focus groups participants shared specific cases of violence. Violence against women has increased taking various forms in past months, according to respondents from Hadhramaut who referred to statistics from available protection centres. A female from Taiz specified that women face various forms of violence such as early marriage, marriage to foreigners (from Oman), dropping out of schools (due to families' inability to pay the cost of education), fraud and theft, widespread prostitution, rape, harassment, electronic blackmail and others.

Online abuse and domestic violence became widely spread. Women in need are exploited and blackmailed. For instance, there is electronic blackmail where individuals threaten women with their photos or conversations, threatening to expose them unless they pay a sum of money. Often women, whose own family is not around to demand the husband's respect, are being abused and humiliated. Those women refrain from filing complaints due to financial dependency or out of fear for their children.

Domestic and gender-based violence has increased, “wife beating is something we now witness daily”, shared a female participant. This significant increase is attributed to the economic situation and the fact that more women are entering the workforce which has opened the door to various forms of exploitation. It may include workplace abuse and exploitation by family members who may take advantage of their salaries

There are cases of women killed by their husbands.

“We hear every day from women we know that they or their married daughters are subjected to intense domestic violence. Divorced women, in particular, often face situations where ex-husbands do not give them child support or any assistance related to child medical care or school expenses”, shared a female participant from Hadhramaut.

The divorce rate has increased. Many women are unable to obtain a divorce due to the difficulty of accessing courts, the high costs of lawyers, and their inability to pay. Additionally, judges often delay issuing rulings, especially regarding alimony, which can remain in courts for years, according to a female participant from Aden.

There is an increase in conflicts between individuals and their parents, including escalations to the point of involving the police and judiciary. “Elderly women face violence from their children, and there is an increase in the number of sons beating their parents”, shared a Taiz participant.

Adults and children with disabilities also faced severe challenges recently. For example, several reports have shared cases about harassment and rape of children with autism and young children. Another respondent shared that older women and individuals from the al-Muhamashin (the Marginalised) group are subjected to high level of violence such as financial and economic exploitation, health and social neglect, social isolation and marginalisation. Some of them endure also physical abuse, torture and humiliation, and they face difficulty to access health care and psychological support.

Some women who have been subjected to abuse by their families and who report the abuse may end up being imprisoned and as a consequence – stigmatised as both prisoners and victims of abuse.

Violent and extremist rhetoric increases vulnerability to some groups of the population and can fuel discrimination against targeted groups among youth, women and men. In fact, it affects both genders. Men (younger and older) also suffer adverse effects from violent rhetoric but it can have more significant impact on women since they are often targeted for discrimination, sexual violence and gender-based social restrictions.

² *Rape Crimes Stories against Yemen's Children in Armed Conflict, 2024, Report from the Justice4Yemen Pact:*

<https://justice4yemenpact.org/rape-crimes-stories-against-yemens-children-in-armed-conflict/>

³ *Excluded, Living with disabilities in Yemen's armed conflict, Amnesty International, 2019*

Trust in institutions and sources of information

Respondents were asked to evaluate the levels of trust towards various sources of information. Between 35% and 45% of them expressed a moderate level of trust to all sources of information.

Sources of information which enjoy high or very high trust from Yemenis are international media sources (42%) and international institutions (42%), followed by family and friends (41%), social media channels (40%) and famous influencers or unofficial press (38%).

Respondents expressed low level of trust or no trust at all towards official media sources in Yemen (46% of respondents); community authority figures (37%); official institutions (34%).

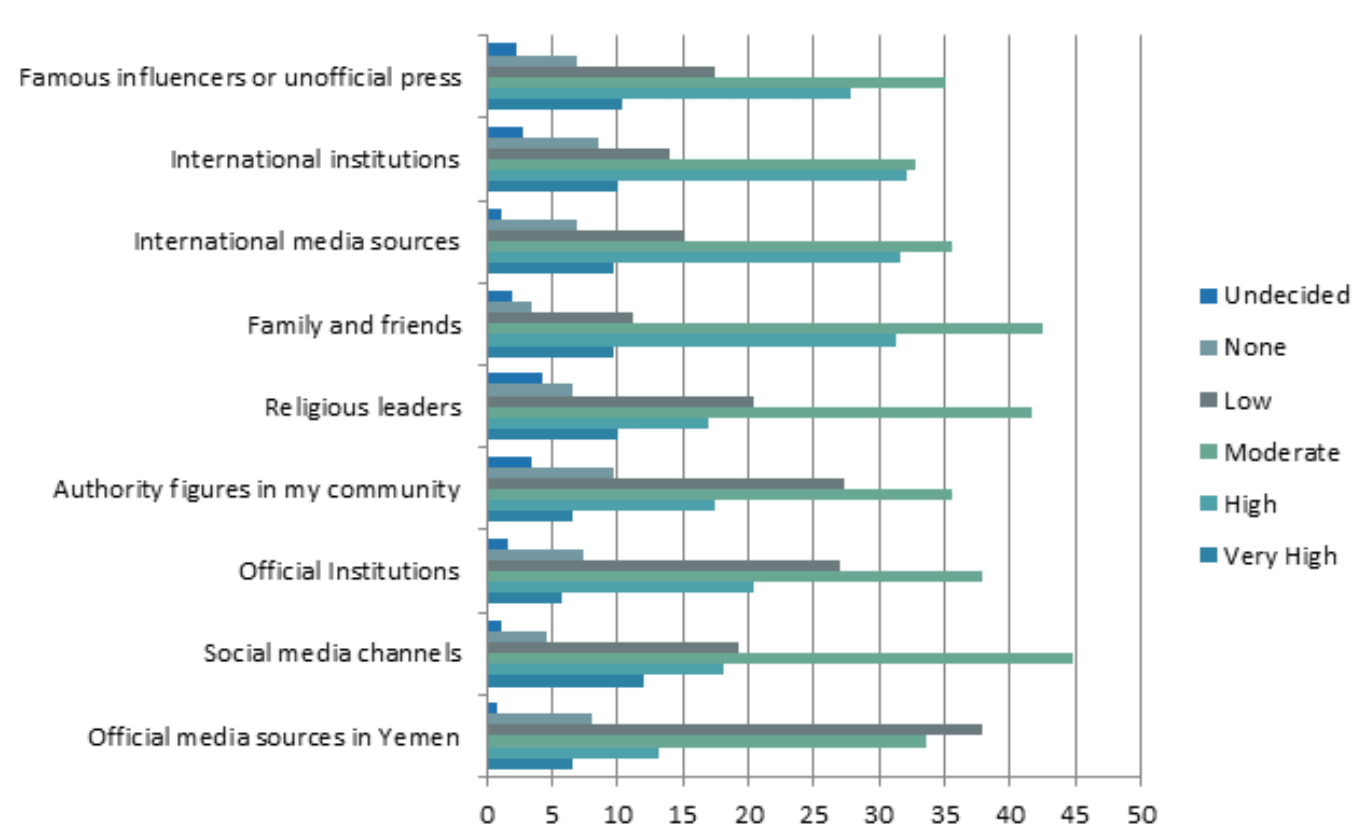


Figure 7 Trust in institutions and sources of information (N=259)

Participants in the focus group discussions expressed similar preferences to trust mostly social media groups and specific news sources published online. Electronic newspapers are preferred as well as local TV channels.

The alarming low trust in authorities and institutions is a reflection of the overall dire situation and the lack of effective state response to the various challenges. People feel disappointment due to the weak oversight and monitoring by the responsible parties, executive and regulatory bodies which are described as “*absent or inactive to exercise their functions*”.

Conflict Resolution in Communities

Community mechanisms to deal with conflicts

Community conflict resolution takes different forms and largely depends on cultural, social and customary factors as well as on trust in people and institutions dealing with it. Communities have developed instruments to keep conflicts under control in a non-violent manner. Such instruments are Community Committees and Community Peace Committees where people look for conflict resolution. For instance, in Hadhramaut region, a neighbourhood leader was accused of aid misuse and the Community committee resolved the issue by replacing him with a more trustworthy person.

Community Peace Committees play a vital role in conflict resolution. They include social figures, sheikhs, dignitaries, general managers, judges, security personnel, and local authorities. They include women, men and representatives of underrepresented groups. Their integrative composition makes them an effective entity in reducing conflicts and mending relationships.

Family issues are usually resolved internally when relatives such as uncles and aunts can be engaged to help conflict resolution. Neighbourhood problems are resolved by seeking the help of trusted neighbourhood leaders and wise and respected individuals. These people act as arbitrators who also mediate between conflicting parties. They meet with each party separately and then bring them together to issue a judgement. The arbitrator's decision is binding and is treated as equivalent to a ruling from a primary court. If the problem escalates, it can be reported to the security centres and, if not resolved there, people may turn to the prosecutor's office.

In Wadi Hadhramaut people resolve their disputes through tribal sheikhs. They go to a specific tribal sheikh known for his wisdom and fairness in arbitration. They place something called "*Adalah*," a valuable item from both parties, which was used as leverage to ensure the enforcement of the ruling. This item can be money, a weapon, or, in some cases, a car.

In the rural areas, there are "*Muqaddams*" and sheikhs to whom people turn for resolving their disputes, and they significantly contribute to conflict resolution.

In each case the fundamental factor is trust in the arbitrator himself and the belief that he will judge fairly.

The security situation significantly improves where the presence of the state is visible. According to a female participant from Hadhramaut, in the city of Mukalla and the liberated areas where the Hadrami Elite Forces are present, there is a noticeable decrease in crime rates. The judicial system is effective: although it may be slow, it is functional.

Women's contribution to community conflict resolution

⁴ UNDP Yemen's Social Protection to Provide Social Cohesion in Vulnerable Communities in Yemen Project, funded by the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre created six Community Peace Committees in Aden (Al-Mansoura and Sheikh Otman), Hadhramaut (Seiyun and Tareem) and Lahj (Tooralbaha and Alhota).

There is a clear perception of women’s role in mediating community disputes. There is a strong agreement among the online participants in the study that women play a significant role in mediating disputes in the community – 44% strongly agree with this statement; and another 19% agree with it. Only 16% do not agree or strongly disagree.

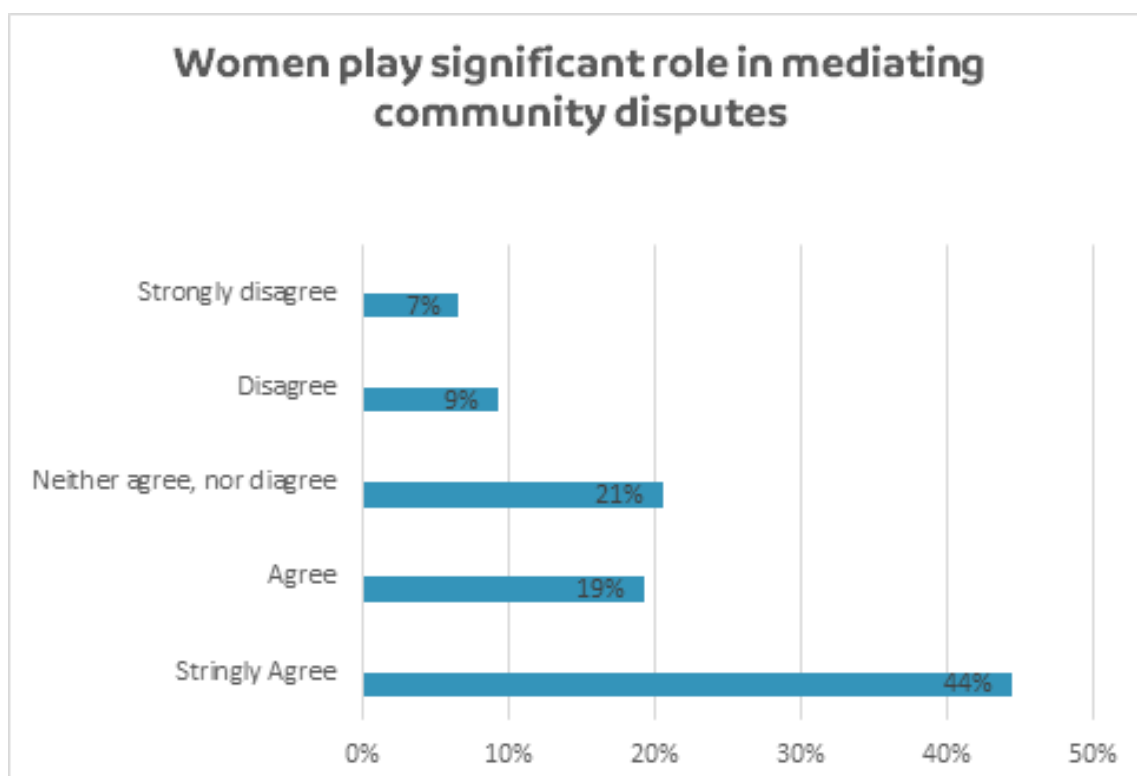


Figure 8 Women’s participation in conflict resolution

There was a definite agreement among respondents in the focus groups that women have a role in conflict resolution in the community. Women are present in community committees, helping resolve disputes and addressing issues between families or neighbours. Some conflict cases are referred to the Yemeni Women’s Union, which resolves them through legal support, psychological consultations or providing shelters. They also cooperate with the security administration to solve these issues.

