ROADMAP ON YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

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ROADMAP ON YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Youth leadership in peace-building and governance takes many names and forms. In places like Somalia, where democratic and inclusive structures are being developed amidst conflict, it is important for youth groups, government stakeholders and humanitarian or development partners to spell out and ensure their support for the role of young people in governance and peace-building. Based on field consultations this roadmap provides key findings and recommendations for youth engagement in governance and peace-building in Baidoa, Kismayo and Dollow.

Methodology

This roadmap is aimed at reviewing existing tools and methodologies in Somalia with a socially inclusive approach and assesses current bottlenecks and structural obstacles in order to find effective and socially conscious ways of promoting youth peace-building and governance in communities and institutions. The methodology embraced focus group discussions (FGD) and key informant interviews (KIIs) plus extensive secondary data and literature review. In Kismayo, two FGDs and eight KIIs were held; in Baidoa, one FGD and 11 KIIs. Ten KIIs were held in Nairobi.

Areas of Intervention

This section highlights the main change areas:

1. Participation and spaces for young people;

2. Power-sharing and decision-making;

3. Civic education and political life;

4. Community-building;

5. Youth participation in programming (in addition to relevant frameworks, key problem areas and change opportunities).

Key findings/recommendations

Some key findings and recommendations include the following: Despite being Somalia's majority demographic group, young people find themselves at a significant cross-roads in terms of political and peace-building engagement in part because realistic, intentional youth programming is severely limited if and when available in the country.

Because so many of the needs of youth are collective and social in nature, community-based programmes are of critical importance. There is an overall need to support community resilience mechanisms and to strengthen a sense of positive identity and belonging. Government stakeholders should realize the benefits of having plans specifically designed for youth engagement and youth development.

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Introduction

For purposes of this road map report, youth is considered to be the stage when people, though seen as biological adults, have neither taken nor are yet expected to take adult responsibilities within their society or culture. It is a vital period of physical, mental and social definition, during which young people are actively forming their identities and determining acceptable roles for themselves within their communities and societies. They have essentially left childhood behind them, but still are neither viewed as nor accorded the status of adults[12].

The United Nations (UN) characterizes Youth as the population group between 15 and 24 years of age. However, the Somalia National Youth Policy defines youth as being within the age-range 15-to-40. Therefore taking national frameworks and lived experiences into consideration when defining the youth age range is essential in arriving at a more comprehensive and culturally

sensitive approach to youth. For poor and non-elite youth in Somalia especially, the prevalence of conflict, high rates of unemployment, lack of education, and the related inability to establish a home and marry are all factors that in a cultural sense delay the transition into adulthood.

People have different needs, vulnerabilities and capacities across gender, age and diversity (e.g. different ethnic, religious, socio-economic groups; people with disabilities, etc.) and good policies and programming should create space allowing for these differences, with the aim of creating and assuring equal access and opportunities for everyone.

The UN views participation as a human right and an end in itself and has collectively committed itself to promote a rights-based approach for participation by children and young people in general, Participation matters for its own

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1 Honawa, A. (2014). "Waithood": Youth transitions and social change. In D. Foeken, T. Dietz, L. de Haan, and L. Johnson (eds.) Development and Equity: An interdisciplinary exploration by ten scholars from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Leiden: Brill. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/9789004269729_004

2 United Nations (2003) World youth report 2003: the global situation of young people. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York

Young people are capable of making informed decisions about their lives and communities as well as being capable of responding when asked to contribute to society

sake, regardless of measurable or demonstrated benefits for various groups or purposes. Moreover, the UN recognizes the right of participation as being integral not just to the democratic ethos but as a key to the building of civil society.

Participation should be viewed within the broader context of civic life, ensuring that young people are engaged in a variety of civic and pro-social activities that benefit themselves, their community and their society. However commendable or fitting the occasion young people should not be confined to participating in one-time policy summits, events or councils. Their involvement must be integrated into the fabric of their community lives if they are to be provided with the widest

range of experience that prepares them to take up the rights and responsibilities of full citizenship.

Youth leadership in peace-building and governance has many names and forms: youth voice, youth participation, youth civic engagement, youth decision-making, and youth empowerment, for example.. While the curriculum should be aimed at promoting and supporting youth as leaders, it should not hold fast to a single way of achieving leadership. Instead, it should encourage young people to look at leadership in situational contexts and to seek and find value in different attitudes and approaches.

Young people are capable of making informed decisions about their lives and communities as well as being

capable of responding when asked to contribute to society through taxes, military service, employment, study and civic duties. Thus, it is misleading and a disservice to young people to categorise and focus on them merely as some form of unrealized "future contribution to society. The National Youth Policy (NYP) recognizes young people as the life blood for the socio-economic transformation of society; and that fostering a sense of national patriotism by enhancing their capacity and their knowledge will enable them to become vital agents of change. In this sense, the well-meant characterizations that "youth is the future" or that they will "inherit the Earth" can be disempowering. Such a perspective actually limits young people and their capacity to contribute to society by assigning it to a future stage and/or postponing their inclusion in society to a later stage, all at a time in their lives when they are already very much a part of society, as well as part of its problems and solutions.

