

Search for Common Ground Lebanon

Communication on Engagement

A summary of Search for Common Ground Lebanon's engagement with the United Nations Global Compact (2017-2019)

May 2017 - May 2019

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Table of contents

- I. Foreword – Statement of Support by Charles Holmquist, Interim Country Director
- II. About Search for Common Ground
- III. Search for Common Ground in Lebanon
- IV. Search for Common Ground and the UN Global Compact
- V. Practical Actions
 - A. Engagement with the private sector: Peace Pioneers 2017-2019
 - B. Other Actions
- VI. Search for Common Ground and the Sustainable Development Goals
- VII. Measurements of outcomes

I - Foreword

Statement of support by Charles Holmquist, Interim Country Director for Search for Common Ground Lebanon,

I am pleased to renew Search for Common Ground Lebanon's active support to the United Nations Global Compact and its ten principles, with respect to human rights, labor, environment and the prevention of corruption.

In this Communication on Engagement, we describe the actions taken by our organization to support the Global Compact and contribute to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Sincerely,

Charles Holmquist

Interim Country Director for Search for Common Ground Lebanon

II - About Search for Common Ground

Search for Common Ground (Search) believes that while conflict is inevitable, violence is not. When we deal with conflict collaboratively, it can catalyze positive change, progress, inclusivity, and prosperity. From mediation over water rights in Yemen to helping prisoners reintegrate in Indonesia, from soap operas in South Sudan to back-channel diplomacy among foreign ministries, Search has built a toolbox of tactics to tailor to each conflict's specific dynamics and history. While its programs may vary, they are based on the same foundation: The Common Ground

THE COMMON GROUND APPROACH

01 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

HOPE: We believe that change is possible even in the worst circumstances for those who seek it.

LEAD FROM WITHIN: We believe that those closest to a conflict are best equipped to drive change.

BE CREATIVE: Embrace innovative, culturally relevant programming that enables new breakthroughs.

START WITH PEOPLE... The human journey of transformation is at the center of all change.

... AND END WITH SYSTEMS: Transform specific relationships that can catalyze systemic changes.

COMMIT LONG-TERM: Change takes time, so we make long-term commitments to the places where we work.

BE INCLUSIVE: Everyone who has a stake in a conflict should have their voices heard.

FOCUS ON SHARED INTERESTS: Identify common goals and build opportunities for collaboration around them.

TACKLE ROOT CAUSES: Focus on addressing the origins, not just the visible symptoms, of conflict.

BE PRACTICAL: Look for concrete avenues for collaboration between parties to the conflict.

ADAPT: Adjust programs to evolving conflict dynamics so that they stay relevant.

02 PROGRAMS



03 POSITIVE OUTCOMES

COLLABORATION: Divided groups work together to achieve their shared goals.

DECREASED APPEAL OF VIOLENCE: Individuals and groups shift away from resorting to violence as a way to deal with conflict.

TRUST: People establish relationships of trust across ethnic, religious, political, and social divides.

CHANGE THAT ENDURES: Individuals and groups recognize the benefits of collaboration and seek to replicate it, even without outside support.

Approach (CGA). The CGA aims to transform how the world responds to conflict, away from confrontation and violence and toward collaboration. Guiding principles inform the design and application of Search's peacebuilding programs, which generate tangible, positive outcomes. Over the years, elements of the CGA have become mainstreamed into the broader field of peacebuilding practice.

Search recognizes its own challenges in adapting to change. Over 35 years, it developed into the largest dedicated peacebuilding organization because of its unmatched set of tools, its ties with the communities, and its evidence-based approach. As the nature of conflicts shifts again, new infrastructures for peace are needed. That is why Search re-examined every facet of its programs, operations, and identity. Over a two-year period, Search staff from around the world gathered to reflect on how our organization should change, and developed a [10-year Strategic Plan](#). The Plan positions Search to transform today's and tomorrow's conflicts. Since its beginnings in 1982, Search has been instrumental

in defining citizen-led peacebuilding and demonstrating its efficacy. Now, from program impact, to operational efficiency, local ownership, evaluation, and transparency, Search aspires to provide a model for successful peacebuilding in the first half of the 21st century.