Women have formed mediation committees to address disputes. For example, one such committee was established to open the road to Taiz. Even though there has been no observed change from these efforts yet, the persistence of their efforts indicate the strength and resilience of women in facing challenges and their determination to find solutions to conflicts that affect their communities.

There are known women who have contributed to resolving disputes and mediating in the community; these women are considered neighbourhood leaders, such as the leader of Al-Masbah neighbourhood, Afrah. Her role was crucial in improving the conditions, cleanliness, and security of the area. The presence of positive models like the leader of Al-Masbah neighbourhood, “Afrah,” demonstrates that women play an indispensable and central role in peacebuilding and establishing stability at the local and community levels. This should be promoted and encouraged by involving more women leaders in conflict resolution efforts across various regions.

In Aden, women are seen as a dynamic force contributing to mass mobilizations, community committees, mediation and humanitarian assistance. They actively participate in resolving specific social issues related to displaced people, marginalised groups and children.

Women participate in Community Peace Committees which play an important role in conflict resolution. As well-structured and active entities these committees help promote community peace. They intervene in societal issues to mitigate conflicts and facilitate reconciliation. Community Peace Committees gained widespread recognition for successfully resolving numerous cases.

The role of women in conflict resolution and reconciliation is prominent today, whether voluntarily or professionally. When given the opportunity, women are trustful agents of problem-solving and mending relationships through their roles as mediators, analysts and advisors. Some women in neighbourhoods have become go-to figures for resolving family issues in a way that satisfies all parties. Women mediators in neighbourhoods intervene in disputes between women within the community; they meet with each party individually and then bring them together to reconcile.

In Hadhramaut many women became social workers and some of them even established their own businesses, offering family counselling, among other services.

Women participate in conflict resolution also through community awareness. There are many women who work on resolving community conflicts, and they are often referred to as “Sheikhs.” For example, there have been several female Sheikhs, and historically, there was a woman known as “Al-Shawfah” in the city of Turbah, Taiz Governorate, who served as a Sheikh in resolving family and community disputes. There are other examples of women who have contributed to local mediation efforts between conflicting parties. Consequently, women can serve as mediators through awareness-raising activities and by using their skills in dialogue, persuasion, and emotion.

Female directors of civil society organizations try to direct their projects toward peacebuilding, reducing conflicts, and facilitating reconciliation. Women educators are doing preventative work conducting awareness sessions for youth and for other women. They organize sessions, events and activities that fill youth’s idle time and reduce the occurrence of conflicts (H.F.).

A coalition of eight women launched an advocacy campaign to pressure the local and higher authorities to solve community issues. They successfully reopened the Dhabah Road and Riyan International Airport, which had been closed since the start of the war, causing tensions in the community.

Women artists contribute to conflict resolution through art and painting. For example, the artist Abeer Al-Hadhrami organized several exhibitions showcasing artworks that express peace. Recently she was appointed Director General of Culture, marking the first time a woman has held this position.

There are numerous examples of women's lawyers contributing to conflict resolution and women who help with reconciliation. For instance, a woman named Bashayer Bawazir in Hadhramout goes to courts and prosecutor's offices to assist parties in the resolution process.

The women's police force works to provide support in resolving conflicts, to reduce their intensity and help reconciliation; sometimes they may detain persons deemed responsible for the conflict.

At home women use their influence on family members to resolve various disputes. They apply communication skills, quick interventions, an emotional approach, trust building and enhancing relationships between parties. They may seek assistance from a more experienced and impactful party in handling the disputes. Often women stand with the weaker party at home to prevent them from being wronged or harmed.

There are cases when illiterate women successfully resolved conflicts, smoothly and quickly. "I was in Shabwa, where there were women who were all illiterate. One woman came and resolved a conflict; the uneducated woman resolved it smoothly and quickly! Women play a significant role in achieving peace within their families and then transferring it to the community"- shared a male participant from Hadhramaut

However women also suffer from repercussions of disputes and often become victims of violence. There are cases of women law graduates who have experienced personal safety violations. Therefore, the role of women in conflict resolution might be diminished by violence and marginalisation. There is social pressure and challenging economic conditions which restrict the role of women in community conflict resolution.

There are many examples showing that Yemeni women play a role in conflict resolution and have engaged in various roles and activities in resolving disputes, whether formally, tribally, or generally. Through these roles, they contribute to peacebuilding. But despite women's involvement in conflict resolution through committees, individually, or through organizations, they are often marginalised, excluded from decision-making positions and refused playing a role in crucial peace negotiations. Despite recognizing their effectiveness in conflict resolution, when it comes to selecting individuals or active parties for inclusion in formal negotiation talks, women are often excluded, and their presence is overlooked.

This indicates that women's involvement remains confined to the community level and secondary activities only. When it comes to significant actions, situations, and decision-making, their contributions are ignored.

Conflict Resolution in Communities

Ten years of conflict have affected the lives of large segments of the population, particularly women and girls. The gender roles have changed over time giving women and girls the burden to maintain the households. While men and boys comprise the vast majority of direct victims of conflict, recruitment, and detention, women and girls are left running their households and disproportionately suffer gender-based violence. Yemen ranked last in the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report from 2006–2021.

In 2021, Yemen ranked among the countries that had the worst standing in terms of women's economic participation, political empowerment, and educational attainment. It also ranked third to the last out of 170 countries in the 2021/22 Global Women Peace and Security index.

The roles of women in Yemeni society are a reflection of religious, cultural, and social customs and traditions. There are some differences across regions and generations.

As many respondents reported before the conflict that started in 2015, Yemeni women and girls were already experiencing discrimination and marginalisation even though there had been progress in gender equality in several areas, including education, political participation, and health. Women could not marry without the permission of their male guardian, nor did they have equal rights to divorce, inheritance, or child custody. The lack of legal protection also left them exposed to domestic and sexual violence. Prior to the conflict, specifically during the National dialogue conference and events linked to it, there was a 30% quota for women in public life, something that was neglected in recent years. The war increased women's vulnerability: some became victims of sexual harassment, early marriages and mobility restrictions.

As primary caregivers at the household level, women bear responsibility for cooking, cleaning, and collecting water and firewood for their homes. They take care of the children, the elderly, the sick, and people with disabilities.

The conflict, economic decline, and a lack of livelihood opportunities have led to a certain shift in these gender roles: some women have to engage in economic activities in order to maintain the household. In recent years more women have become involved in both paid and subsistence labor. Thus, one of the consequences of the conflict situation was that some of the traditional gender norms have been broken due to necessity.

"In the past, it was forbidden for women to go out, but now this restriction has been damaged due to need. Many women now are out participating in different activities and events. They have become entrepreneurs, owners of businesses and actively engage in the labor market, whether in government, commercial or civil society organizations", shares a female from Hadhramaut.

According to other women from the Hadhramaut governorate, many standards have been broken, or rather society has become more accepting of women's new roles. Hadhramaut society, known for being one of the most closed off and traditional in Yemen, looked at women's work and social activism with scepticism. Now people can see women driving cars, whereas a few years ago there was

no single woman driving in this region. Nowadays women's work is widely accepted and both husbands and wives share the cost of running the household due to economic necessity and financial hardship.

Women's leadership in various fields becomes more common; for example, women become directors of civil society organizations, general managers in local authority structures or owners of businesses. There are many girls who attend universities and pursue specialisations. According to a female respondent, some girls now require their suitors to allow them to complete their university education after marriage. Previously girls would typically complete high school and then get married.

According to the latest estimates, displaced persons due to the war are over 3 million and 80% of them are women and children. Among all displaced families 26% have a woman as a family head and a breadwinner. Women have to cope with this new situation, taking roles previously unknown to them. Many of them have to learn and adapt quickly, finding jobs different from the agricultural sector where many used to work in the past. Nowadays, women take up trade, jobs in the service industry, computer programming, design, coffee shops, chocolate making, the beauty sector and other income-generating professional areas, which empower women.

At the same time, one of the impacts of war are the many imposed restrictions on civil space in general in Yemen, including restrictions on women, whether in political participation or within the framework of movements and travels. Still, women gained confidence to fight for their rights and for the wellbeing of their families and communities. There are women who have begun to call, for example, for the release of detainees and prisoners. The voice of women has become stronger and louder. They have been active in community centres, mediation efforts to work with parties related to opening roads, exchanging prisoners and detainees, repairing waterways, extending power lines and other community conflicting issues.

Another substantial change is the formation of the women's police force with more than 100 women employed.

But changes also come with some negative consequences. *"When women entered the labor market, they faced psychological pressure. This also had a negative impact on the family as men started to vent their anger on women"*, said a female participant from Hadhramaut.

Redistribution of roles in the families has affected the marital relationships. Domestic conflicts intensified, fuelled by the economic challenges and leading to substantial increase in the divorce rates. Men may be forced to travel to other areas in search of a livelihood which increases the burden on women who have to bear greater responsibilities than before. Consequently, tensions that rise in the marital lives can negatively impact their children.

The economic downturn has affected the roles of both men and women. Women's acceptance of lower salaries has negatively impacted men's job opportunities. On the other hand, the recent involvement of women in the labor market shows how their deprivation of economic activity in the past years creates difficulty to find jobs which can allow them to support their families. Without experience and qualification women face limited job opportunities and exploitation.

There is a great need for occupational training and economic empowerment of women. The existing cultural and social factors also make women more susceptible to discrimination in the labor market, which affects their incomes more severely, leading to reduced economic opportunities and a narrower range of career options.

Yemen is a male dominated society and men are the main decision-makers in the household, community and the government. Involving women in decision-making positions depends on factors such as age, economic power and contribution to the household budget, experience and the absence of a male family figure. In the situation of conflict, women often have to take responsibility to secure basic needs for their family like healthcare, education, and food, by using their own inheritance or savings to cover them.

Years of conflict have resulted in problematic access to education for children. Safety and security concerns among families increased regarding girls who attend schools in conflict-affected areas and where distances to schools are much longer. In the northern regions, girls are held back from school to help with domestic work. In the southern regions, transportation is a more significant challenge. Schools are lacking female teachers, especially in the rural areas. A general practice is for every second girl to get married and leave for their husband's house before she reaches eighteen. For some families it reduces the burden of a daughter's expenses and leaves resources for other family members. Early marriage is seen as protecting girls from sexual harassment and abuse and also as means to building social alliances and networks.

There is a requirement for women to be accompanied by a male guardian (*Mahram*), which is not part of Yemeni law, but the authorities have been enforcing it through verbal instructions.

This practice is one of the obstacles for women travelling without a male guardian or without a written approval from her Mahram across governorates under DFA control. Restrictions of mobility limit women's participation in different aspects of life, such as politics, healthcare, education, the social sphere and the job market. It is difficult for women to attend educational programs and training courses in other governorates to increase their qualification needed for government positions.