This roadmap seeks to highlight the current gaps on strategic support for the promotion of youth participation in peace-building and governance processes. This objective is also reflected in the National Youth Policy, the Wadajir Framework and the National Development Plan (2017-2019) – chapter II; and finally UNSC 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018). Furthermore, this roadmap intends to promote further discussion on potential solutions and pathways for young people to fulfill their potential in governance and peace-building.

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Methodology

This roadmap aims at reviewing existing tools and methodologies in Somalia with a socially- inclusive approach and to assess current bottlenecks and structural obstacles in order to find effective and socially-conscious ways of promoting youth peace-building and governance in communities and institutions. With a solid framework basis, the methodology used to address these gaps derives from key informant interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) in Nairobi, Kismayo and Baidoa. Key informants comprised government stakeholders, UN actors, donors, key youth leaders and NGO stakeholders. Focus Groups were made up of young people and elders.

There were 10 key informant interviews developed in Nairobi; 11 in Baidoa; and eight in Kismayo. There were two FGDs in Kismayo -- one with young people, another with elders. One FGD was held with young people in Baidoa. There were no interviews or FGDs with young people from Dollow. In order to incorporate more nuance to the analysis, the researcher had to use primary data from different project

sources such as the Danish Refugee Councils Conflict Analysis for the DANIDA-funded Durable Solutions project and the Danish Demining Group Conflict Analysis for the DFID-funded Security Sector and Justice Programme. Mobilization of young people was crucial to the overall endeavor and Y-Peer was responsible for mobilization in Mogadishu, Baidoa and Kismayo. However, challenges including, but not limited to, logistical difficulties and restrictive security and safety regulations, meant that vital youth population groups such as women, minority clans and people living with disabilities were under-represented - not as the original methodology intended. As a result and in order to compensate, secondary research sources were needed to bridge some existing knowledge gaps.

In addition, as part of the broader project, a training held in Mogadishu on "Communication for Impact" offered some key insights by young people from Dollow, Kismayo, Baidoa, Mogadishu and Galkayo. While the Peace-building Fund project, of which this roadmap is an integral part, had focused

on Baidoa, Dollow and Kismayo, having access to a broader sample of the life experiences of young people in Somalia proved to be an important step for contextualization and developing more targeted and relevant recommendations.

Limitations

Limited sampling. Somalia being a conflict-affected country, limitations related to access, security and safety posed challenges in relation to gathering representative samples that would allow for a higher confidence interval.

Representation. There were also challenges in acquiring sufficient representative voices of traditionally marginalized groups within the youth samples (especially women and minority clans). This was overcome to some extent by recourse to the following focus groups and key informant interviews.

Youth is by no means a homogeneous label or group. As with most other population groups, there are significant differences in how young people access political and social-economic opportunities depending on their location, sex, social status, clan affiliation, disability or special ability. This is further compounded by the expanded age range used by Somalis including some young people themselves to define the term "Youth. Young people, especially those in their early 30s, are not necessarily subjected across the board to similar levels of disenfranchisement and exclusion from political and decision-making spaces as those younger than them. In Kismayo especially, the sample majority comprised "older" young people and there was a definite gap when it came to women's representation and Af-may speakers. In contrast, the challenge in Baidoa was finding a representative sample of more disenfranchised youth, particularly people with disabilities.

As with most other population groups, there are significant differences in how young people access political and social-economic opportunities

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Brief Context Overview

As the narrative of this roadmap notes, "the peacebuilding environment in Somalia is only akin to a handful of countries in the world, Somalia[having]... undergone nearly three decades of prolonged conflict starting in the late 1980s and early 1990s".[3] With the complete collapse of central government authority in 1991, most of Somalia was left in a complete state of chronic political instability. A country afflicted by wide- scale insecurity, destruction of property, famine, mass displacement, injury and death.[4] Humanitarian and development agencies have responded with a multitude of humanitarian and development initiatives. Some have been successful, but many more have encountered extreme difficulties in achieving their objectives. Since the 90s, with the collapse of the government, governance structures have become less inclusive and cultural conservatism has had a strong impact on young people, restricting their space in public life and decision-making processes and leaving them more vulnerable to recruitment by armed organized groups.[5] Scholars have theorized over the Somali conflict for many years. According to Bradbury (1994, p. 20), for example, it can be ascribed to a mixture of factors, "including the legacies of European colonialism, a schismatic kinship system, the contradictions between a centralized state and a pastoral culture, East/West Cold War politics and militarization, underdevelopment and uneven development, ecological degradation, the lack of power-sharing, corruption, and violations of human rights."

As a result, young people in Somalia are disproportionately exposed to different types of violence, including forced recruitment, violent extremism, armed criminality, harmful practices and dangerous

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3   UN PBF, Project document, Context Analysis Section (p.5).

4   Lidwien Kapteijn, Clan Cleansing in Somalia: The Ruinous Legacy of 1991, University of Pennsylvania Press (December 18, 2012).

