

# CONFLICT ANALYSIS SUMMARY

# SOMALIA

## *Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy in Conflict-Affected Contexts Programme*

This report summarizes findings from a conflict, peace and situation analysis undertaken as part of the UNICEF Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy (PBEA) programme, funded by the Government of the Netherlands. The aim of the analysis is to identify conflict dynamics in the Somali context, explore the relationship between education and conflict, and identify opportunities for education programming to mitigate conflict drivers.

### Methodology

The conflict, peace and situation analysis was conducted by a team from the University of York and supported by Daryeel Associates, based in Mogadishu, and was developed in three phases. The first phase entailed a literature review of relevant peace, conflict and situation analyses for Somalia as a whole – as well as for Somaliland, Puntland and the South Central Zone (SCZ) individually – and a review of policy-oriented conflict analysis tools. This information was used in the design of the study, including contextual understanding, risk analysis regarding data collection and documentation of key stakeholders to be engaged in the subsequent research.

The second phase was an investigation of conflict and peace dynamics in each of the three zones, and field research on the links between these dynamics and education. Interviews and focus group discussions were held in Somaliland, Puntland and the SCZ with government officials, civil society organizations, community and religious elders, business leaders, head teachers, teachers, students and parents. The interviewees were selected from both urban and rural environments, across clans and sub-clans, and from settled and displaced communities. A

The PBEA programme, 2012-2016, seeks to build peaceful societies by strengthening the role of education in peacebuilding and integrating peacebuilding within the education system.



special effort was made to include minority and marginalized voices. Interviews were also conducted with key officials at the state level.

The final phase involved the University of York team collaborating with UNICEF Somalia's country and zonal offices to outline an education and peacebuilding programme for the three zones, based on the results of the conflict, peace and situation analysis.

## Context

Somalia has experienced one of the longest running conflicts on the African continent and is currently comprised of three heterogeneous areas: the SCZ, the semi-autonomous region of Puntland, and the independently governed region of Somaliland.

Somalia gained its independence in 1960. Nine years later, President Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke was assassinated, triggering a military coup led by Colonel Siad Barre. While Barre initially worked to modernize and develop the country, the failure of the Ogaden War with Ethiopia in 1977 – which attempted to unite ethnic Somali people under one State – led to a critical weakening of the Government and the military, and gave rise to clan-based opposition groups. These groups were violently repressed by Barre, leading to a full-scale civil war from 1989-1991, when the regime collapsed. The same year, Somaliland declared independence and began rebuilding its infrastructure and state apparatus. Puntland similarly transitioned to a more stable government through grass-roots, locally led development initiatives since 1998. While Somaliland and Puntland still experience conflict and disruption, both areas are more stable and prosperous than the SCZ, which is nonetheless the seat of the federal Government.

The period following 1991 was marked by numerous attempts to forge a central government and consolidate peace, supported by external actors. Transitional governments struggled to establish security and provide basic social services, but corruption, lack of inclusion and internal competition for power derailed their efforts. External actors have also become drivers of conflict due to their competing interests within Somalia.

In June 2006, the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) took control of the capital, imposing 'law and order' with high levels of support. However, international efforts to create a power-sharing agreement between the ICU and the Somali Transitional Federal Government failed. In December 2006, Ethiopia took control of Mogadishu and southern Somalia, which it occupied for two years. This was a period of disastrous and violent instability, during which Al-Shabaab, which was originally a militant wing of the ICU and is now linked to Al-Qaida, emerged. Al-Shabaab was the main armed resistance against the Ethiopian occupation, and the group initially received significant support from Somalis at home and in the diaspora. By 2008, Al-Shabaab controlled most of the SCZ and Mogadishu.

In 2011, the Horn of Africa faced a drastic famine caused by severe drought, and Al-Shabaab's mishandling of the crisis in Somalia led to eroded public support and its withdrawal from the capital, followed by its expulsion from most of southern Somalia by the African Union Military Observer Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and Kenyan and Ethiopian forces. Its loss of power and territory led to a shift in tactics to urban guerrilla warfare, terrorist attacks in Somalia and neighbouring countries, and targeted political violence. Inter-clan violence that had been

suppressed under Al-Shabaab has reignited in many areas. Currently, local clan militias and international forces are present in Somalia, working in various contexts to combat Al-Shabaab and to build stability and/or gain control of different areas of the south, along with various international actors that are engaged in anti-piracy and antiterrorism initiatives.