Women's Public Participation

Women's participation in community and government

The average scores provided (ranging from 2.7 to 2.9) indicate a response that generally leans towards disagreement or mild agreement. Considering the scale where Strongly Agree is 5, Agree is 4, Undecided is 3, Disagree is 2, and Strongly Disagree is 1, the midpoint is calculated as the average of the highest and lowest values:

$$\text{Midpoint} = \frac{1+5}{2} = 3$$

The average scores point to a nuanced landscape regarding political participation, particularly concerning women and youth. While there is acknowledgment of opportunities for their involvement in political processes, a prevailing sentiment of skepticism and concern lingers regarding the sufficiency and accessibility of these avenues. Across various statements, such as political parties' openness to youth (2.8), women's participation in decision-making (2.9), engagement with political parties (2.8), democratic process participation (2.9), freedom of speech (2.7), presence of civil society organizations (2.7), and women-led organizations (2.9), there exists a mix of positive recognition and lingering doubts, indicating the need for further examination and action to ensure inclusive and effective participation for all groups.

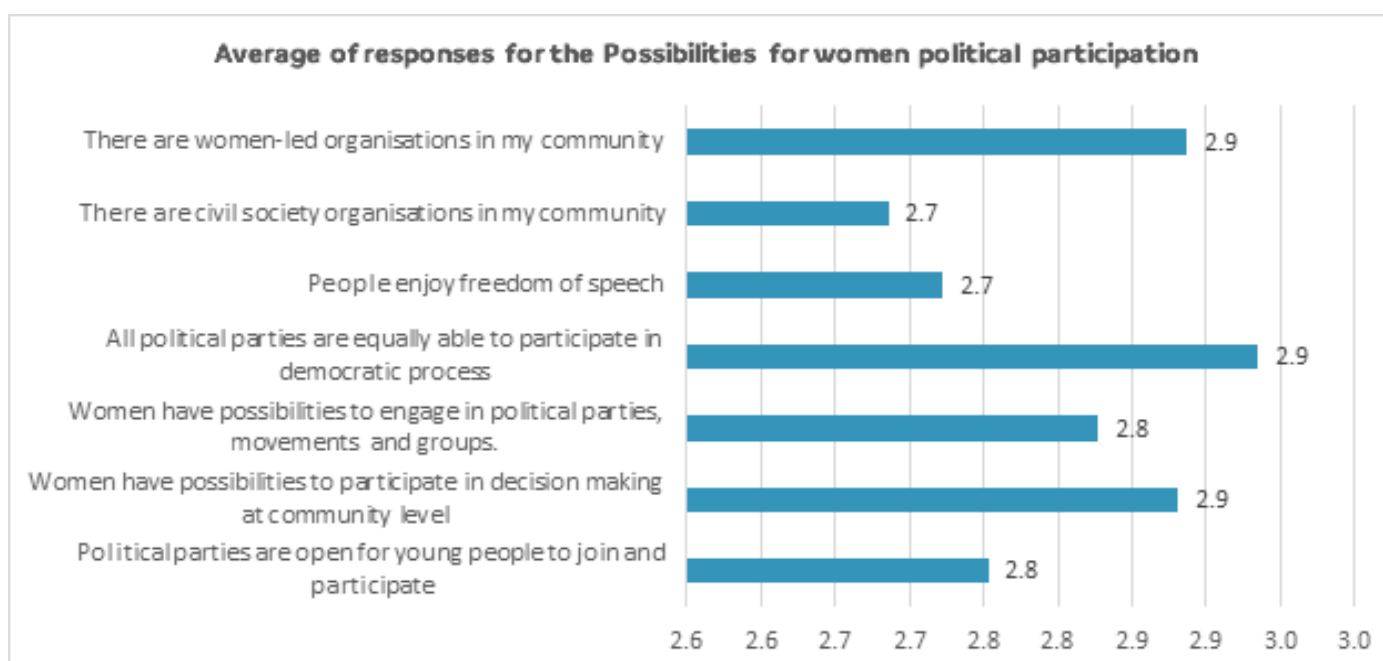


Figure 9 Possibilities for political participation (N=259)

Participation in community life, civil society organizations and in politics plays a key role in fostering a resilient inclusive society. There are civil society organizations in communities in Yemen which play an important part in their development, according to 71% of respondents in the online assessment. According to 73% of respondents, women who contribute with time, skills and resources, to enhance the wellbeing and cohesion of their community by providing services, lead many civil society organisations. At the same time, much fewer respondents (37%) believe that women have opportunities to participate in decision-making at the community level or to engage in political parties and movements.

Participation in political parties is perceived as possible according to one third of respondents. A similar number thinks that political parties themselves are able to participate in the democratic process (34%), people enjoy freedom of speech (36%), and they have the freedom to associate and create movements and organizations according to their interests (40%). Only 13% of respondents agree or strongly agree that political parties are open for young people to join and participate.

Obstacles before Yemeni women for greater participation in political processes

Yemeni women experience many obstacles to political participation, but some are commonly expressed by most respondents. These obstacles include tribal and religious restrictions (78,8%); limited representation in power and in political parties, which makes women less visible (77,2%); restrictions to women’s movement (74,9%); and traditional roles given to women which require their whole attention to domestic work (74,1%).

More than 50% of participants also point out obstacles like stigmatisation and disapproval of women activists, lack of supportive networks and the stagnation of political life as a whole.

Other factors include low education (48,3%); weak economic capacity (46,3%); security concerns (43,2%) and family responsibilities (42,5%); 24,7% of respondents also point out legal obstacles.

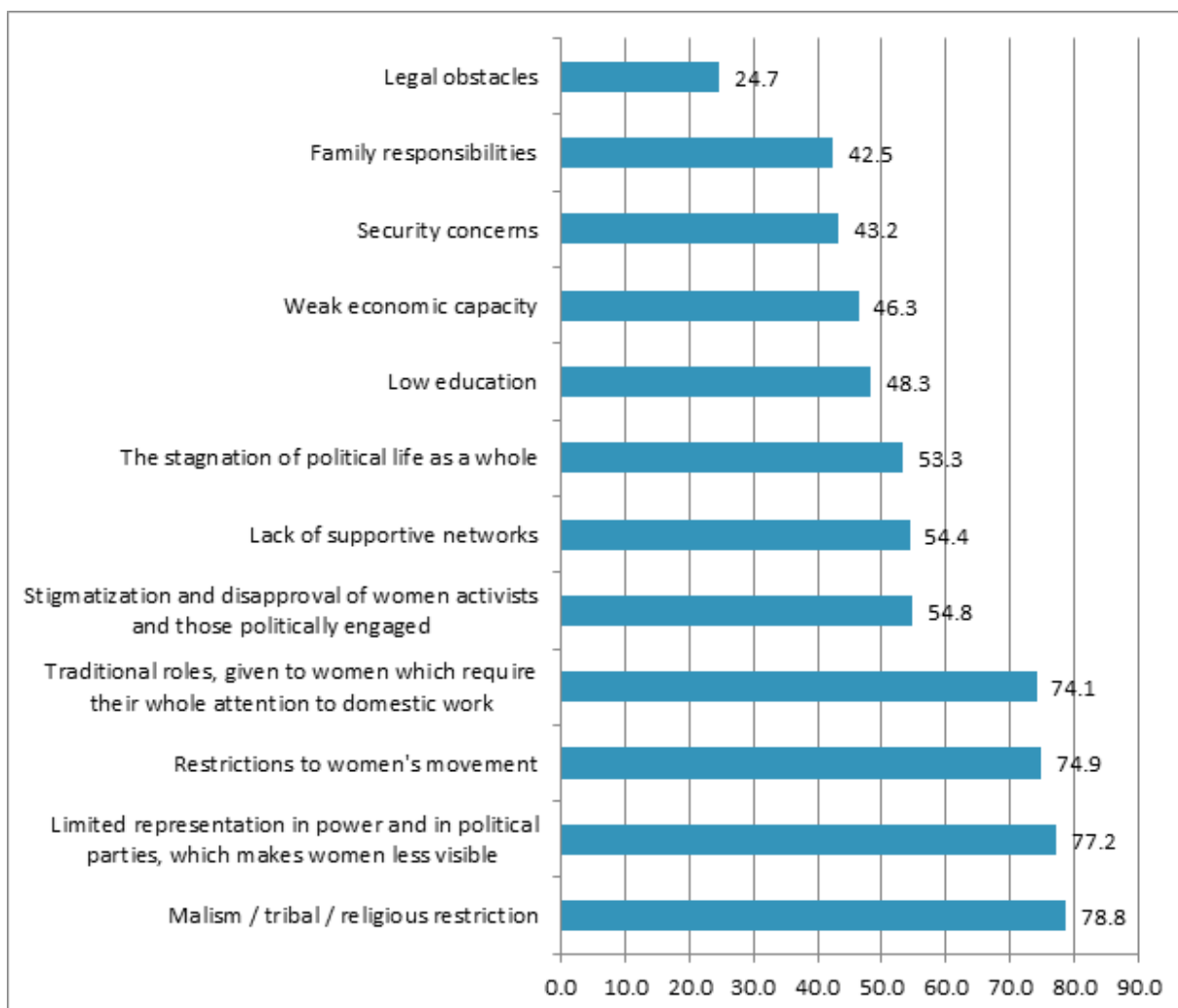


Figure 10 What makes women’s participation difficult?

Women participation in community matters

Focus group discussions with key stakeholders were informative to identify positive cases of women participation in community matters. A critical step for women's inclusion is engaging them in community services, which is one of the few areas where authorities bring women in the decision-making process.

There are some positive examples related to the participation of women in positions in charge at the local level.

In Taiz, Ms. Misk Al-Maqrami was appointed as the director of the Taiz Club; Ms. Iftihan Al-Mashhri was appointed as the General Director of the Cleaning and Improvement Fund. They both proved their competence, demonstrated proficiency and capability in the role, earning collective trust in handling the positions. In a way such appointments were defined as a "courageous act" because such positions of authority were usually kept for men from specific circles.

In Aden, according to Ms. Ishtiaq Mohammed Saad, women's work within the local authority is limited and restricted but there is some increase in women's participation in the judiciary and in the local governance despite the conflicts. There are women who have taken on executive positions, managing their offices under the local authorities. Local women have been involved in community and humanitarian work; and have been included in qualification and training courses. Still, women's work within the local authority is limited and restricted. Positive steps were taken under a decision issued by the Honourable Minister of State to implement the national plan for the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. This effort targeted women in the districts of Aden Governorate, establishing a program and a work mechanism. It was done in partnership with UNDP, under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour and coordinated by the SOS Foundation.

Despite these efforts, in general, one of the impacts of the war in Yemen has been an apparent decline in the presence and appointment of women in decision-making positions, whether in the government or local authorities and executive offices. Women possess the competence and capabilities to lead in times of peace and war, and yet the authorities justify women's exclusion from decision-making positions with the ongoing conflict.

Women in government

Women's participation in the government has not been significant even at the beginning of the war when very few women were involved in government roles. A couple of ministries have been granted to women such as the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Human Rights while other sectors where women can play a crucial role were not open for women's participation.

As the war and conflict continued, the involvement of women significantly decreased. In the recent government formation no woman was appointed as a minister or deputy minister.

According to a participant in a focus group from Hadhramaut the quota system mandates a certain percentage for women, but has not been implemented. In the past, people doubted the presence of women in the security sector, but today, women have reached and achieved significant success. For example, recently Lt. Intisar Al-Asad Ba'aisa was appointed the director of women's police, among many others who have succeeded in the security sector. But still, the government uses the war as an excuse to exclude women. Even though women are present in all industries, there is very little political will to have them engaged in government roles and in policy making.

There is clear evidence of excluding women from decision-making positions during the conflict.

Women-led organizations have also been under attack and have not found protection or support by the government. For example, according to Dr. Ishraq Hayel Al-Hakimi, Director of the Women's Development Research and Studies Centre at the Taiz University: *"The Women's Center at Taiz University was subjected to fierce and misleading campaigns by religious advocates and platforms, which described the activities of the Women's Centre as blasphemous, morally corrupt, and deviating from Islamic doctrine. In response to all the incitement campaigns against the centre, neither the government nor the local authorities intervened to stop this malicious campaign against the centre."*

All respondents agreed that there has been an apparent decline in the presence and appointment of women in decision-making positions, whether in the government or local authorities and executive offices. There is no evidence of women's significant involvement in these roles. Excluding women from representation in governance and political parties is often justified by "it is not the right time for women's appointment due to the ongoing war", shared a female participant from Hadhramaut.