5   SAMUEL HALL. Investing in Somali Youth. Exploring the Youth-Employment-Migration Nexus in Somaliland and Puntland, 2015.

migration.[6] Moreover, persistent marginalization has led to the absence of, or under-resourced and/ or unsuitable initiatives designed to help young people become more resilient[7]. The October 2017 truck bomb in Mogadishu, which caused more than 500 deaths, was followed by large street demonstrations, expressing the loss of trust in formal governance structures. Somalis felt the current administration had left them unprotected. In such a climate of uncertainty, there are few safe spaces[8] for young people to provide or seek peer support or implement meaningful community change initiatives that can contribute to their personal, collective group and community resilience in the face of violence. As expressed in the Somali National Youth Policy: "The youth are aware that it is fundamental to achieve security and peace in Somalia and express strong desires to be active participants in the peace- building efforts. However, when the safety and security of young people are not guaranteed, many of them can be brainwashed, radicalized and used for violent and criminal activities organized by groups

who take advantage of the youth vulnerability".[9]

Young people also suffer notable exclusion from decision-making processes and spaces, especially with respect to issues of peace and security, despite being recognized as powerful agents for change (positive and negative) in communities and society in general. Despite progressive legislation on youth participation such as the Youth Parliament initiative, the socio-cultural environment and poor implementation of these laws has stymied their engagement. Moreover, young people continue to face distinct barriers to their active civic participation due to ongoing discrimination on the basis of traditional norms of gender and age, coupled with a lack of investment in their skills and confidence to engage. Lastly, an absence of communication channels and advocacy tools tailored to the unique skills and competencies of women and youth perpetuates their exclusion from potential venues that could address the local roots of violence.

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6   UN PBF, Project document, Context Analysis Section (p.6).

7   USAID, Somalia Transitions Initiative, October 2018.

8   In this we are using the definition of "Safe Space" as meaning a place or environment in which a person or category of people can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm.

9   Somalia National Youth Policy (2018) pp.

In the next sections, the specific dynamics of Kismayo and Baidoa will be highlighted. Those locations – both capital cities within their Federal Member States (Jubaland and South West State) -- provide a good insight into the overall dynamics of governance and peace-building in Somalia. The combination of District, Federal Member State, Federal Government dynamics allows for an interesting profile of young people's opportunities and challenges to engage, influence and actively participate in these ever-evolving systems.

Baidoa

Baidoa District is one of five districts in the Bay region. (The others are Buurhakaba, Diinsoor, Baardale, and Qasahdhere). According to the 2018 UNFPA Population projection, the Bay region has an estimated population of 1,035,904. Baidoa town was considered to be the administrative capital of the Bay region and is now the capital of South West State.

Since being recovered from Al-Shabab (AS) by Ethiopian forces and their Somali allies, Baidoa has made some progress towards stabilization (albeit slowly). Of note are the continuing efforts of the nascent Somali police and national army troops to ward off the ever-present AS threat. They remain dependent on support from Ethiopia's AMISOM and non-AMISOM forces. Clan militia remain the main security provider for their respective clan communities. In the absence of a functioning and credible judiciary, disputes are dealt with by traditional clan mechanisms with AS courts continuing to be the main recourse for communities to address disputes in areas outside the towns.

The political process to establish and strengthen the administration of South-west State is undermined by many factors, all interlinked. A key factor is the strong perception among the majority Digil-Mirifle clans of historical grievances, injustice and socio-political marginalization by both the Darood and Hawiye elites dating back to independence in 1960 and more so since the 1991 civil war.

In that context, the linguistic and socio-cultural differences between the Digil-Mirifle and the rest of the major Somali clans represent a distinct ethnic and political fault-line. The standard Maxaa Tiri Somali language — promoted and patronized by the state since independence — is used by a majority of Somalis. However, the Digil-Mirifle speak dialects of Mai Terreh or Maay Maay (Af-Maay). Likewise, the internal social organization and traditional clan structures, especially when it comes to the agricultural and coastal Digil communities, vary greatly from those in place in nomadic Somali

communities. Unless learned due to urbanization or schooling, the standard Somali is unintelligible to the Rahanweyn, just as most Somali-speakers do not understand Maay Maay. During the consultations in Baidoa, the issue of the Maay Maay and Maxaa Tiri-speaking populations was placed in the forefront during a Parliamentary argument between a Maay Maay-speaking MP and a Maxaa Tiri-speaking MP who claimed not to understand him and insisted he should be speaking Somali. This political discussion (or non-discussion), which happened a week before the consultations, showcased the differentiated access of Maay Maay-speaking populations to power even though their rights are stated in the South West Constitution.

In terms of safety and security, Al Shabaab is still in control of many of Baidoa's districts[10]. This persistent threat and its response in the form of Ethiopian National Defence Forces units stationed in Baidoa contains intra-Mirifle tensions. Aggravating factors arising from overriding security concerns include political interests in profiting from displaced communities, limited access to governmental institutions, and especially urban-rural divides. This is why it is vital to improve

relationships between security providers and young people, particularly Af-Maay speakers.

Kismayo

The historical context of Kismayo is one of a rich culture and economic prosperity attributable to its strategic coastal location, which provides access to Somalia's most fertile lands. The city has been among the most contested and therefore has witnessed significant violence, earning the title of "Somalia's Sarajevo"[11] Kismayo is currently an enclave amidst AS-controlled surrounds, with intra- and inter-clan dynamics adding to a potentially volatile situation. There is also significant tension between the young people who went to Kenya and Ethiopia and those who stayed. The ones who left and returned are seen to have more access to education and therefore are perceived to have greater economic opportunities.