Despite the ongoing challenges and violence, positive changes have been experienced since 2012, including the establishment of a post-transitional government committed to reconciliation and peace based on a provisional constitution. While many barriers to peace remain, Somalia has an opportunity to build on this relative stability to strengthen the federal Government, consolidate control, and enter into an effective power-sharing structure for the central State.

### Key conflict drivers at the national level

The situation across and within the three Somali zones varies widely. While recognizing that each of the areas is unique and internally diverse, several underlying and cross-cutting issues that impact equity and social cohesion and drive conflict across the three zones have been identified. All of the conflict dynamics in Somalia are interrelated and often reinforce each other.

#### SECURITY AND JUSTICE

- **External influence:** The involvement of international actors in the Somali context both alleviates and triggers tensions in the country. Ethiopia and Kenya have armed forces supporting AMISOM peacekeepers to help push Al-Shabaab back from its southern Somalia strongholds. They are also involved in cross-border clan-based disputes, and other activities for their own economic and political agendas. International actors from outside the region, including the United States, France, Arab countries and Turkey also are engaged in various operations in Somalia to combat terrorism and piracy. Many other state and non-state actors provide financial and other support to local actors or proxies, which can reinforce divisions and instigate conflict.
- **Autonomous armed groups:** Autonomous armed groups in Somalia, including Al-Shabaab, clan militias, private security forces (both domestic and foreign), armed criminal groups and government security forces, have proliferated in the context of deteriorating security environments and weak government defence forces. These groups struggle to control territories and interests, and frequently clash with one another.

#### POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

- **Weak governance and state fragility:** A long history of poor governance, power struggles and weak institutions has led to a state structure with very little legitimacy. The inability of the Government to sustain state-led security, control territories, manage revenues, provide services or organize effective institutions has consistently undermined the various iterations of national governance – resulting in a patchwork of local governance arrangements and private provision of public services. Political and economic elites have often benefited from the continued ‘de-institutionalization’ of government, and may view efforts at state building as a threat to entrenched interests. In this context, municipalities and informal local governance arrangements have proved to be the most enduring systems of governance and conflict resolution. The variation in local conditions between regions, municipalities and neighbourhoods also creates highly nuanced and ever-changing patterns of instability. State-building efforts must find ways to capitalize on and collaborate with these resilient forms of local governance.
- **Diaspora:** The large Somali diaspora also plays a significant role in the country’s politics and

economics, because the dispersed population is the main source of private capital and investment, and owns and operates almost all Somali websites. Members of the diaspora been crucial in strengthening institutions that build peace and mediate conflict, but they have also fuelled clan animosity, funded armed groups or funnel support to Al-Shabaab. Perceived economic and development gaps between the diaspora and the rest of the population are a growing source of tension.

- **Uneven development:** Uneven economic and social development within and across zones has resulted in divisions between core and peripheral areas that fuel discontent. Core areas benefit from greater investment, infrastructure and services, while peripheral areas that are remote and rural have fewer services. Migration from peripheral areas to urban centres places added pressure on scarce resources and services. Peripheral areas also serve as bases for more radical groups intent on destabilization. Divides between core and periphery, and between rich and poor, are exacerbated by chronic poverty and high rates of unemployment, particularly among the large youth population. Frustrated, unemployed youth are key targets for recruitment into criminal gangs, militia or extremist groups.

## SOCIAL ISSUES

- **Clan identity:** Clan identity and politics is an enduring feature of the country and the manipulation and politicization of clan identities sparks violent conflict in all three Somali zones. Clan protection, shifting cross-clan alliances and day-to-day conflicts are all linked to clan identity and competition. These divides can be reinforced by both internal and external actors that capitalize on clan identities and divides to their own advantage. Attempts to ensure inclusivity of clans in key state-building and programming initiatives have also come under criticism for reinforcing, rather than overcoming, clan identities.
- **Social violence and crime:** Social violence and crime are prevalent in all three zones, linked to a culture of impunity as a result of poor accountability structures, weak rule of law, high accessibility to small weapons, black market trade routes and normalized narcotics use. Relying on violent means to settle disputes or gain commercial advantage is commonplace. Kidnapping, assassination and hijacking occur in some areas, as does the use of political terrorism by Al-Shabaab.
- **Rising extremism:** The crisis of state failure has increased radical Islamic ideologies and extremism. Conflicts persist over interpretations of Islam, especially as they relate to justice and social and economic opportunities. The rise of fundamentalist or extremist views, embodied in the ideology of Al-Shabaab, is also rooted in grievances that are global in nature. While Al-Shabaab has weakened in popular support, it remains a potent force for radical political and social beliefs, and the underlying sentiments that gave rise to the movement continue to exist.

## NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

- **Competition over scarce resources:** Growing pressure on water and land resources, due in part to agricultural expansion, privatization of water and other natural resources, as well as urban growth, are a key source of communal tension and clashes. Competition to control ports (including in Gaalkacyo), airstrips, checkpoints and access points are key conflict drivers. Commercial interests can exacerbate divisions in an effort to gain advantage.

## Conflict dynamics at the zonal level

In all of the zones, conflict dynamics are extremely variable, with significant implications for programmatic responses. While only high-level zonal conflict dynamics are described in this

summary, village-to-village and even neighbourhood-to-neighbourhood variations in conflict conditions and dynamics are described in the full study, necessitating micro-level analysis and response.

### **South Central Zone (SCZ)**

Southern Somalia comprises a vast area that borders both Kenya and Ethiopia and includes a long coastline on the Indian Ocean. Mogadishu, the nation's capital, is located in southern Somalia. The SCZ has the highest concentration of Somalis, approximately 6 million, and attracts the majority of international attention due to its strategic and political importance. Within this area, there are two major rivers, a large amount of arable land, and the seaport of Kismaayo. Two decades of conflict have dramatically changed the political, economic and social structure of Somalia. Much of the infrastructure built during the Barre regime has been destroyed, services are almost entirely delivered privately, and the economy is largely informal, mostly in livestock, grain or trade.

Instability, weak governance and insecurity dominates the relationship between Somalia and its neighbours. The Government of Ethiopia has repeatedly sent military forces into Somalia to counter administrations it considers to be hostile. International actors, including Kenya and Ethiopia, have been deeply involved in Somalia over the decades. Most recently, the United States launched military operations against Al-Shabaab as part of the 'war on terror' through drone strikes and Special Forces operations.

Structural conflict drivers across the SCZ include competition for natural resources such as pasture land and water, and clan-based access and allocation mechanisms. Growing resource pressures due to migration to urban areas and movement among internally displaced persons have exacerbated these issues. Further structural drivers of conflict include militarization, the proliferation of the small arms trade, the potential for disengaged and unemployed youth to be recruited into militias, extreme poverty, and the erosion of social norms and traditional resilience and conflict management mechanisms.

Proximate drivers of conflict include separatist agendas, particularly in Kismaayo, where groups are vying for control. Criminality, weak governance and food insecurity are present across the SCZ, creating desperation and a population that can be easily mobilized to violence. The presence of Al-Shabaab has created a fragile security situation and ongoing low-level tensions, and external influences in Juba, Mogadishu and Baidoa exacerbate pressures. Environmental predation along the coast and in Juba, and the abandonment of traditional forms of natural resource management have resulted in the depletion of resources and the proliferation of criminal organizations attempting to control resources.

### **Puntland**

Puntland was established as a semi-autonomous state in 1998 in an attempt to ensure that the interests of the population in this area were protected during the rebuilding of the Somali Government. Approximately 3.9 million people live in Puntland, most of whom belong to sub-clans of the Darood clan-family, Majeerteen (the largest Harti subgroup), and other minority groups. The area has sustained political and administrative institutions, built the private sector, and increased social services – including education – using a grass-roots approach to governance and development. Approximately half of the population are nomadic pastoralists,

whose main source of income is livestock. Fishing, agriculture and spices, as well as foreign investment from the diaspora, are other primary features of the zone's economy.

Piracy along Puntland's 1,600 kilometres of coastline has had a significant impact on fishing communities. Over the last four years the government has engaged in coordinated anti-piracy campaigns, working with an international task force to stem the growth of piracy. Oil and gas exploration could change the region's economy dramatically over the coming years.

Puntland's political dynamics revolve primarily around clan relationships. The Majeerteen sub-clan is the dominant group in politics and economics, with other groups vying for representation. This process often exposes entrenched inter- and intra-clan divisions. The constitution outlines a multiparty electoral system with the aim of eliminating clan-based parties, but the institutionalization of the constitution has been fraught with issues – including favouritism, unequal representation and contention over demarcation lines. Political presence and influence varies greatly across regions in Puntland, with the periphery less engaged in political processes. Political friction around the intended District Council elections in 2013 led to a stalemate around voting processes, and to avoid destabilization, the elections were postponed.