⁵ Ms. Ishtiaq Mohammed Saad, Director General of the Local Administration for Women's Development in the Governorate Office, member of the Advisory Council of the Presidency of the Transitional Council, and Deputy Head of the Governorate Team in the implementation of the National Plan for the Women, Security, and Peace Agenda.

Engagement in political parties

The level of openness of political parties to women's participation, especially to the new generation of women-leaders, is very low.

Most respondents who filled the online questionnaire believe that political parties are not open to women's participation, especially to the new generation of women-leaders (56%); or parties are moderately prepared to accommodate women in their structures and processes (29%). A small percentage of respondents perceives parties as open towards women or ready to include the new generation of women in their organizations (14%)

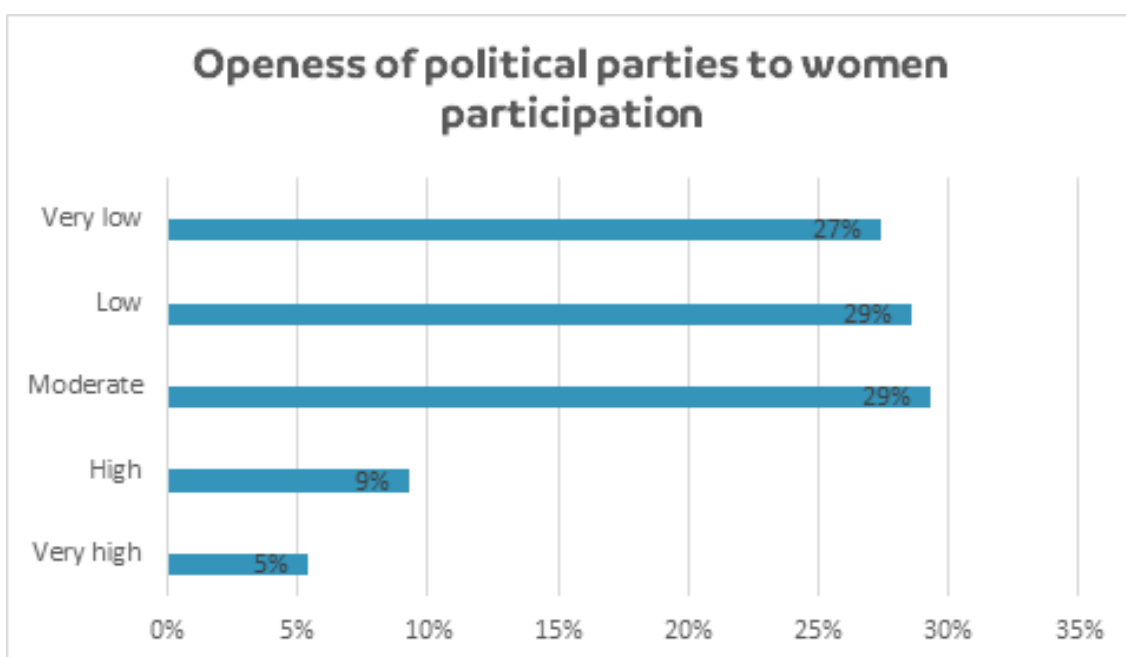


Figure 11 Political parties' openness to women's participation

There is marginalisation and devaluation of women within the political parties and entities they belong to, such as the Southern Transitional Council, Islah and the General People's congress. According to a male participant from Hadhramaut, these parties and entities do not believe in the value of women's political engagement, so it is natural for the government to keep it marginalised.

"The presence of women in political parties is merely symbolic because men control all the roles women take on. Everyone deals with women not from the perspective of rights and duties but from traditions and customs. Women must assert their roles and not allow anyone to override or take their rights under any pretext. Women who should be empowered are those who can impose themselves. I want to see a female Secretary-General of a party or a governor, as this will enable women to assert themselves", explains a male participant from Hadhramaut.

There are some efforts made by political parties to include women. According to a female respondent from Hadhramaut, economic factors, the family situation, and male authority in the household have changed significantly, so that women's participation is more widely accepted. But parties face significant obstacles in attracting women, such as cultural biases and gender discrimination.

"There is political participation by women with family support; there is greater acceptance of women in politics, overcoming past issues like assassinations of women activists. There has been maturity and conviction, with no direct prohibition in the consular and diplomatic fields, but it remains limited within parties. Why aren't there women with military ranks? There is improvement, but there are still obstacles."

Female participant from Hadhramaut

What really helps parties recruiting women is raising political awareness and improving societal view on qualifications gained through political participation. Parties should adopt measures to facilitate and encourage enrolment of girls, women and youth such as providing training to enhance political participation and offer opportunities for networking and social interaction. This way, acceptance of politically engaged women would increase due to positive models of competent and resourceful women in politics.

Political parties need to adopt the gender equality principle and promote women's representation in political decisions. They have to provide fair opportunities for women to run for office and participate in party activities. Women can contribute to changing political agendas and advancing important social and economic issues by supporting policies and reforms that promote equality and achieve more sustainable development.

Women's Role in Track II Peace Process

Only 22% of respondents think that women's role in Track II peace process is well recognized. Most respondents (55%) believe that people, especially those in charge, do not recognize the role of women in Track II peace process.

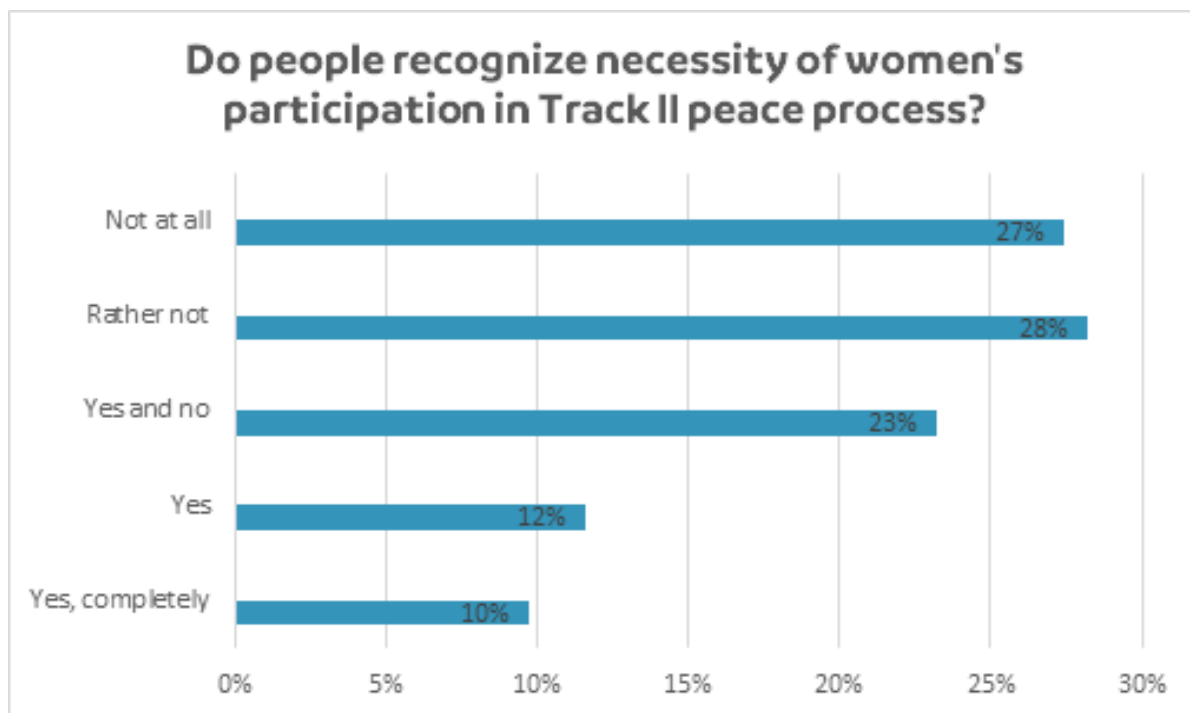


Figure 12 Women in Track II Peace Process

About 83% of respondents agree that more efforts should be made to increase women's participation in local and national political matters, including in negotiations for peace.

In terms of the level of preparedness and capacity of the next generation of women-leaders to engage in the peace process, 30,5% of respondents believe that women's level is high and another 46,7% perceive their preparedness as moderate.

Respondents who attended the focus groups strongly believed that Yemeni women play a significant role in conflict resolution but they are often marginalized and excluded from decision-making positions and from crucial peace negotiations.

“Despite recognizing the roles and effectiveness of women in conflict resolution and encouraging their participation, when it comes to selecting individuals or active parties for inclusion in formal negotiation talks, women are often excluded, and their presence is overlooked. This indicates that women's involvement remains confined to the community level and to the secondary activities only. When it comes to significant actions, situations, and decision-making, their contributions are ignored” shared a female respondent from Taiz.

Women need to be in the Track II Peace process and efforts should be made to enhance women's capacities in peacebuilding, negotiation mechanisms and other relevant programs. Women would contribute to diverse perspectives and experiences, enhancing creativity and innovation in peacebuilding. Achieving comprehensive peace requires the involvement of everyone, regardless of gender. Many women possess unique abilities and talents that contribute to the success of the peace process. They have the capability to communicate effectively, negotiate, and resolve conflicts peacefully. Involving women in making peace decisions enhances stability and leads to better outcomes. Raising awareness about the importance of women's participation and changing the culture and stereotypical perceptions about women's roles in society is crucial. Efforts should focus on education about women's rights and the importance of gender equality in all fields, including political, economic, and social participation.

Involving women in peace-related decisions enhances social justice and achieves gender balance. Their presence helps build a more stable, tolerant, and cooperative society. Policies and laws need to be developed to promote women's participation and increase their representation in various fields. Governments and institutions should adopt policies and regulations that promote gender equality and ensure fair representation of women in decision-making and societal roles.

The availability of diversity and gender representation in the peace process enhances the legitimacy and credibility of its outcomes. Both men and women must recognize the necessity of women's participation in the peace process. Women need to be provided equal job opportunities and barriers to high-level positions should be reduced.

"Women should be able to hold roles such as deputy, governor, minister, prime minister, and president of the country—what's the problem?", said a female participant from Hadhramaut.

Factors which contribute to women's participation and influence

There are various conditions which help women influence decision-making at community and national levels. The most significant factors are related to education (64%) and experience (64%). Family support is also an important factor for 58 % of respondents. Other important factors for participants are the active membership or support from a political party or group (56%), support by a family male figure (47%) and social and economic status of women and their families (43%). Marital status and age have also been pointed out by some participants (19%).