III - Search for Common Ground in Lebanon

Search first worked in Lebanon in 1996 and opened up a permanent office in 2008. Throughout the years, Search has addressed several critical issues such as conflicts arising within Lebanon's already diverse society, tensions resulting from the increasing influx of Syrian refugees, security sector reform, and women's socio-economic empowerment. For each issue, Search staff sought to engage all stakeholders and strengthen local capacities in order to create sustainable change and increased social cohesion, notably by supporting those who champion dialogue and inclusion. This work involves bringing people together from different backgrounds and positions, so that they can speak and be heard in a safe and healthy process in order to discover one another's point of view and share common experiences and interests. Search engages with communities who are bonded by their sect, nationality, gender, age, profession, or socioeconomic background.

Search for Common Ground Lebanon (Search Lebanon) now **aims to promote a sustainable culture of peace, dialogue, and inclusion across communities throughout the country**. In 2016, Search Lebanon developed a [multi-year strategy from 2017 to 2021](#), with a renewed focus on the root causes of long-standing conflicts and through programming representative of the diverse population in Lebanon. This goal will be achieved by applying the CGA to four key pillars:



SOCIAL COHESION



PEACE & GENDER



PEACE EDUCATION



INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE

As established in this strategy, Search Lebanon believes that those root causes are primarily related to ongoing sectarian tensions, exclusive governance, inequality and a lack of inclusivity, and the further strain on social cohesion resulting from the crisis in Syria. Thereby, the greatest challenge facing the country lies in the deep divisions

and the persistence of old grievances leading to low levels of trust within Lebanese society. In order to bridge the dividing lines, historical tensions and unhealed wounds must be addressed at both the leadership and community levels so as to enhance collaboration around shared interests and build a healthier society.

IV - Search for Common Ground and the UN Global Compact

Search is a non-business, non-governmental and non-profit organization, member of the UN Global Compact Network Lebanon (UNGCNL) since May 2017. Throughout its work, Search is committed to advancing and upholding all of the UN Global Compact's Ten Principles, related to the areas of Human and Labor Rights, the protection of the environment, and countering corruption.

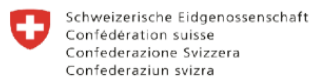
Search fosters an organizational culture based on respect, integrity and accountability, making the organization a credible, trustworthy partner in communities around the globe. At all times, Search strives to create an environment where abuse and harassment are absolutely not tolerated, and commits to investigating breaches of its [Code of Conduct](#) seriously and transparently. Search's Code of Conduct includes the following policies: 1) Professional responsibility; 2) Honesty and Integrity; 3) Non-Discrimination / Anti-Harassment / Equal Employment Opportunity; 4) Policy on the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Beneficiaries or Participants in SFCG Programs (SEA) 5) Politics and Community (Political promotions and/or lobbying are prohibited in the workplace, and in the conduct of duties and responsibilities; 6) Conflict of Interest policy; 7) Gifts and Favors; 8) Use of Resources; 9) Maintenance of Books and Records; 10) Non-Disclosure Policy / Improper Practices; 11) Safety; 12) Confidentiality; 13) Open Door Policy; 14) Compliance; 15) Internal Complaint Procedure; and 16) Whistleblower Policy.

This Code of Conduct ensures that employees are held to the highest ethical standards — both in their interactions with colleagues and with all external stakeholders, guaranteeing the respect of Human Rights, the organization's financial transparency and compliance, and contributes to sustaining an organizational culture of inclusion and respect.