Displaced populations and their role in society are a contentious topic in Kismayo. The presence of internally-displaced people (IDPs) has implications for integration, since displaced communities are not recognized as fully-fledged citizens, and are therefore unable

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10 See INSO reports (2018).

11 Ken Menkhaus (2012). Somalia's Sarajevo. Foreign Policy. October 3, 2012. Available at: http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/10/03/somalias-sarajevo/

The youth are aware that it is fundamental to achieve security and peace in Somalia and express strong desires to be active participants in the peace-building efforts

to claim the same access to jobs, resources and rights. Returnees and IDP (usually from minority clans) numbers are predicted to increase the size of Kismayo dramatically over the next decade. If continually disenfranchised, this could lead to a potentially explosive situation in a one-person, one-vote system given that the biggest constituency could eventually be made up of minority clans in a State (Jubaland) that is still very much led by clan identity politics.[12]

The presence of AS continues to be the main conflict and source of tension in Kismayo.. AS retains control of all land routes into the city, the northern outskirts of town, and most of Middle Juba. In 2017, the group advanced towards Kismayo and captured the town Bulo Gadud, just 30 kilometres from Kismayo. Its continued presence threatens the fragile peace in the city. Having been entrenched in the region for over a decade, This is why AS is often resorted to as an "informal justice" mechanism, especially when it comes to arbitrating land disputes.

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12 Menkhaus, Ken. Dadaab Returnee Conflict Assessment, DDG, 2017.

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Areas of Intervention

In this section, the roadmap focuses on five key areas of intervention dealing with Youth engagement with peace-building and governance: 1) Participation and spaces for young people; 2) Power-sharing and decision-making; 3) Civic education and political life; 4) Community-building; 5) Youth participation in programming.

Although these areas are inherently connected, the consultations followed these five major areas in order to identify and present more specific action points for consideration of involved stakeholders. In addition to key informants and group perceptions and recommendations, this section also highlights selected national and international frameworks.

Participation and spaces for young people

Articles 12, 13 and 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child state that children and young people have the right to express their own views freely; the right to freedom of expression

(including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds); and the right to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

Some examples of youth participation in practice are:

• Young people being consulted about their ideas and opinions

• Young people researching issues that affect their lives

• Young people planning or leading community activities or events

• Young people taking part in youth committees or action groups

The key challenges for youth participation and the provision of spaces for young people are distinctly varied among the three locations. In Dollow, there is a need for additional physical spaces for youth and related activities, specifically where young women are concerned. By way of contrast, infra-structure is already better developed in Baidoa and Kismayo, but the active engagement

of young people in the analysis and solution of their own and communal problems is still in its infancy.

In this particular change areas, consultations show that the international community should hold space and enhance young people's voices to engage in research, advocacy and grass-roots organizing. This can be achieved by:

- Engaging more closely with universities (Bay and Benadir) and by supporting and encouraging participatory action research with young people;

- Supporting feedback and input from youth both in policy and practice at District, Federal Member State and Federal Government levels;

- Allowing a diverse group of young people to have a space in media (radio/TV) to discuss their perspectives on participation and peace-building.

- Provide more core funding for organizational development (not just activity-focused) while supporting and encouraging groups to build organizational capacity, strategy and vision.

- Promote increased integration and cross-consultation between Federal State Youth Councils and the District Councils.

- Invest more in social accountability mechanisms between communities, governments and international organisations.

The Arts offer a fertile area for engagement that up until now has been overlooked. Whatever obstacles might exist, in Mogadishu and Puntland offer interesting initiatives that provide a template of what is possible when the Arts are used in a meaningful way. Stakeholders can provide the space for young people to express their views and perspectives artistically. Investing in such programmes or turning to more traditional"peace-building or civic education activities can have a dual impact by promoting participation/expression and providing a form of trauma-healing.

Power-sharing and decision-making

Power-sharing– in this case, a partnership of youth and adults -serves to support and develop a mutual interest to influence and make decisions about their collective well-being. A singular benefit is summarized aptly in this quote from the Somali National Youth Policy

The Arts offer a fertile area for engagement that up until now has been overlooked.

(2018) that envisages: *"a nation that transcends patriarchal structures and allows young women to partake in decision-making in regards to their community, family planning, higher education, and full employment to foster development and reach their full potential".*

I. M. Lewis, a leading scholar and the author of the most widely-cited study of Somali society, holds the view that the Somalia clan system, while a significant social structure that dispenses important social services, has also proved to be a source of division and conflict in Somalia (Lewis, 1994). Wam and Sardesai (2005) ascribe "clannism" and clan

segmentation as being major sources of conflict, given that they have been used to divide Somalis, to mobilize militias, and even to fuel rampant clashes. Similar views are also systematically repeated by young people – most strongly perhaps in Kismayo. Clannism is cited as a major divisive element and obstacle for young people seeking to engage with politics.

Power-sharing and political settlements are challenging processes in every context. However, in the Somali narrative and certainly during interviews related to the compilation of this roadmap it was clear that this artificial balancing act, even

Partners can also enhance the capacity and the space for young people to express their challenges about the civic process in broader media configurations

if considered un-Islamic by some, was widely seen as key to the maintenance of stability in Somalia. This goes some way to explain why –perpetuating structures of power or benefiting from them aside –Somalis, including young people, are still somewhat reluctant to move away from 4.5.