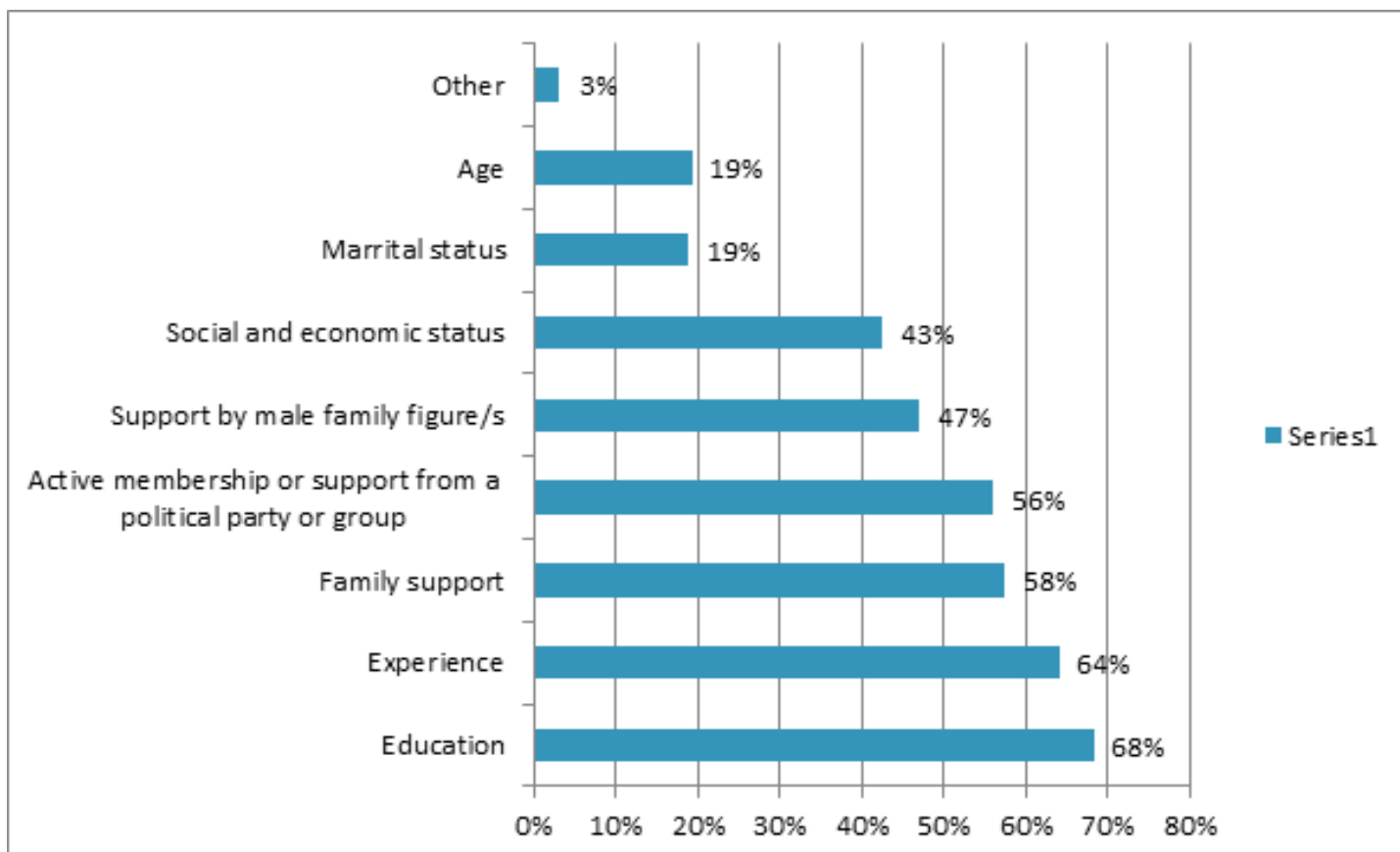


Figure 13 Factors for women's influence on decision making

According to focus group participants from Hadhramaut, experience, age and education are factors which are most important for women's involvement in public life and political representation. Age means accumulation of experience, political awareness, leadership skills and resilience over time.

The availability of family support and encouragement affects women's ability to be active in public life; to overcome challenges and gain confidence for political participation and influence.

Other factors that facilitate women's participation include having the infrastructure to support women's involvement; awareness and cultural changes in attitudes that support women in politics and enhance their ability to engage; empowering women to access educational opportunities, training and financial resources.

Even though there is some tangible progress regarding women's participation in decision-making at various levels (including women at leadership positions), there are still many challenges presenting barriers to women's political participation such as gender discrimination, regional biases, institutional obstacles and male dominance. What many participants - females and males - told us during the focus group discussions and interviews, women in Yemen are subject to various types of violence while they experience increased responsibilities and changes in their gender roles. On the one hand, the shift of gender roles provides opportunities to empower women for greater social and economic participation; on the other hand, women have been further subjected to violence and discrimination as a result of this transition.

As many interviewees mentioned, political participation is closely related to women's economic empowerment. Women's recent experience of economic participation happens within a framework of existing gender inequality and male dominance. As a consequence women have to overcome obstacles to economic and political participation which include restricted access to financial resources such as bank loans. In Yemen, women's access to microfinancing is problematic, because it is common practice for banks to require the permission of a male guardian for women to be able to make financial transactions. The interest rates, requests for guarantees, and difficult repayment schedules also stop women from seeking bank loans to finance their business ideas.

Yemeni women have to deal with the existing social and religious norms that perpetuate gender inequalities, reduced market access and difficult mobility. Women shared a range of security-related concerns such as harassment at the check points if they are unaccompanied by male relatives. Without the male relative or "protector" present, women are more vulnerable to sexual and physical violence.

According to the focus groups participants, women face not only institutional barriers but sometimes abuse from family members such as creating difficulties to access their inheritance, pressure to sell their gold (received at their wedding as part of their Mahr or dowry) or exploitation from relatives who take their incomes gained through economic activities. In addition, women have to contend with limited mobility due to cultural gender norms. All women participants in the assessment also talked about women's struggle to deal with the challenges of limited access to food, health services, water and sanitation - which has deteriorated as the conflict continues.

These few examples of violations of women's human rights only show how much is needed to be done to eliminate gender-based discrimination and violence through a national legislative reform process and addressing systemic barriers to women's participation and discriminatory practices.

Mechanisms for coordination and communication between women leaders and authorities

Respondents were asked to evaluate the possibility of creating a mechanism to coordinate between women leaders and higher authorities and decision makers in order for women to access the decision-making process. Most of them were positive and optimistic stating that it is somewhat likely (62,5%) or very likely (30,9%) to create such a mechanism.

Focus group participants have suggested various mechanisms for managing relations and coordination between women leaders, senior local authorities and decision-makers, including those who have access to negotiations on the Track I and Track II peace process.

Enhancing women's role in society can be done by mandating a percentage of female participation (**quota**) in political parties, government positions, international organizations, and civil society organizations. **Enacting laws and policies** that encourage the appointment of women to leadership positions and enable their effective participation in decision-making can enhance women's representation in decision-making bodies. Balance in gender representation in public and private sectors should be promoted by encouraging institutions and companies to appoint and promote women to leadership positions.

Managing relationships and coordination between women's leadership, local and higher authorities, and decision-makers requires providing interactive mechanisms and platforms for open and transparent dialogue. **Joint committees** can be established, including representatives from various entities, to facilitate communication and the exchange of information and ideas.

Local and higher authorities can establish **advisory bodies** that include representatives from women's leadership. These bodies can be invited to provide advice and guidance on gender issues, equality, and other related matters.

Consultation mechanisms can be created by the government departments, civil society organizations, political parties, and other agencies to enhance communication with women's leadership and ensure regular consultation to guarantee their representation in important decisions. Women representatives should be appointed to advisory bodies and committees to contribute to decision-making.

Dedicated networks and communication platforms can be established for women's leadership, local authorities, and decision-makers to exchange information and coordinate efforts. Modern communication tools such as digital platforms, applications and virtual meeting platforms should be utilized to ensure continuous communication. These platforms can serve as a space for exchanging information and experiences, organizing constructive discussions, and directing joint strategies.

To achieve such mechanisms, it is essential to enhance awareness by providing joint meetings or workshops for women's leadership, local authorities, and decision-makers aiming to build understanding about the importance of integrating women into the decision-making process and taking the necessary actions to achieve this. Workshops and training sessions can be organized to build capacities, increase knowledge about the available mechanisms and formulate clear and realistic plans to establish such a mechanism.

Continuous training for women leaders and high-level authorities can be useful to enhance their awareness about women's rights and their skills in relationship management, negotiation, and effective decision-making. Specialized training programs, such as programs on communication interaction and negotiation mechanisms, can be organized to strengthen leadership capacities and effective communication.

In addition, such workshops will build partnerships between non-governmental organizations, government bodies, and women's leadership; they will enhance cooperation and build trust. Regular meetings and joint workshops can be organized to achieve coordination and exchange experiences and best practices.

Whatever form these mechanisms take, transparency and good governance in decision-making and coordination should be enhanced. Local and higher authorities and decision-makers must provide the necessary information and respond to suggestions and observations from women's leadership, ensuring their participation in setting priorities and making decisions. Field visits, meetings and regular workshops should be held to discuss updates and essential issues, working to find solutions. This will enhance women's roles in decision-making and participation in upcoming peace negotiations. This will ensure that women have a more significant positive impact on the Track II peace process in their communities.

Women's participation in such mechanisms can be empowered by the presence of an agent for women to help form a feminist alliance and advocate for women's rights.

Women need wider support through social networks and strong civil society organizations and alliances focused on women's issues.

Awareness of the importance of women's leadership and its role in decision-making should be enhanced through awareness campaigns and educational initiatives to promote recognition of the added value that women leaders can provide. The role of media should be strengthened to highlight the contributions of women leaders and raise awareness of their importance. Media campaigns and awareness initiatives should be organized to spotlight successful models and inspire women to participate in decision-making.

Regional and international cooperation should be encouraged to exchange experiences and best practices in managing relationships between women leaders and high-level authorities.

Enhancing participation of the new generation of women - leaders

Respondents have suggested numerous ways to support the new generation of women in order to participate in the political and peace negotiations processes.

Enabling environment

Political will for women's inclusion and enabling environment is needed in order to ensure women participation in the political and peace negotiation processes. Women need economic and social empowerment, educational programs and opportunities to participate and contribute with their capabilities and competencies. Women have to be given more state jobs and leadership positions in public institutions and political parties and not be limited by roles dealing only with women and family issues; they need to receive support and advocacy from political parties, presidential leaders, the government and the community.

Developing necessary laws and policies to protect women's rights and enhance their participation in the political life is important along with reviewing laws and regulations that hinder women's empowerment. The principle of gender equality has to be included in the constitution, national laws, elections and political representation.

Media plays an important role in broadcasting awareness programs and women leaders' impactful work and activities on radio, TV channels and online news. This will help the community to accept women's participation more widely as a substantial part of their community life.

Women who participate in the political life need to feel safe and supported. Providing protection and guarantees against any threats or violations they may face is an important condition for women's participation.

Community and family awareness

Civil society organizations should contribute to community and local authority awareness to enhance women's participation in community matters and public institutions. Awareness is essential to change attitudes and values and to create positive perception of women's involvement in decision-making positions. Changing social and cultural attitudes is a long process through empowerment and encouragement programs that should be conducted by civil society organizations.

Local authorities have to play a key role in engaging women in community matters and must endorse all women who do constructive and inspiring work for their communities. Positive role models of women leaders in government and in different areas of life will contribute to wider acceptance of women's participation in public life.

Awareness should be also directed to guardians – husbands, fathers and brothers - to allow and support their wives, daughters and sisters to be active in public life and to take decision-making positions. There are cases when a woman is offered a position in decision-making, but a relative prevents her from taking it. Women need their families to be behind them when engaged in public affairs. Men have to be encouraged to support and empower women, as well as to actively contribute to gender equality and changing the culture related to traditional perception of gender roles.

Education and capacity building

Providing education and opportunities to develop women's capabilities to serve the community is a key factor for women to build confidence and develop their ability to work politically in Yemen. Women need to be educated and trained to engage in the political process; to become familiar with the laws and rights, to take proper courses and engage in public and political work in practice.

Civil society organizations can contribute to enhancing women's capabilities in conflict resolution by organizing training courses that introduce the tools, methods, and conditions necessary for resolving disputes.

In order for a new generation of women to be engaged in Track II Peace process they should be involved in programs to develop their skills. Opportunities are available, both by the local and the international support of the peace process in Yemen. Numerous local and international organizations conduct training courses and programs in peacebuilding. Organisations such as the Peace Truck Initiative provide capacity building opportunities for women in thematic areas such as gender-based conflict analysis, advocacy for peace, writing policy brief and others aiming to empower feminist activists, civil society and humanitarian workers, as well as government representatives, to integrate gender into peacebuilding work and ensure that the needs of women and girls are effectively and sustainably met. Other organisations, including Partners Yemen, have been active in engaging women in skills building courses in project management, mediation and reconciliation, leadership skills and many others.

It is important for more women to take advantage of these opportunities to enhance their capabilities in this field. This preparation will ensure they are ready for future peace negotiations and secure at least one seat within the negotiating delegation.

Women leaders have to be given opportunities to participate in international and regional conferences, events and forums to exchange experiences and learn from successful practices.

Networking and mutual endorsement

Women have to stand by each other, to unite and create supportive networks. They need to engage in organizations that work to enhance the role of women in politics and peace processes. According to a male participant from Hadhramaut, the marginalization of women sometimes comes from women themselves; they fight against each other and it does not help their case to be nominated and present in decision-making positions.