V - Practical Actions

Since its engagement with Global Compact in 2017 and through its Peace Pioneers Initiative, Search Lebanon has directly supported the engagement of Lebanese private sector companies in peacebuilding and their pursuit of corporate sustainability. Under this framework, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the United Nations Global Compact Network Lebanon (UNGICNL), aiming to stimulate Lebanese private sector engagement in peacebuilding, was signed in 2017. In addition, Search Lebanon has engaged in a number of Global Compact events.

A - Engagement with the private sector: Peace Pioneers 2017-2019



Search believes that the diverse private sector actors in Lebanon, along with the vibrant civil society, are key actors to initiate positive change.

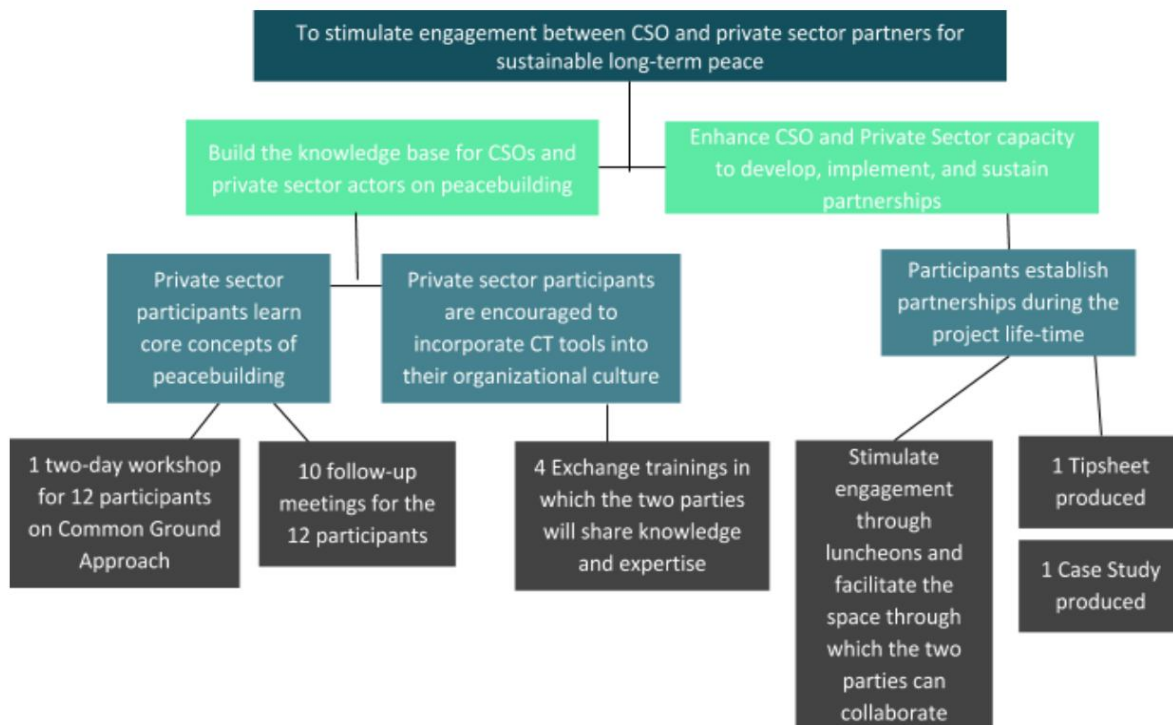
Partnerships between businesses and civil society organizations (CSOs) have the potential to magnify a structure's public value and stimulate socio-economic growth in a scale that could not be achieved by each sector alone. Creating synergies and collaboration between the private sector and peacebuilding organizations in Lebanon will catalyze long term engagement for sustained change. These synergies are not only beneficial for the society at large, but also mutually advantageous for businesses and CSOs, as they increase comparative advantages by combining resources and capacities. Although the private sector and civil society are traditionally motivated by different interests, Peace Pioneers aims to bridge those interests and establish Business-CSOs relationships based on mutual advantage and shared knowledge by pursuing the following specific objectives:

- Build the knowledge base for CSOs and Private Sector Actors on Peacebuilding;
- Enhance CSOs and Private Sector capacity to develop, implement, and sustain partnerships.