Looking to a more gender-

nuanced analysis, in Baidoa, where gender representation is more widely accepted, the District Council formation in Xudur and the challenges it faces regarding gender equality and social inclusion underscore how South West State still has issues overcoming gender barriers in political participation. In the case of Jubaland, making progress was always presumed

to required more time because of assumptions based on its greater isolation and a prevailing more conservative tradition.

In this particular change area, international organizations can support and enhance the capacity of local groups and civil society networks to discuss the meaning and implications of gender equality and social inclusion for the different contexts, always taking full account of the underlying knowledge of stakeholders and the existing dynamics.

While international organizations should look at political settlements, the challenge is how to strengthen voices, especially those of excluded and/or marginalized groups, in the political and governance process. Jubaland is entering an election season; South West State just been through a highly tumultuous election process and the country is preparing for its next FGS election. With the National Reconciliation framework in place, there is an important opportunity for any actor wanting to further this process through collaboration with governments, elders, youth organizations and women's associations thereby enhancing inclusiveness and promoting gender equality by helping bring about a broader democratic

representation. Moreover, this is a process that needs to be consolidated at the Federal Member State level.

Civic education and political life

"You need money to be in politics in Somalia. With money, you buy the elders, with that you buy-into the system. Young people with no money have no chance".[13]

The World Youth Report of 2016 states: *Youth trust in political and economic institutions has declined, which is seriously affecting their participation in community life. Globally, youth have been disengaging from civic life. Over 73 million young people are unemployed, with many working in the informal sector who are underemployed. Though interest in political life has been increasing among youth, participation in civic life through voting and activism are also in decline. When youth disengage from civic life, it could have negative consequences on addressing social inclusion, inequality and even the gender gap. What should policymakers do to re-engage with young people?*

Young people in all locations seem quite disillusioned by the general state of politics in the country, as though they had no voice, deprived

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13 FGD, 12/10/2018

of a say thanks to a perceived collusion between the old and new systems.

Even though international organizations have tried to support inclusive and democratic processes in Somalia, there has been a lot of cooption and collusion involving organizations and government, which limits the trust and legitimacy of organizations when they try to facilitate or act as third party neutrals to promote the process. At the other extreme, a segment of the international community has bypassed government completely in pursuing this narrative. Both extremes are not helpful. Best practice in Somalia shows that international partners can play a key role in facilitating discussions between young people and government authorities on roles, rights and responsibilities. The value lies in enhancing real civic education and social accountability in a space where trust for politicians and the political process wanes and withers.

Partners can also enhance the capacity and the space for young people to express their challenges about the civic process in broader media configurations such as radio, TV, and social media, thereby

ensuring a larger and more representative conversation. Having a broad spectrum of political actors to answer some of these challenging questions (and helping them prepare accordingly) is a way to maintain impartiality while furthering dialogue within a democratic space. Regardless of location, the key is having a diversity of young people from different language and geographic backgrounds as well as politicians from a wide political spectrum and multiple levels (district, FMS, FGS).

Community-building

"Youth in Somalia need their own country"[14]

Extensive research shows that young people who are asked to participate in community change are more likely to get involved than those who are not[15]. Yet from the consultations that helped shape this roadmap, it did not appear that all organizations were as focused and intent about the engagement and involvement of young people as they might have been.

An easy recommendation arising from a perusal of the literature and from the feedback provided

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14 KII, 13/09/18

15 Ellen Quintelier (2007) Differences in political participation between young and old people,
   Contemporary Politics, 13:2, 165-180, DOI: 10.1080/13569770701562658

Promoting young people's leadership in social cohesion, community engagement and as community organizers also helps to re-frame youth's role in the community's eyes

by the young people consulted in this exercise was that organizations should be committed and direct about engaging with a diverse group of young people if their intention is to represent a range of perspectives, experiences and skill-levels in "community-building".

Young people should be part of planning processes at town level and

have an active part in prioritizating the needs of their communities. Part of this work demands support for the involvement of young people in planning processes and participatory research, all transferrable skills in the overall process.

Promoting young people's leadership in social cohesion, community engagement and as community

organizers also helps to re-frame youth's role in the community's eyes, presenting them as contributing, engaged and involved. It also supports a joint sense of belonging and builds on existing traditions of social protection and social capital in Somalia. Intra-communal dialogue processes and inter-generational dialogue processes remain largely unexplored in Kismayo, Baidoa and Dollow yet have the potential to provide an important platform for reconciliation and engagement.

A lot has been accomplished already on refurbishment of communal space by young people through cash-for-work, efforts that have been highly appreciated. One element that could elevate such interventions would be to ensure a more active role for young people in the planning of such renovations and mapping processes. In similar fashion, there is a huge untapped potential for innovative communal improvement schemes that focus on youth populations in locations such as Baidoa, Kismayo and Dollow.

Youth Participation in Programming

Roger Hart's seminal, UNICEF-published Ladder of Participation, Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship" lists eight different stages or rungs of youth participation. They are presented here in order of importance and degree of youth empowerment:

8) Youth-initiated, shared-decisions with adults occur when projects or programmes are initiated by youth and decision-making is shared among youth and adults. These projects empower youth while at the same time enabling them to access and learn from the life experience and expertise of adults.