In January 2014, a successful power transition to a new president signalled progress in the implementation of political processes. The grass-roots approach to governance is widely celebrated as a model for the rest of Somalia, but there are underlying issues that may pose threats to success if they are not addressed.

While conflict drivers in Puntland are manifested and experienced in vastly different ways throughout the zone, structural conflict drivers across the majority of regions include access to natural resources such as land, water and fish, economic stagnation and poverty, and large populations of marginalized youth who are vulnerable to recruitment into armed groups. Clan dynamics are also a major factor in most areas, particularly in Gaalkacyo, Jariiban and Boosaaso, where polarization at the family and community levels give rise to violent crime and conflict. Difficulties with power transitions in the government have eroded clan cooperation and led to violent confrontations. In Gaalkacyo and Eyl, armed criminals, insurgent groups and gangs perpetrate violence that has become 'normalized' in the form of assassinations and turf wars.

Proximate drivers include the unresolved border disputes with Somaliland over the Sool and Sanaag regions, and the increased presence of Al-Shabaab in Gaalkacyo, Jariiban and Eyl. Vulnerable populations – especially internally displaced persons, minority groups, and girls and women – face significant barriers and are disproportionately affected by violent conflict. Gender-based violence, harassment and discrimination are linked to the prevalence of violence and conflict at all levels of society.

### **Somaliland**

Somaliland is located in north-western Somalia, with borders on Puntland, Djibouti and Ethiopia, and coastline on the Gulf of Aden. Though it is not officially recognized by the international community, Somaliland has functioned as a de facto State since 1991. The government continues to dispute control of the Sool and Sanaag regions with Puntland, rejects its status as part of the Somali State, and refutes the leadership of the federal Government in Mogadishu, which is a central debate for Somaliland's leadership. The governance system is a

representative democracy, but it is also heavily based around clan politics and structures that are entwined with political and administrative institutions.

Somaliland has a population of approximately 3.5 million, divided into agricultural, nomadic and settled urban communities. More than 84,000 internally displaced people live in Somaliland, most of whom were displaced by drought. The economy revolves around livestock, and there is a rapidly returning diaspora that is increasingly involved in the business economy of the zone. Despite its stability, there are a number of radical factions that have roots in Somaliland, including Al Wuhda and al-Itihaad/Al Ictisaam as well as Al-Shabaab.

The history of Somaliland significantly influences its current identity. While the rest of Somalia was administered by an Italian colonial regime, Somaliland was a British protectorate. Britain limited its involvement in Somaliland, restricting investment and stalling infrastructure development and state capacity building. The indigenous structures were largely untouched, a factor that has played a key role in the success of the state in establishing a peaceful political order today.

Somaliland joined Somalia in 1960 but was suppressed by Barre during his reign. Violence erupted between the Somaliland National Movement and Barre's regime, which resulted in huge loss of life, and more than 500,000 internally displaced persons and refugees fleeing the region. Civil war broke out, and infrastructure was devastated, especially the education system. In 1991, Somaliland negotiated a peace agreement across the region. While the state has not been absent of challenges and clashes in its development, including two direct conflicts in the mid-1990s, and deep fragmentation persists, there has been relative peace over the past 20 years compared to other areas of Somalia.

Border disputes continue to be one of the major sources of ongoing clashes. Violent disputes persist in Awdal, a site of long-standing territorial disputes. Border disputes in the Sool and Sanaag regions are also cited as ongoing conflict drivers. The centre of Somaliland, where state authority is consolidated, is largely peaceful, but the peripheral areas have not uniformly benefited from the central administration. Resource scarcity and uneven development are cited as key problems. Another common issue is the high number of marginalized youth experiencing such challenges as unemployment, human trafficking, narcotics addiction and gang recruitment. Proximate conflict drivers include unequal political representation, competition between the centre and the peripheries, corruption, poor leadership and gender discrimination.

### **The role of education in peacebuilding**

The conflict dynamics identified in previous sections affect the education system in Somalia in various ways, including destruction of physical infrastructure, poor access and quality of education, and weak education governance. Various levels of government are struggling to provide and manage education, yet all three zones lack funding, human resource capacities and technical capacities. As a result of continued instability and underinvestment in education, Somalia has some of the lowest education indicators across east and southern Africa. Very few children graduate from primary to secondary education, and those who do are disproportionately male. Data on service provision are unreliable or unavailable, and there is no way to verify the number of children who are out of school.

