

homes and communities. Traditionally, in some areas women have played a key role in indigenous conflict management and everywhere women can play a role to promote or mitigate social cohesion.

Young Yemenis constitute 30% of the population¹⁰ and they have suffered significantly from the current crisis. They lack opportunities in education and employment. Additionally, young men in particular have been recruited by parties to the conflict to fight, often expressing that they feel used by political and military elites, and the presence of various radical groups in the country – from Al-Qaida in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP) to Daesh or the Islamic State (IS) – constitutes a very dangerous combination of elements for youth. Many young people have also been injured and live with disabilities, which further aggravates their economic and social situation.

Finally, as a result of the weakness of central authorities to provide sufficient **security** as part of basic services to citizens, local actors, stakeholders and governance structures (mostly at the level of governorates or cities) must take over these responsibilities. Some efforts are currently underway to improve local security. Yet security for citizens remains elusive; challenges relate to the weakness in law enforcement, difficulties in reactivating the judiciary and a lack of resources for strengthening the rule of law. Competition among local security actors, the proliferation of weapons and the lack of reintegration perspectives for members of non-statutory forces will create further challenges in ongoing attempts to enhance local security. Security organs are often perceived as a means of repression and the citizens' trust is low in their capacities and commitment to provide safety and security.

2.2 Problem Analysis

The main problems that this Action intends to address are:

1. Lack of inclusion.

The current legal set up of the UN-led peace process (UN Security Council Resolution 2216) singles out two parties to the conflict as the main interlocutors. However, a sustainable political settlement will only be reached and sustained with adequate support and buy-in from civil society and the population at large, in all its diversity. This means addressing near-term needs, such as strengthening the demand for peace negotiations among civil society, as well as the longer term issues necessary for preparing local populations for a sustainable peace agreement and the practicalities of 'the day after', including durable solutions for IDPs. In this context, local level peaceful coexistence, security and stability are important not only for the implementation of a future peace agreement but also for enhancing the prospects of a subsequent broader peace and reconciliation process.

Local level initiatives may be useful in helping to create an environment that is riper for sincere peace talks. Efforts at these levels may help to foster conditions and attitudes that may eventually help the process move forward should the official peace process be resumed.

2. Lack of coordination, feedback loops and complementarity between and among local and national level peace efforts

Over the past years of protracted crisis and intermittent successes in the national peace efforts, many international donors have engaged in support to peace initiatives – including Track II dialogues, a wide array of capacity building for CSOs and women's/youth groups to participate meaningfully in broader peace processes, sub-granting to organisations to plan and implement confidence building projects at the local level but also targeted mediation activities. There is a rich body of lessons learnt and best practices which has so far remained untapped by the donor community due to a lack of strategic mapping and coordination efforts. In particular, there has been a limited understanding of how local level initiatives can best complement or even support the national level peace process. There is also a lack of coordination between different track II and track III initiatives.

3. Lack of trust between citizens and security providers.

Peace and stabilisation are not possible without a minimum level of security. The absence of national institutions that control the whole territory of Yemen has enabled the proliferation of local militias and local powers. Local police had to face unsurmountable problems, not only due to the lack of capacity, preparation and equipment, but also due to the lack of trust from the citizens. The concept of citizens' and community security should replace the "regime security" concept, thus underlining how the latter is perceived as a negative force by most of the

¹⁰ Youth aged 15-24 comprise 21% of the population, with a further 9% aged 25-29. <https://www.Worldometers.info/demographics/yemen-demographics/>.