Through structured dialogue in a collaborative engagement platform, this initiative promotes continuous engagement in delivering proactive, long-term peacebuilding

strategies rather than responsive, short-term ones. Moving beyond their respective interests, the private sector and civil society stakeholders jointly defined principles and common goals, which ensured an enduring impact, responding to the priorities of both parties.

Over the course of two years, a research has been conducted which 1) maps out the private sector actors and initiatives engaged in peacebuilding, and identifies potential entry-points/ recommendations. Factsheet, that CSOs and companies can use to engage with each other effectively, have also been developed.



Directly supporting the Global Compact’s objectives, Peace Pioneers organized luncheons aiming to introduce businesses to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and start a discussion on how they could and would like to contribute to peacebuilding in Lebanon. Following those introductory sessions, a luncheon was held in January 2018 to particularly introduce the SDG 16. These open discussions led participants from theoretically understanding the SDGs to analyzing real-life cases, through which they had the opportunity to think and

project towards active engagement in supporting their realization.

B - Participation in Global Compact, and local events

Over the past two years, Search Lebanon's representative has attended the following events:

- Environmate Hackathon - May 2017;
- Business for Humanitarian Action and Peace Webinar - June 2017;
- The 2017 Multi-Stakeholder SDG Forum - October 2017;
- Tech4Cause Workshop - September 2017;
- COP and COE (Communication on Progress and Communication on Engagement) Workshop - October 2017;
- CORE: How a Single Organizing Idea Can Change Business for Good - October 2017;
- Business for Peace Annual Event - November 2017;
- Preventing and Combating Gross Human Rights Violations - December 2017;
- Lebanon Collaboration for the SDGs & Official Launching of "ProAbled" - December 2017;
- Lebanon Collaboration for the SDGs and the official launching of the platform "ProAbled" - January 2018;
- Fight against Corruption in Lebanon - February 2018;
- European Commission, Dell, Tetrapak and the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership Workshop - February 2018.

VI - Search-Lebanon and Sustainable Development Goals



Leaving no one behind - By tailoring its projects activities to be inclusive and accessible to all, Search ensures the inclusion of all particularly vulnerable groups in Lebanon - including children, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants - in dialogues,

field visits, and public events. More specifically, Search has developed a gender mainstreaming approach that ensures that gender equality and sensitivity are

priorities in all areas of Search's work.

Over the past two years, **Search Lebanon**'s projects specifically contributed to the **SDG 4** "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all", and more specifically its **Target 4.7**: "by 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development".

Indeed, through its **Peace Education** approach, Search Lebanon provided conflict sensitive education and learning for young people, by encouraging young people and educators to act as leaders, role models, and influencers for peace in their communities. This will in turn encourage peacebuilders to emerge, day-by-day, through their lived experiences at school and through informal education. Our overall goal is that **learning and teaching empowers young people to transform conflict**.

Our specific objectives for achieving this goal are that:

- Children and youth from different backgrounds learn together and develop lasting and respectful relationships;
- Children and youth learn conflict transformation principles through informal education;
- Schools and educators integrate conflict transformation principles into their curricula; and
- Young people and educators become leaders for peacebuilding in their community.