In the absence of government service provision, the private sector, international agencies, and non-profit and self-help groups have tried to fill the gap. Many of these services are run privately and operate on a fee system, which excludes the poorest families, particularly minorities, migrants and those who are internally displaced. In addition, schools operate using their own, unregulated curricula that reflect the interests and ideologies of the school funders, many of which may be faith-based, businesses, diaspora organizations or non-governmental organizations. Koranic schools and madrasas have also expanded, providing both religious and basic education services. Concerns have been expressed about the potentially militant versions of Islam that may be promoted through unregulated madrasas. Al-Shabaab, for example, incorporates fundamentalist teachings into the school curricula in areas where it is operating, as part of its strategy to recruit young people. Regulating education to ensure it does not become a driver of conflict will be a significant challenge in all three zones during the coming years.

In many cases, education has reinforced gender discrimination and perpetuated gender-based violence, which is systemic at home and at school. Likewise, violence against children in schools adds to the general culture of violence and perpetuates the inter-generational transfer of violence as a means to resolve conflict. Growing youth populations strain the capacity of an already stretched education system to meet the education and training needs of young people. High levels of unemployment and frustration among youth are key drivers of conflict. This is exacerbated by nomadic populations migrating to urban centres as indigenous forms of education become increasingly insufficient.

Despite the variance in contexts and conflict dynamics, education-centred peacebuilding initiatives can help lower the potential impact of many of the identified conflict drivers and serve as a significant peace dividend in the country. Possible strategies for supporting the education sector's contribution to peacebuilding include supporting teachers to improve the quality of teaching, reforming curricula, promoting young people's inclusion in politics, addressing attitudes towards violence as a social norm, working with nomadic cultures to find solutions for service provision, building partnerships to strengthen peacebuilding initiatives, and ensuring high-quality monitoring and evaluation.

Approaches should engage local actors to promote resilience in the local education setting and ensure pilot projects demonstrate tangible, measurable results. Most importantly, education has the potential to be a significant peace dividend in Somalia.

### Peacebuilding entry points in education and learning

The conflict, peace and situation analysis identified where education can play a key role in addressing identified conflict drivers. These have been prioritized according to their potential to contribute to the consolidation of peace and development in Somalia.

#### Political and policy responses

- **Reform school-based governance structures** to ensure they are inclusive and engage representatives from all groups, including community elders, internally displaced populations, pastoralists and women.
- **Provide safe and productive spaces for youth** to discuss politics, engage in local

processes, voice opinions and air grievances, and to counteract the impact of radical political Islam. Encourage a culture of voluntarism, open debate and conflict mediation, and share information about access to justice systems. Empower girls and young women to be peace agents in their communities by providing them opportunities to learn mediation skills.

- **Engage religious** leaders in conflict mediation training and the mobilization of communities around education for children. Promote positive Islamic teachings that emphasize peace and development.
- **Use schools as community hubs** to bring people together to engage in constructive dialogue, discuss common educational goals for children and promote social cohesion.
- **Support integration of internally displaced populations** into national education to ensure equitable access among those who are displaced and host communities.

### Structural reforms

- **Increase quality primary and secondary education** provision as a peace dividend, with specific emphasis on girls, internally displaced populations, nomads and minority groups to ensure equal access and to enhance social cohesion. Network schools across regions and expand collaboration and knowledge exchange between areas to facilitate the mobility of nomadic groups and tailor education initiatives to meet the needs of pastoral communities, such as seasonal school cycles.
- **Undertake curriculum reforms** to promote national citizenship and political, social and moral responsibility, de-emphasize clan-based identities, promote peaceful methods of conflict resolution, and reduce gender-based violence and violence against children.
- **Provide teachers with training** to improve their skills in peace education, psychosocial support, conflict mediation and resolution, the ability to discuss controversial or sensitive issues in the curriculum, and non-violent alternatives to corporal punishment.
- **Provide vocational training** and ensure relevance of the curriculum to employment by adopting a more vocational approach to secondary education and supporting youth to transition into entrepreneurship, apprenticeship or further training in both formal and non-formal education.
- **Ensure schools are child-friendly** and provide protective and safe spaces for children and young people that are free from violence, corporal punishment and sexual, physical or emotional abuse.

### Individual and interpersonal changes

- **Promote recreational programmes** for children and youth in schools through the use of sports, mobile theatre, dance and drama to model safe and healthy competition and build cross-group relationships.
- **Identify and celebrate role models** in society to promote peace, teach history and frame the discussion of current events to promote the importance of peace to children and youth.
- **Engage peer tutors** to promote peacebuilding in schools.