7) Youth-initiated and directed is when young people initiate and direct a project or programme. Adult involvement is solely supportive.

6) Adult-initiated, shared-decisions with youth are defined as projects or programmes initiated by adults with decision-making shared with the young people.

5) Consulted and informed is when youth give advice on projects or programmes designed and run by adults. The youth are informed about how their input will be used and the outcomes of the decisions made by adults.

4) Assigned but informed is where youth are assigned a specific role and informed about how and why they are being involved.

3) Tokenism is where young people appear to be given a voice, but in fact

have little or no say about what they do or how they participate.

2) Decoration is where young people are used to help or "bolster" a cause in a relatively indirect way, although adults do not pretend that the cause is inspired by youth.

1) Manipulation is where adults use youth to support causes and pretend that the causes are inspired by youth

Most of the existing youth initiatives in Baidoa, Kismayo and Dollow seem to adhere to the Tokenism/Decoration categories. This becomes clearer when applied to prevention of violent extremism and prevention of illegal and unsafe migration agendas. Local youth organizations and networks have few alternative funding options, and lack any or have extremely limited influence in helping determine or develop the intended narrative and ensuing message.

Beyond the "consultation" model, international partners should look at more flexible grant mechanisms for organizational capacity development.

Also, they should move towards process rather than output-driven monitoring. This is not something new in Somalia. Oxfam Novib was instrumental in pushing this approach during the 90s. Understandably, given a prevailing funding environment that prioritizes compliance, this would now present a challenge. However, it is crucial that donors show more flexibility – like the UN – and revert to this approach in order to promote and develop real capacity from within youth networks.

Other relevant initiatives highlighted during key informant interviews and focus group discussion included co-designed projects; creating youth steering committees and youth third party monitoring groups to emphasize the active role played by young people in this process; and, again, building transferrable skills and capacities that could result in exploring and realizing different opportunities.

6

Key Findings and Recommendations

Key Findings

Young people in Somalia are at a very interesting cross-roads in terms of their engagement with political and peace-building activities. Upcoming District, Federal Member State and National-level elections represent major opportunities for youth engagement and for young people to play an active part in the country's political present and future. One key informant summed the situation up as follows: "Rome wasn't built in a day. They [young people] are looking to the district council formation [to be elected to district councils] as a route to pave the way for the new generations".[16] In one of the FGDs[17] the following was described " [Elections] provide an opportunity for young people, not because young people get elected, but because young people are hired as the technical teams and government staff. Our DGs are young people and we hope that a lot of young people will be elected to the district councils as well".

While there is evident good will towards youth programming in Somalia, the existence of specifically designed youth programming in the country is very limited, especially within the context of broader governance and peace-building interventions. Speaking of efforts by international organizations, one source noted: "If we are doing any youth programming, it is not intentional"[18]. There is no commonly held understanding of how to programme for young people and their specific needs, vulnerabilities, challenges and opportunities. Another insightful quote cited was: "We [UN and international partners] need to stop trying to re-invent the wheel and carrying out the same programming. Young people are doing their own projects -- why can't we support that?"[19]

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16 KII, 17/09/2018

17 FGD, 09/10/2018

18 KII, 10/09/2018

19 KII, 13/09/2018

This leads to the next main finding: When it comes to political and development opportunities, being the majority demographic of Somalia's population can be both a blessing and a curse for young people. A phrase commonly repeated by government stakeholders, donors, young people and development actors alike was to the effect that young people are the majority of the population in Somalia. This was repeated without fail in all the FGDs and in 98% of the KIIs. And while that might be of benefit to young people in terms of the wide range of initiatives in which they are included, it has also meant that policies, programmes and interventions are not necessarily developed with a specific eye on youth needs, given the default assumption that because they are the majority, the process will benefit them anyway.

This in turn highlights yet another challenge. There is very little clarity or awareness among humanitarian or development actors of the young people that are excluded by or lack access to their interventions, programmes and participation spaces. According to one respondent: "the National Youth Policy exists, but young people have not been consulted. We have expressed our concerns, but we have not been heard. It seems like they only consulted the guys in Mogadishu.[20] Humanitarian and development actors in Somalia seem to have limited knowledge about population and political dynamics within their areas of operation. This can be especially damaging when it comes to governance and peace-building interventions since it often serves to reinforce or replicate power dynamics that the interventions may have been intended to address.

Young people have expressed disappointment and frustration with the current 4.5 system and with clannism in Somalia. This was cited consistently in the youth FGDs as the main obstacle preventing young people from having access to political opportunities. That said , it must be noted, because these factors have been so pervasive in specific areas of recent Somali politics and decision-making processes, that youth movements themselves replicate the 4.5 dynamics within their leadership and decision-making structures.

Young Somalis are extremely connected given their usage of social media. However, it would be wrong to assume that connectivity directly translates into online action or social accountability. From the discussions in Kismayo and Baidoa, young people reported strongly that Twitter was

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Young Somalis are extremely connected given their usage of social media.

for the politicians, the diaspora and international organizations. Some gender assumptions indicated what was considered permissible for boys, girls, young women and young men to do online. Young women in both Baidoa and Kismayo appeared to prefer and dominate the Instagram space, whereas young men still leaned more towards Facebook. However, none of this social media online activity was seen as a step in the direction of improved governance or peace-building.