Over the past two years, Search created the video game [Cedaria](#) in order to provide children and youth in Lebanon with a platform to learn and practice how to manage conflict, solve community problems collaboratively, and understand the perspectives of the 'other.' Search employs the game with educators across Lebanon so that youth can apply the lessons they learn in their daily lives. Through our [Rainbow of Hope](#) program, Search sought to capitalize on the early stages of children's development by providing after-school classes and recreational activities that build their skills in

conflict transformation through storytelling: we have brought together over 1,270 Lebanese, Palestinian, and Syrian children who not only learn these lessons, but in doing so have a tremendous impact on their teachers and parents as well. Search's [Fursa](#) program, arts-based social cohesion and capacity building activities, for Syrian and Lebanese youth leaders, were combined with facilitated dialogue and joint community activities. Young participants from both communities were brought together in psychosocial support and relationship-building activities, breaking down stereotypes and building the foundation for them to collaborate in subsequent activities through arts-based interactions. Through life skills and vocational trainings, youth were then equipped with the skills necessary to decide themselves the type of joint livelihood projects that they want to subsequently design and implement.

Through its five-year strategy and program outputs, Search Lebanon directly supported the achievement of the **SDG 5** "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls", and more specifically its **Target 5.5** "ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life". Over the past two years and until 2021, our overall goal is to **increase women's political, economic, and social participation for a more peaceful society**, which is supported by specific objectives to:

- Encourage individual behaviors that are respectful of women and demonstrate positive masculinity;
- Promote public attitudes that hold a fair and equal role for women and men in society;
- Increase cooperation between different stakeholders, male and female, to more effectively promote gender equality;
- Empower key stakeholders, male and female, in calls for reducing economic, social, political, and legal constraints for women.

Over the past two years, Search began the [Qalb el Soura](#) project to promote women's participation in politics in the lead up to the 2018 elections. To achieve this, we partnered with screenwriters and film students to support the production of miniseries and short films promoting women's inclusion in Lebanese politics. We connected those working in the television and film industries with women working in politics, in order to provide these storytellers with real-life accounts of what it takes

for women to break the barriers of entering Lebanese politics. Search also worked with numerous CSOs on the “**Hakkik Damanik**” campaign to raise awareness about the unequal status of men and women in the National Social Security Law. Provocative images like the ones here, as well as TV spots and street activities, sought to shift attitudes to promote women’s socio-economic empowerment.

Search’s [Fursa](#) project also supports the **SDG 8** “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all” and specifically its **Target 8.6** “By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training”, as it improves the social and economic inclusion of youth in refugee and host communities in Lebanon, by providing access to livelihood opportunities and trainings on basic economic skills.

Search’s overall programming goals and outcomes directly contribute to the **SDG 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”, as they aim to build peace, promote tolerance, combat discrimination and stigma, thus contributing to the development of fairer communities. Search believes that dialogue and understanding are necessary basis for resilient and inclusive societies. This is reflected through Search Lebanon’s strategy for social cohesion, which aims for different groups and individuals to work together to seize opportunities and overcome challenges in their society. Our specific objectives for achieving this goal are to:

- Build healthy and collaborative relationships across societal dividing lines to increase trust;
- Enable a greater understanding of the ‘other’ and identify shared needs;
- Catalyze agency for collaborative problem-solving at multiple levels of society.

Our [Diwan](#) project directly feeds into the **SDG 16**, and more specifically its **Target 16.7** “ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels”, as it aims to contribute towards more inclusive and participatory governance in the Lebanese region of Wadi Khaled, through which more sustainable, equitable, and accountable development projects can be implemented. Through the [Aswat Faaela](#) project, Search also provided a comprehensive youth leadership program. Emphasizing the participation of those who are traditionally left out - such

as young women, people with disability, and those with limited means or opportunities - was a primordial point. Together, the groups identified needs in their communities that they responded to with community projects or advocacy to local authorities.

Finally, our 2017-2021 strategy for inclusive governance is guided by the goal that government and citizens collaborate in inclusive processes that increase stability in the country. Our specific objectives for achieving this goal are to:

- Strengthen awareness of the rights, roles, and responsibilities of citizens, civil society organizations, and government;
- Improve collaboration between local leaders, civil society, and local communities in addressing local needs;
- Empower marginalized groups to participate more actively in decision-making;
- Engage citizens in collaborative projects that benefit their communities.