Women can enhance their participation in decision-making positions based on United Nations Resolution 1325. This is an opportunity for women-led civil society organizations to activate this resolution and work on its implementation on the ground. Through lobbying and advocacy, feminist and human rights organizations can demand representation of women in local, executive, and government authorities and other decision-making positions. It will enhance women's role in formulating policies and decisions that affect their lives.

Forming alliances between women from different communities and governorates, between women from different fields of life and different political parties, will help to connect women and build powerful unions. It will facilitate their access to existing parties and decision-makers. The same is relevant for women working at a community level: building alliances and connections within the communities, engaging influential women and other stakeholders facilitates women's work and public initiatives. Existing women's alliances are already doing substantial work to defend women's rights and promote meaningful participation of women and youth. Such alliances, networks and women's groups are Yemeni Women Union, Al-Zahraa for Women's Development, Social Development Hodeidah Girls Foundation, Marib Girls Foundation, Women's Pact for Peace and Security and the Women's Solidarity Network, to mention a few.

Empowering women-led organizations

Women-led organizations need support and protection to fulfil their mission to alleviate societal burdens by providing humanitarian support and aid, participating in mediations to resolve conflicts, contributing to social change, supporting and empowering women in all aspects of life. These organizations need financial and technical support to meet the complex requirements of donors. Women-led organizations should be offered more flexible support to be able to function.

In Yemen, the UN Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund is channelling financing to grassroots women's organizations, mobilizing to promote the socio-economic recovery and political participation of forcibly displaced women and girls in peacebuilding contexts. Other international donors are also focusing their support to women's groups and alliances. Still much more funds and support is needed to achieve a substantial change in women's situation and their participation in public life. Women understand community needs and bring gender-based perspective in programme designs and community initiatives.

Governmental bodies are expected to support women's organizations by providing direct grants that serve women and meet their needs in the community in the long term. The government has to protect civil society organizations in general and feminist entities in particular, from being intimidated and incited about their work in society.

Inclusion of women in political parties

The current status of women's engagement in the political parties shows lack of participation or only symbolic participation. The inclusion of women should not be restricted to sectors specifically designated for them. Ideally, political engagement should be a collaborative effort where women participate in all party committees, just like men. Political parties can ensure the effective participation of women at all levels and in all leadership positions.

Continuous efforts must be made to enhance women's political participation, including providing education, training, and necessary resources, and raising awareness about the importance of women's representation in political decisions.

Implementing policies that promote gender equality in political life is essential. Additionally, parties and political entities should ensure equal opportunities in nominations for international conferences, giving greater chances for their female members to represent them.

Engaging women in peacebuilding efforts

Women are the most conflict-affected community group and they are strongly motivated to contribute to resolving this conflict. Conflicts lead to the loss of the family's breadwinner, displacement and changes in gender dynamics, which places many burdens on women that were previously borne by men. Because the woman becomes the primary breadwinner providing for her family after the absence of father, husband, or brother, this strongly emphasizes the importance of actively involving women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts. Women possess a unique understanding and experience of the impact of conflicts on families and communities, and they play a pivotal role in maintaining the stability of society and rebuilding in the aftermath of conflicts. Integrating women as a principal partner in conflict resolution efforts is crucial for achieving sustainable and inclusive results.

Peace talks need to include an equal representation of men and women in order to reflect the opinion of the wider community and achieve more sustainable results.

Raising awareness about the necessity of equal representation of women in the peace talks can be done by civil society organizations, independent women activists, community committees, and social media influencers. Many civil society organizations have women leaders who prove their capabilities to solve problems and show high standards of work. Those women who have the opportunity to work in non-governmental organizations dedicated to conflict resolution and peacebuilding already have experience, knowledge and understanding of the peace process. Many other women are engaged in humanitarian assistance, raising awareness about human rights, working towards community reconciliation, and strengthening the social fabric.

Women who successfully do humanitarian and peacebuilding work can be role models for the next generation of women activists who can establish community organizations that aim to achieve peace and development; promote constructive conflict resolution, mutual understanding and dialogue. Women can contribute to humanitarian and developmental work in areas affected by conflicts and wars providing assistance and collaborating in reconstruction efforts, enhancing stability and peace in affected communities.

Despite this, women continue to face barriers to participate in peacebuilding and humanitarian decision-making at all levels, and the work of local women peacebuilders, humanitarians and human rights defenders in fragile settings remains dramatically underfunded worldwide. There are groups of existing women leaders who are fighting for their rights despite the widespread gender-based violence, which is growing exacerbated by the conflict, preventing women's meaningful participation in peace and security processes, political decision-making, and humanitarian action.

Focus groups participants provided numerous examples of successful women mediators, women engaged in humanitarian assistance and women leading local civil society organisations who have proven to serve as powerful engines of development, leading local movements to solve community issues, address local conflicts and respond to humanitarian crises. Their experience and knowledge, wisdom and courage provide inspiring role models for the new generation of women leaders.

The new generation of women leaders can be trained to lead civil society organizations and gain skills such as project management, organizational development and leadership. In governorates like Hadhramaut developing cadres of women leaders is a necessity since there are not many peacebuilding projects like in Sana'a, Aden, or Taiz.

Women should be supported to play an essential role in organizing campaigns, popular movements, and advocacy efforts for peace. They should be free to organize marches and peaceful protests and work to raise public awareness and shape public opinion about the importance of peace. At the same time women need protection and safety, they need to be able to act free from violence and abuse.

In the peace process women can be engaged in work focused on promoting dialogue and understanding between conflicting parties. Women can participate in peace forums and conferences and contribute to community and national dialogues.

Encouraging a new generation of women to engage in civil society organizations and humanitarian and developmental work will contribute to peacebuilding and enhancing stability.

International organizations and NGOs working in various governorates in Yemen have firsthand experience and knowledge about the situation. Some of the following recommendations come from the information they shared during the focus group discussions.

Providing education for all children and preventing of girls school dropping out from school

It is clear that in many areas in the North and South schools became destroyed or have become inoperable for various reasons. In some areas, mixed schools accommodate both boys and girls; many more girls than boys are leaving schools due to family hardship, high transportation cost or due to the school's inability to accommodate them in a safe and proper way.

Developing educational programs for women's occupational training and entrepreneurship

Women's recent involvement in the labor market has shown how social and cultural norms halted their professional development and exposed their deficit in experience and skills. Economic hardship pressed many women to engage in economic activities to support their families, consequently, many of them face exploitation and discrimination in the labor market. Women need support to exercise their rights to education and economic freedom.

Women civil society activists need support and protection

Organizations such as the Peace Track Initiative provides protection for women human rights defenders and those engaged in political processes and peacebuilding. They are supported through small-grants programs, capacity building, rehabilitation, improving logistics, and advocacy. This working model needs to be expanded because many more women activists are under attack and face various violations, including kidnappings, arbitrary detention, blocking their bank accounts, threats to their safety and the safety of their families, and forced relocation. Women are facing difficulties in obtaining passports; their movement is restricted and dependent on guardianship. These issues are blocking women's opportunities for public participation.

Engaging women in the political process should follow a carefully designed program

Such a program should include preparation, capacity building, protection, networking and helping them reach international bodies and donors. For example, the Peace Track Initiative is helping women engage in the political process of building peace. The Peace Track Initiative works as a secretariat for the Women's Solidarity Network, which includes more than 300 women from different fields. They provide examples how uniting women-led organizations facilitates the work related to the Track III Peace process and provide access to institutions and civil society groups and women working inside Yemen. Therefore capacity building is important but it needs to be paired with protection, better networking, and supporting women's work, whether through advocacy campaigns, or offering grants to their institutions.

Public institutions need to recruit more women and engage them in various positions, including security forces where women's representation is very weak. According to the Human Rights Centre the new forces affiliated with the Transitional Council, limit women's participation and even in the area of education women are still not well represented and far below the level of participation before 2015 when the war began.

The increase of gender-based violence is widely known and needs special attention

Organizations like the Yemen Support Fund report that women have limited access to basic services and limited freedom of movement; they are disproportionately displaced and have limited economic opportunities. Their hardship also affects their home and ability to support their children. While some NGOs offer peacebuilding interventions related to security and political stability engaging women-led organizations in reconciliation efforts and community initiatives, more needs to be done in the area of violence prevention and reduction of escalation in many regions.

Supporting women networks and civil society organizations is an important instrument for peacebuilding in Yemen. Some initiatives target educated professional women activists and their unions and networks. Others engage civil society organizations and women in communities to deal with various problems, for example, electronic extortion, which has become an issue but has not been addressed by the authorities. Units, opened in Aden, Lahj, Shabwa, and Taiz by the partners of Yemen Support Fund, are helping women victims and working with authorities to ensure that there will be regulations in place to address blackmailing and other forms of online abuse. Giving the limited opportunities for women to travel and gather, it is important to provide opportunities for women to meet, work together and participate in public forums where their voices can be heard.

Involving women in all stages of program design to take their perspectives and empower them to be actively participating in various initiatives

It became noticeable that including certain quota of women (e.g.30%) in training sessions, committees and other forms of work, is not enough to increase their participation. It is important women to be actively engaged in decision-making positions. For example, the Rural Water Committees in Taiz governorate adopted a procedure setting clear responsibilities to committee members so women have a decision-making role and a voice in all matters. This is a model how the committees have to be structured in order for women to participate actively, and not to be excluded or involved only formally (with a certain quota).

Empowering women to participate in public life needs comprehensive methodology that includes men As a representative of UN Women states, ensuring men's participation in various women-related initiatives is a key to win men's support for them. Recommendations how to reach higher women's representation in public institutions, political processes and community development, need to reach all spectrums of society. It is helpful to have allocation of jobs reserved for women so young men do not compete for them.

Engaging women in mediation committees and initiatives that build peace in communities proved to be one of the successful approaches to increasing their public participation. Many NGOs working in various governorates pointed out the abilities and skills women demonstrate in dispute resolution. When NGOs working in these areas engage women equally with men and provide training and opportunities to implement community initiatives to both men and women, the results show real involvement of women in the mediation cases. In communities, women's mediation is an ongoing process that is accepted and supported by society since it is linked to developmental and social conflicts within the local context.

It makes the community guarantee women's protection and societal customs accept more easily such interventions. Women have been involved in mediation of cases of high social value, for example, The Hadhramaut Women for Peace team mediated to open Al-Rayyan Airport to travelers, and it was actually opened. Women have resolved conflicts also related to the distribution of resources such as water and humanitarian aid, resolving land disputes, opening roads and family disputes. There are many success stories that empower women to continue in their new non-traditional roles.

These experiences have to be transferred to the advanced stages in the political process and ensure that women participate also in Track II Peace negotiations.

Strategies and Ways Forward for the Program

This assessment aimed to evaluate what women need in order to take leadership roles and participate in the Track II peace process. The findings have confirmed the validity of the objectives of the program. Participants in the online questionnaire and in the focus groups from the target governorates have reaffirmed the pressing need for empowering women and creating an enabling environment for their participation in public life.

The assessment has identified numerous challenges and areas that need multi-sectoral approach and intervention in order to enhance the role and collaboration of Yemeni women leaders, including the second-generation women leaders, in actively contributing to negotiation, reconciliation, accountability, and governance on the implementation of peace and reconciliation agreements, and the cessation of hostilities.

In all governorates where Partners Yemen implements the "Enhancing Women's Engagement in Track II Peace Process" Program, the situation has worsened during the past months. The economic decline and the lack of livelihood opportunities have led to a certain shift in gender roles. Women have to engage in economic activities in order to maintain the household. The war taught people a lot and produced many capabilities which can be seen in women's achievements and accomplishments in various fields like education, labor, family, civil society organizations and community work related to social care, education and various services, including conflict resolution and family counselling. Still women are excluded from government and political parties by justifying it as "it is not the right time due to the ongoing war". The program will raise awareness about the role of women in public affairs, especially promoting the new generation of women leaders, who already can be seen participating in public dialogues and discussions where they engage in conversations about peace, justice, and human rights. This reflects their aspiration and readiness to participate in the Track II peace process.