Recommendations

The recommendations that follow are listed in relation to key stakeholders. Overall, the emphasis is on the importance of supporting community resilience mechanisms and strengthening positive identities and a sense of belonging.

Many of the needs of youth entail collective and social needs, with community-based programmes being critical. Youth service institutions need to provide group-based activities (sports, community service, life skills, non-violence communication, conflict management education) that

help develop positive identity, group empowerment, and the acquisition of leadership, teamwork, and self-governance skills, all under adult supervision. Such programmes need to provide safe and structured arenas for competition, for peer bonding, and for male-female relationships. Meeting individual needs is important as well, though this is usually best accomplished in the context of positive relationships developed within the programme and between the youth and the community at large.

Youth groups and movements

- Look more closely at cross-district and cross-Federal Member State collaboration about youth-related activities. Puntland provides an historic example of a consistently strong commitment to its youth network and a continuing engagement in institutional development.

- District Councils and District Youth Councils provide an interesting opening for youth engagement. There is abundant evidence that

Youth service institutions need to provide group-based activities

young people are willing and eager to engage with both the District Council Formation process and the District Youth Council process. Given this readiness to participate, it is important to strengthen coordination between the two bodies in order to ensure that it is more than another bureaucratic sphere and that it can serve as an active space for decision-making, one that reflect the perspectives and aspirations of young people.
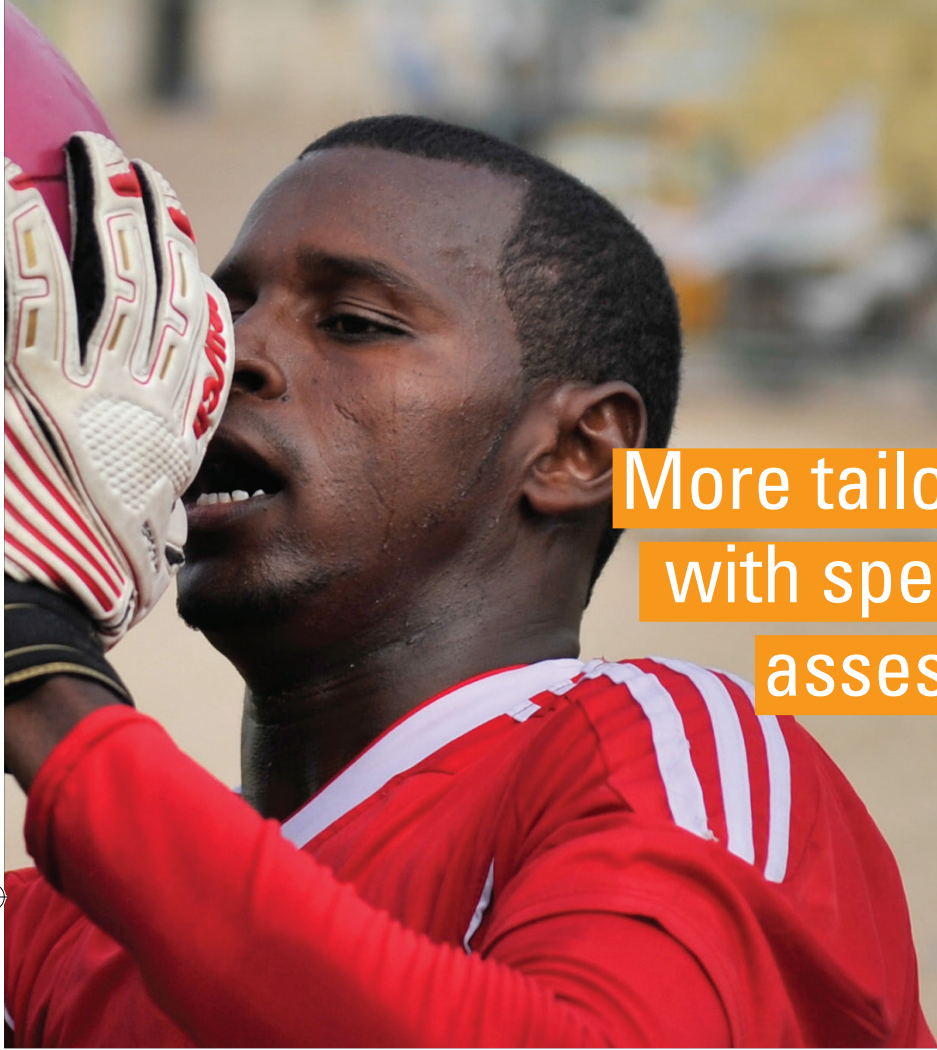
- Youth groups need to be at the forefront of the move for inclusion and should support the leadership and development of singularly marginalized groups in their areas.

- Youth groups and movements should look beyond regular donor streams for more sustainable funding channels. They should also link their work to national, Federal Member State and District level policies or processes, and potentially explore linkages with diaspora and diaspora funding,

especially from the United States, with regard to structural and organizational development.

Government stakeholders

- Federal Member State stakeholders should look to operationalize and implement the National Youth Policy in their States. Creating a collective process with a clear action plan and targets might support ownership, clarity and fund-raising efforts. During these consultations, South West State representatives were keen to

use the national policy as a broader platform to improve youth development in the State.