VII - Measurement of outcomes

Search is committed to high standard monitoring and evaluation as an organizational principle, both for the efficiency and accountability of its actions as well as for encouraging learning within the organization and the sector. Some of the primary results of the projects described above are the following:

Aswat Faaela

- 134 youth equipped with peace-building skills;
- 107 youth engaged in action-research;

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“I am so happy because for the first time I feel that I am doing something for us, the youth, and we are capable of proving ourselves in front of everyone.”- Bilal, Syrian Palestinian youth.

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- 50+ master facilitators trained and community builders trained on psychosocial support, advocacy and social entrepreneurship;

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“Aswat Faela gave us new skills to research, plan and implement. Look at the risks and find solutions. Have a comprehensive view. These tools are splendid and we can apply them anywhere. Community builders are using them even in their place of work. This shows that they are effective and that society is responsive to them” - Anonymous, male participant.

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Cedaria

- 1 facilitation package developed, which includes: 1 Facilitation guide, 3 Facilitation cards and 1 Mission list;
- 8 facilitators trained;

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“Cedaria is an interesting tool to be used to train people on peacebuilding and conflict resolution, and is an alternative to the traditional boring tools used” - UNICEF club member at the American University of Beirut.

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- 600+ games distributed;
- 1,500 + persons reached through social media;
- 270+ youth engaged in dialogue sessions about in-game learnings.

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“[Cedaria] made it clear to me that in every conflict we should dig deeper and address the cause rather than just scratch the surface.” -Political Science Student at the Lebanese American University, Beirut.

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Diwan

- 59 persons trained on the benefits of inclusive governance (85% demonstrated an increase in knowledge);

- 270+ local authority representatives, youth and women trained on project management and governance;

“Even though there are lots of cultural barriers, social norms, and [personal] challenges, these workshops succeeded in initiating and triggering reformation on all levels. Participants were, for the first time, eager to adopt the techniques and recommendations resulting from the workshops. The level of discipline by the end of each workshop is very significant and reflects the true desire of this community on broadening their scope of knowledge.” - Diwan Trainer.

- 96 dialogues on local governance held, engaging 1000+ community members;
- 1 Advisory Board created, which monitors the current governance mechanisms and advocates for their continued improvement in order to reach a collaborative and inclusive culture of governance;
- 32 trust building activities between local authorities and community members held, gathering 1,500+ participants;

“Together we are bigger. We [now] know that we can work together to be more effective and be more powerful.” - project participant.

- 1 community-led awareness-raising campaign to encourage the payment of municipal taxes implemented: “Edfaa Tanfaa / Pay and Benefit”.

Fursa

- 106 youth trained and engaged in life skills activities;
- 25% of youth reported increased access to economic resources and opportunities in their communities;
- 15 micro-projects supported, leading to the creation of 185 livelihood opportunities;
- 15% of participants stated that they found employment because of Fursa;

- 61% of youth participants reported feeling increasingly valued and welcome within and outside their community;
- 97.8% of Lebanese participants reported that their feelings towards the Syrian refugees had changed, and 65.9% of all refugees interviewed reported to have shifted attitudes towards the host community;

“Before the project, we didn’t know each other. (...) Through the Fursa project, we have made a lot of friends and I believe that this friendship will last long, except if we go back to our home countries. I am Lebanese and have made a lot of Syrian friends and I consider them my sisters (...) that kind of friendship is a long-lasting one. I don’t want them to go back home now.” - Participant to a vocational training.

- 100% of participants demonstrated increased knowledge of life skills.