It is clear that the political process is incomplete when it lacks women and other groups such as the youth. Inclusion of all stakeholders is an essential aspect of the peace process to be sustainable.

Women need programs for political empowerment that create a more enabling environment and introduce mechanisms for cooperation and communication with authorities, international organizations and key decision-makers. This has to include awareness raising for women's political, social and legal rights along with various instruments for women's engagement. Partners Yemen has planned such instruments such as an advisory committee and various forms of networking, participation in communication platforms and consultation mechanisms. Increasing women's participation, visibility and getting their voices across is crucial for women's rights and democracy.

Providing **specialized training and educational programs** for the new generation of women and girls interested in public and political participation is essential. Women shared numerous specific topics needed to build their capacity for political engagement and participation in peace negotiations: communication, negotiation, mediation, transitional justice, preparation of public policy papers, the basics of political process, introduction to human rights and international human rights instruments, leadership and others. Developing strategic leadership skills should involve training on how to set a strategic vision and goals for the peace negotiation process and how to achieve these goals effectively. Women indicated that they would benefit from building skills building and training in areas such as peacebuilding, conflict assessment and context analysis, conducting advocacy campaigns, outreach, strategic planning, and social cohesion. Partners Yemen will address some of these needs by preparing training materials and conducting training seminars for the new generation of women leaders aiming at covering the suggested topics and building practical skills on how to prepare high level meetings; conduct professional briefings, build consensus, measure impact and conduct dialogue process.

Enhancing women leaders' **conflict resolution and mediation** skills should be a special focus. Training women to handle disputes and disagreements to achieve reconciliation and peace is perceived as a necessary prerequisite for their participation in Track II peace negotiations. Such a training program should include mediation techniques, constructive negotiation and problem solving, dealing with impasse and difficulties of various sorts during the negotiation process. Partners Yemen is well-positioned to build such a training program based on its own wealth of experience in providing conflict resolution and mediation training in tribal areas and on lessons learned from numerous real mediation cases managed during the years. Women will develop understanding of how political, social and economic dynamics affect mediation and negotiation processes; women will develop skills to analyze stakeholders, identify opportunities, and assess the context, its strength and weaknesses.

Encouraging young people and women to **engage in humanitarian and community work**, in various initiatives and campaigns related to peace and justice, will provide important experience and understanding of the real life issues and connection to various groups of people. Such experience and connections will be informative for women's participation in public dialogues and discussions about peace, justice and human rights.

Partners Yemen should **continue to build links** with respected community members whose support may be needed to ensure the success of the women empowerment program. Partners Yemen could assist in building channels of communication between women's groups, communities and the government. Each initiative needs the engagement of key stakeholders in target governorates and the interest of women-led civil society organizations. Spending time building relationships and understanding the local context is very important to mobilize support, disarm spoilers and find the necessary human and material resources needed for women's presence and participation in political processes. Engaging women themselves in this community mobilization process aiming to support women's political participation would be a valuable experience to practice negotiation skills, problem solving and dealing with difficulties and challenges.

Engaging women in political work should be facilitated by **legal and political support**. It is necessary to think about women's safety and protection, to offer legal advice and reinforce their social and political rights. The assessment highlighted the desire for women to have a role in resolving conflicts, participate in decision-making in their communities and in political life. It also confirmed that women are very much aware of the challenges and obstacles towards their public and political participation and issues related to their security and safety are important. Given that women are discriminated against and excluded from formal decision-making processes in Yemen, Partners Yemen should continue to emphasize women's participation and work with other stakeholders to deal with the safety issues and reduce various barriers towards women's involvement.

Participants in the assessment were repeatedly sharing that in order to engage women in politics they need **economic empowerment**, including offering job opportunities, funding and small loans to support their political projects. Women also need **support for childcare and healthcare** for children and family members, social psychological support in order to be able to overcome challenges they may face during political participation. Such support cannot be provided solely by one project or organization but a pressure can be put on relevant authorities to ensure childcare, health centres and other services are functional when people need them.

Finally, it is crucial the Program launches an **advocacy campaign** targeting political parties and authorities to pressure them to empower women and provide opportunities for their participation and their voices to be heard. Women also need feminist organizations and civil society organizations to strengthen their role in promoting women's participation in the peace process and to provide the necessary support for them. Partners Yemen already has a women's network in place from its previous initiative, which crosses tribal and family boundaries, and can capitalize on it. There are many sectors where Yemeni women can make significant contributions, such as the economy, security, and foreign policy but they are lacking real opportunities to do so. Despite the numerous obstacles, women are trying to assert their presence and actively involve themselves in administrative, humanitarian and service work.

The project is pushing women's rights and political inclusion up in the Yemeni agenda for development and peace. It advocates for urgent measures to decrease the various layers of vulnerabilities to women, to eliminate discriminatory practices and politics of marginalisation and exclusion of women from public life. Yemeni people want a future of peace, security and prosperity; they need real actions to achieve sustainable political settlement through the efforts of all parties involved - including through meaningful inclusion of women in the political dialogue and in the peace negotiations.

The Gender and Context Analysis study outlines several key actions to strengthen women's participation in peacebuilding. It is essential to raise awareness about the critical role women play in these processes and to empower them to overcome existing barriers. We can provide the necessary support for women to engage effectively in peacebuilding efforts and address these challenges through targeted training and development initiatives. Additionally, encouraging future generations of women to participate in these activities is vital for fostering long-term peace and stability.

To this end, this 5-Year Strategic Plan presents a comprehensive approach that ensures both immediate actions and long-term sustainability. This plan empowers women to play a pivotal role in creating a more peaceful and equitable society.

Actionable Activities

Activities	Priority Level	Timeline	Responsible Person/Team
Raising Awareness			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobilize civil society organizations, independent women activists, and social media influencers to advocate for equal representation of women in peace talks. 	High	Year 1-2	Gender and Peacebuilding Working Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight women leaders' capabilities in conflict resolution and their high standards of work through targeted campaigns. 	Medium	Year 2-3	Women's Leadership Development Initiative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showcase experiences of women involved in humanitarian assistance and community reconciliation to increase visibility. 	Low	Year 3-4	Knowledge Management and Capacity Building Team
Empowering Women			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish community organizations focused on peace and development, providing resources and training. 	High	Year 1-3	Community Mobilization and Empowerment Team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote constructive conflict resolution and dialogue through women-led initiatives across communities. 	Medium	Year 2-4	Peace Education and Dialogue Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support women's participation in humanitarian and development work in conflict-affected areas, ensuring access to resources. 	High	Year 2-4	Humanitarian Assistance and Development Cooperation Team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with women-led organizations in reconstruction efforts to enhance stability and peace. 	Medium	Year 3-5	Humanitarian Assistance and Development Cooperation Team

Activities	Priority Level	Timeline	Responsible Person/Team
Addressing Barriers			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify and address barriers women face in decision-making at all levels, ensuring inclusivity in peace processes. 	High	Year 5-1	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy Unit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase funding and resources for local women peacebuilders and human rights defenders in fragile settings. 	High	Year 4-1	Resource Mobilization and Donor Relations Team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish support groups for women leaders confronting gender-based violence, enhancing their safety and agency. 	High	Year 3-1	Women's Rights and Protection Unit
Training and Development			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop training programs for emerging women leaders in project management, leadership, and advocacy skills. 	High	Year 4-1	Women's Leadership Development Initiative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create regional capacity-building programs in governorates like Hadhramaut to strengthen local women's leadership in peacebuilding. 	Medium	Year 5-2	Regional Capacity Building Program
Training and Development			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate women-led campaigns and advocacy efforts for peace, ensuring their voices are heard in negotiations. 	High	Year 3-1	Advocacy and Public Engagement Team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement safety measures to protect women from violence, enabling their full participation in peace activities. 	High	Year 5-1	Women's Safety and Security Unit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage women in promoting dialogue between conflicting parties, fostering understanding and collaboration. 	High	Year 4-1	Peacebuilding and Reconciliation Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage women's participation in national dialogues and peace forums to ensure their perspectives are included. 	Medium	Year 5-2	Peacebuilding Dialogue and Negotiation Support Team

Activities	Priority Level	Timeline	Responsible Person/Team
Encouraging Future Generations			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch initiatives to inspire the next generation of women to engage in civil society and humanitarian work. 	High	Year 5-1	Youth Empowerment and Engagement Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop mentorship programs pairing young women with experienced leaders in peacebuilding fields to enhance skills and confidence. 	Medium	Year 5-1	Mentorship and Leadership Development Program

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Assessment methodology
Gender and Context Analysis
METHODOLOGY

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

The *Enhancing Women's Engagement in Track II Peace Process* project intends to respond to the gap of women underrepresentation in the peace talks and political discussions. It will work to enhance the engagement of Yemeni women leaders (Second Generation of Women Leaders SGWL) in Track II peace processes. The new generation of women leaders are under focus due to their potential to influence and their willingness to participate and make change. The project contributes to promotion of a just and inclusive peace by increasing social inclusion and meaningful participation of women and youth in the Track II process. It aims at strengthening women leadership in peace discussions by supporting women leaders to participate in the political process.

The goal of the project is to enhance the role of women leaders to contribute to the peace process at Track I and Track II in order to increase women leadership and visibility at the local and national levels.

The project objectives include

1. Enhancing the role and collaboration of Yemeni women leaders, including the second – generation women leaders, in actively contributing to negotiation, reconciliation, accountability, and governance on the implementation of peace and reconciliation agreements, and the cessation of hostilities. This objective aims to increase women's participation and influence in the peace process in Yemen and promote their meaningful engagement in decision-making processes.
2. Building mechanisms to manage the relationships and coordination between women leaders, higher authorities, and decision-makers with the ability to access Track II negotiations that lead to impacting Track I dynamics through advocacy and consultations. This objective aims to strengthen the participation of women leaders in the peace process by providing them with the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to effectively engage with decision-makers and advocate for their inclusion in the negotiations. It also aims to ensure those women's perspectives and voices are heard and considered in the peace process.

Special attention is given to the current situation and the women access to political participation in **4 targeted geographical locations**: Amanat Alasimah, Taiz, Aden, and Hadramawt – regions with large populations and diverse political influence and natural resources.

The assessment will be focused mainly on the capitals of these governorates which are centres of political and economic activities and where the presence of Track II women leaders, political parties, and local authorities is more prominent.

The analysis intends to carry out an assessment of the level and scope of women's participation in 4 regions. A starting point of this work is to examine the context and situation prior to the project intervention, identifying the real dimensions of the problem and collecting the opinion of key stakeholders in each of the target areas.

2. ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

The Gender and Context Analysis aims to explore what is the situation of women's political participation in the 4 target regions.

The expectation towards this work is to get better understanding of gender dynamics and the roles of men and women, especially their roles in political parties. This context specific, conflict sensitive and gender analysis will contribute to validate correlation between women engagement and peace progress in the Track II that impact Track I; it will focus on the opportunities to success, lessons learned and ways to enable the new generation of women. This process will include identifying the existing women's access and available communication mechanisms to Track II.

The analysis will provide insights on the existing data and use it for further design of the proposed course of training and outreach activities under this project.

More precisely, the Analysis in the target regions aims at:

- Examine the volatile context and the effect of changes in the regional dynamics in recent months;
- Explore the drivers of the current conflict and their impact on women and the wider population;
- Identify how the roles of men and women define the level and scope of participation in community matters and in the political parties;
- Examine factors which relate to new generation of women engagement in political parties;
- Identify the level of awareness of men and women towards the necessity of women participation in the Track II peace process;
- Explore opportunities for women to participate in the Track II peace process and existing efforts to increase women's participation;
- Describe lessons learned and ways to enable a new generation of women.
- Gather data on the mechanisms to manage the relationships and coordination between women leaders, higher authorities, and decision-makers with the ability to access Track II negotiations that lead to impacting Track I dynamics through advocacy and consultations
- Outline the level of preparedness and capacity of next generation of women leaders to engage in the peace process.

This phase of the project will capture the necessary data that will inform the capacity building program for women leaders, the stakeholder's engagement and the mechanism that needs to be built to manage relationships between women leaders and decision makers with the ability to access Track II negotiations.