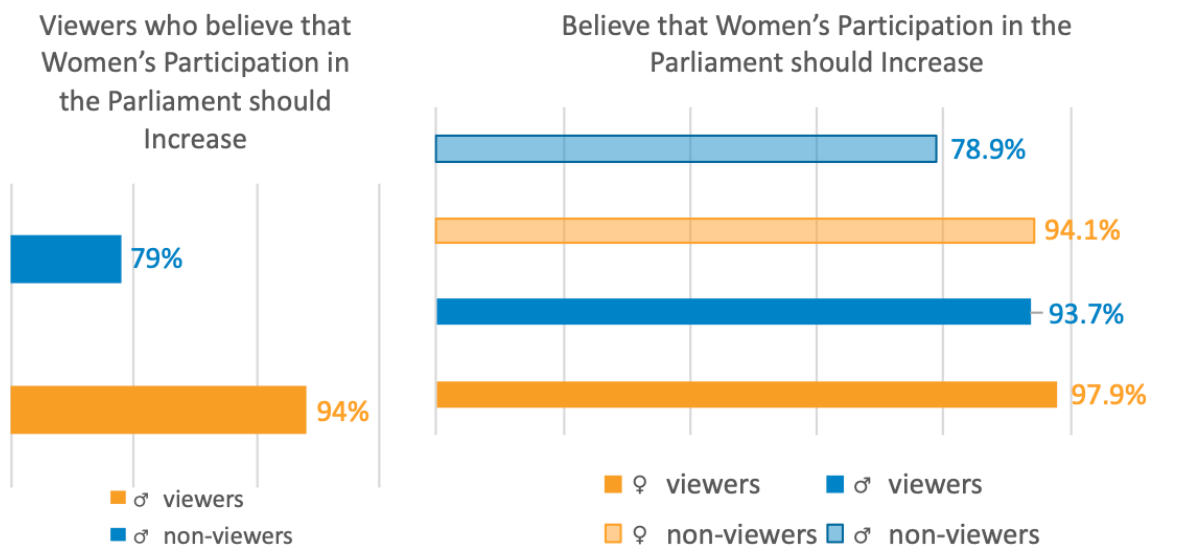
Peace Pioneers

- Raised awareness about United Nations Global Compact - Network Lebanon to more than 25 businesses in Lebanon;
- 2 Luncheons on Sustainable development goals focused on SDG 16 & 17 held;
- 90% of participants demonstrated an increased understanding of how collaboration between the private sector and civil society in Lebanon can contribute to peacebuilding;
- A research mapping out private sector actors, initiatives engaged in peacebuilding and identified potential entry-points and recommendations developed;
- A tip sheet to promote CSOs/business engagement produced;
- 2 case studies of CSOs/private sector partnerships produced;
- One 2-day innovation workshop to increase the understanding on how the private sector in Lebanon can contribute to peacebuilding as well as strengthening working relationships between the private sector and peacebuilding actors in Lebanon implemented;
- 2 days of Peace Mentorship sessions to support youth with creative ideas

using technology to contribute to peacebuilding in Lebanon implemented.

Qalb el Soura

- 4 short films produced;
- 2 mini-series aired;
- 416,000+ viewers of two miniseries;
- 94% of male viewers believe that the number of women in the Parliament should increase;
- 50% of female viewers would run for office if given the opportunity.



Rainbow of Hope

- Development of a curriculum and animation toolkit of peacebuilding and conflict transformation themes for children;
- 500+ children reached;
- 100 parents reached;
- 48% overall increase in the children's English skills;

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“I met two parents who told me that they were encouraging their five children to attend the class because they noticed an improvement in their children's abilities to use English words.” - English teacher from Akkar, Lebanon.

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- 54% overall increase in the children's conflict transformation skills.

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“One of the Syrian students came to class and told the teacher that his mother does not want to come to the Mother's Day celebration because she did not feel comfortable around Lebanese mothers. His Lebanese friend overheard him and was disappointed to hear such news. They both decided to try and convince the student's mother to come to the celebration. They began planning secretly together, and went to the student's house to act out the story from “It's Okay to be Different.” The mother was so moved by the two children that she came to the event, and told the teacher that she cried after seeing them both together.” - Teacher from Akkar, Lebanon.

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