In addition, the assessment will provide data to compare results related to perception and attitude of key stakeholders at different levels in four governorates. Therefore, the results will be helpful to various national and international organisations in shaping effective measures to increase women engagement in high-level meetings. The results will inform the project partners in formulating evidence-based recommendations for policy improvement in relation to the peace negotiations.

The proposed assessment methodology is designed to examine the variety of themes of interest to project partners and other key stakeholders.

3. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Definitions

Track I Diplomacy

Track One Diplomacy is considered to be the primary peacemaking tool of a state's foreign policy. It is carried out by diplomats, high-ranking government officials, and heads of states and is aimed at influencing the structures of political power.

Track 1½ Diplomacy

Track 1½ intermediation typically involves unofficial actors such as former government officials, or religious or social organizations, who intervene between official government representatives to promote a peaceful resolution of conflict. Three kinds have been common:

- Direct mediation or conciliation by unofficial third parties. In this model, informal intermediaries act between conflicting parties either by hosting and facilitating talks or by providing unofficial shuttle diplomacy.

«Consultation» and facilitation of interactive problem-solving by unofficial facilitators. In this model, key individuals from the parties are brought together in their personal capacities, rather than as representatives of their side, for direct, private interaction.

Facilitation of problem solving or confidence-building by official third-party actors among private citizens in influential sectors. Official third-party actors initiate or facilitate discussions among non-official representatives of the conflicting parties such as academics or businesspeople -- in order to stimulate progress in official negotiations.⁷

Track II Diplomacy

Track II Diplomacy is considered unofficial interventions with unofficial actors. The term «track two» was coined by Joseph Montville, who distinguished traditional diplomatic activities (track one diplomacy) from «unofficial, informal interaction between members of adversarial groups or nations with the goals of developing strategies, influencing public opinions and organizing human and material resources in ways that might help resolve the conflict.»

Women's participation

Women's equal participation and leadership in political and public life are essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, including SD Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Data show that women are underrepresented at all levels of decision-making worldwide and that achieving gender parity in political life is far off. In Yemen, a country with one of the biggest gender gaps in the world, facing discrimination, patriarchal structures and restrictive social norms.

⁷ https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/track2_diplomacy

3.2. Data collection methods

The assessment includes quantitative and qualitative research through focus groups and interviews. **The quantitative research** includes a questionnaire distributed mostly to women leaders; as well as to men, including authority figures in position of power and decision-making.

The total number of participants in the assessment, by filling in questionnaires, is 200 people, distributed as follows:

- 150 women;
- 50 authority figures in position of power (men or women: judges, political leaders, tribal leaders, local government leaders etc.)

The qualitative assessment includes 9 focus groups and if needed 10 individual interviews.

Two focus groups in each region will be conducted consisting 6 to 10 participants in each group. One of the two regional focus groups has to include only women.

One focus group will be conducted in Sanawith stakeholders such as NGOs, including women led NGOs, international organisations, participants in Track I and Track II peace negotiations and others.

In addition, around 10 individual interviews will be conducted with representatives of the political parties, judicial system, religious or tribal leaders, NGOs, including women – led NGOs and groups, representatives of international organizations, participants in Track I and Track II peace negotiations.

Individual interviews and focus groups could be conducted in presence or online.

Summary of the focus groups and the target participants

Geographical locations	Focus groups	Individual interviews (if needed)
Amanat Alasimah	1 focus group for 6 to 10 women 1 focus group for 6 to 10 participants	3-2 individual interviews
Taiz	1 focus group for 6 to 10 women 1 focus group for 6 to 10 participants	3-2 individual interviews
Aden	1 focus group for 6 to 10 women 1 focus group for 6 to 10 participants	3-2 individual interviews
Hadhramaut	1 focus group for 6 to 10 women 1 focus group for 6 to 10 participants	3-2 individual interviews

Note: the initially chosen region of Sana'a was later replaced with the region of Marib.

3.2. Thematic areas

Based on the objectives of the Gender and Context Analysis several important themes related to women political participation have been identified and considered important to assess within the research framework, namely:

1. The context

Questions in this area explore the participants' perception of various aspects of the conflict situation in Yemen and their impact on women and girls, men and boys. Participants can share their opinion about measure that can be taken to improve the situation, including women's role in these efforts. Various aspects of consequences of the conflict on human security are explored: economic, food, health, community, personal, ecological and political security; media freedom and ways to address disinformation.

2. Conflict analysis

This section looks further into the conflict situation, the actors involved and the underlying factors that reinforce conflict and frozen development. The questions include analysis of existing resources (programs and mechanisms for dealing with conflict at local and national level), exploration of challenges and opportunities available in order to support a realistic approach to conflict resolution in four regions in Yemen] strategies and ways forward.

3. Gender roles

These set of questions are designed to find how the roles of men and women define the level and scope of participation in community matters as well their access to political participation. Traditional roles of women are explored in relation to factors such as economic decline, violations, exploitation and abuse, sectarianism and ideology. It is important to know how the conflict affects life at home and women cope, including their ability to influence men leading up to, and during, the conflict.

4. Women engagement in political parties

This section aims at exploring situation in women's political participation and factors that facilitate or create obstacles to their access to political process.

A special focus is given to the new generation of women and their motivation to engage in politics, the availability of family and community support, the cost and benefits of such political engagement. Information is gathered how much the political parties are open for women, what conditions they create to attract women and what is women's role in existing political groups.

5. Participation in Track II peace process

This section looks at the awareness about the necessity of women's participation in Track II peace process. Opportunities for women to participate in peace negotiations are explored as well as the existing efforts to increase women's participation. Collecting lessons learned and ways to enable new generation of women will provide insights for creating an enabling environment for involvement of a new generation of women leaders in the peace process.

6. Mechanisms for coordination and communication

Participants share information about existing mechanisms to manage relationships and coordination between women leaders and higher authorities and decision-makers with the ability to access Track II negotiations. They generate ideas how such mechanisms can be improved or created and what support can be given to women who are capable and motivated to participate in the political process and peace negotiations.

7. Capacity building needs

The aim of this section is to explore the capacity building needs of the new generation of women leaders. The responses to these questions will help design a customised training program for women leaders which will increase their knowledge and skills to be engaged in the political processes and to participate and provide valuable contribution to Track II diplomacy.

The assessment will also pay attention to traditional conflict resolution systems, customary law and women's participation in various mechanisms for dealing with conflicts..

3.3. Questions to be asked of each group of Actors

Partners Yemen and Partners Bulgaria will draw a list of relevant actors such as women leaders, women-led NGOs, community and tribal leaders, local government, INGOs, local NGOs, local councils, corporations working in the areas, minorities and youth, religious leaders, development and humanitarian actors, etc. It should be important to address their interests, goals, positions, capacities and resources (or social capital), peace or conflict agendas, incentives and relationships. The assessment should address the following questions: What capacities for peace can be identified? What is their attitude towards women's participation in political process and peace negotiations? What actors can be identified as spoilers? What actors can be identified as peacebuilders? How does the conflict affect them? What survival strategies have they developed? What capacities do the actors have to contribute to peace process? Are they capable and motivated to support women's participation in political parties and peace negotiations?

Questions for Women Leaders

Objective: Focus groups with women leaders will take place in each of the target regions Amanat Alasimah, Taiz, Aden, and Hadramawt. The questions should determine how the conflict and its recent development and its consequences on human security affect them, their families and their communities. Questions should help understand the existing power dynamics and in what way the traditional gender roles and expectations towards women affect their participation in society life beyond the family and how they can contribute to conflict management and peace process at different levels. Attention should be paid to women's participation in Track II negotiations and the needs to build better capacities as peace negotiators, mediators and influential leaders.

Questions will include:

Section One – the Context:

1. How would you describe the situation in Yemen in the last 6 months? What are
2. The consequences for human security?
3. What is the impact of conflict on women and girls, men and boys?
4. How do you perceive the capacity of households to meet their needs?
5. How the basic nutrition requirements of people are met?
6. Do people have access to clean water?
7. Is the sanitation system in place?
8. Are health services and medicines accessible?
9. What is the situation related to the access to services in your community?
10. What are the challenges to keep children at school?
11. Can you describe the situation in terms of security and safety of people?
12. How vulnerable to violence are women and girls; disabled; elderly and minorities? Have you witnessed / or know/ cases of violence (physical, psychological, sexual, economic) against these group of people?
13. Is your region hit by climate crisis and if yes, what are the consequences for your family and community (flooding, storms, dryland)?
14. How do you perceive media in terms of trustful and accurate information about the situation in Yemen?

Section Two: Conflict Analysis

15. How does your community deal with/resolve disagreements?
16. Which factors help conflict to stay non-violent and content?
17. What is the role of women to mitigate conflicts?
18. What other figures or institutions become involved in mitigating conflict (tribal or religious leaders for example)?

Section Three: Gender roles:

19. How the roles of men and women define the level and scope of participation in community matters?
20. How the economic declines impact women and their traditional roles?
21. Are there cases of violence against women induced by the conflict?
22. How the exploitation of sectarianism and ideology impact women?
23. In what way the traditional and patriarchal gender norms change during the conflict?
24. Do women play a role in mediating disputes in the community? If so, how and in what way?
25. How does conflict affect life at home and within the family?
26. How do women resolve conflicts at home?
27. How do women influence men leading up to, and during, conflict?

Section Four: Women engagement in political parties

28. Which factors contribute women to exert influence in decision-making? How factors such as age, experience, education, social and economic status, availability or absence of male family figure relate to women participation in decision-making and political process?
29. What are the obstacles and factors contributing to women participation in the political parties?
30. Which factors facilitate the new generation of women engagement in political parties?
31. Which political parties are open to women participation? What conditions they create to attract women? What is women's role in existing political groups?

Section Five: Participation in Track II peace process

32. Do men and women recognise necessity of women's participation in Track II peace process?
33. What are the existing opportunities for women to participate in the Track II peace process?
34. What efforts are made to increase women's participation? What are the lessons learned and ways to enable new generation of women?

Section Six: Mechanisms for coordination and communication

33. Which are the existing mechanisms to manage the relationships and coordination between women leaders, higher authorities, and decision-makers with the ability to access Track II negotiations?
34. What else can be done to improve these mechanisms or what new mechanisms can be created to manage relationships between women leaders and higher authorities?
35. What support can be given to women who want to participate in the political process?

Section Seven: Capacity building needs

36. What is the level of preparedness and capacity of next generation of women leaders to engage in the peace process?
37. What are the needs of the new generation of women leaders in order to engage in the peace process?
38. What training programs would be useful for women leaders to improve their skills to participate in the peace negotiations?

Questions for INGOs/International community representatives

Objective: Interviews with international representatives should focus on perspectives of conflict and its consequences for various aspects of human security. Special focus should be given to their perception of situation of women and ways to increase women's presence in community matters and Track II negotiations. These interviews should draw on field experience of INGOs operating in Yemen, including lessons learned, gaps in programming, potential opportunities and challenges to operate in situation of conflict. It is important to identify existing efforts and avoid duplication so that Partners Yemen is addressing gaps in programming related to women empowerment and engagement in political participation in the four regions.

1. Have you worked in this specific governorate? What is your assessment of situation in these communities?
2. What work has your INGO been doing in these communities?
3. How has conflict affected your INGO work?
4. How has the conflict affected women and children in these communities?
5. What is the role of women in your work? How do you manage to involve women?
6. What factors create challenges and what factors facilitate women's participation?
7. Are there lessons learned that can be considered in this assessment?
8. Are there specific instances where women have mediated conflict? Can you provide example how what women did worked?
9. Do you have suggestions how to increase women participation in conflict mediation?
10. Having in mind your observations and experience in Yemen, what kind of training would be useful for women in order to improve their capacity to participate in peace negotiations?

Online Questionnaire

The online questionnaire is developed in both English and Arabic language. It is administered through Google forms.

At least 250 participants are expected to respond to the questionnaire.

Annex 2

Gallery. Focus group discussions



Aden - FG - Women





Hadhramaut – FG – Women



Hadhramaut – FG – Mixed



Taiz – FG – Mixed