- Government stakeholders would benefit from having more specific plans for youth engagement and youth development. While Government stakeholders appear both open and willing to work with young people, the majority lacked detailed and specific plans for engagement.

- Government stakeholders have the responsibility of being advocates for under-represented

More tailored interventions, with specific youth market assessments should be promoted.

and marginalized groups in their States and Districts. More effort should be in place to help support young women, young people from marginalized clans, and young people living with disabilities in order to promote more inclusive governance and development processes.

- Government stakeholders have an opportunity to strengthen community initiatives in their areas in favour of improved sustainability.
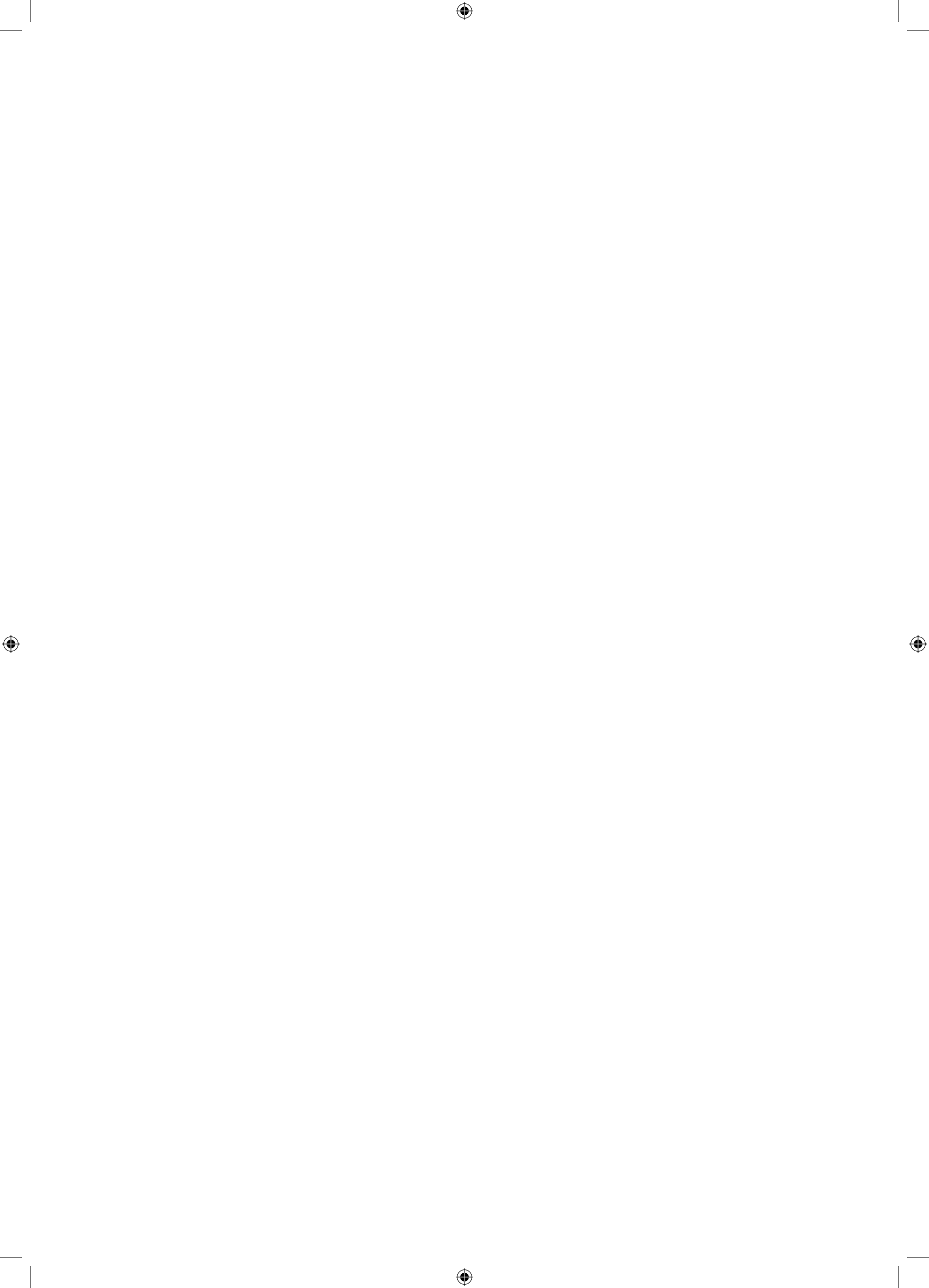
International actors, NGOs and development sector

- Conflict-sensitivity should be at the heart of all programming or interventions regardless of the context, but especially so when it comes to conflict-affected areas. This demands that those doing the programming know who the young people are they are trying to support and be fully aware of those who might be left behind by any intervention. Inevitably, this varies depending on the context - young people lacking access in Kismayo are not the same as

those from Baidoa just as their respective resilience and coping mechanisms also differ.

- Communities have expressed frustration and bewilderment with some of the models offered by vocational skills and employment programmes. More tailored interventions, with specific youth market assessments should be promoted. Also, there is a need for local universities and training centres to create more sustainable channels for different types of jobs. Additional suggestions included a call for incubators and entrepreneurial kits.

- There is a clear need for improved coordination between actors. At the level of District and Federal Member State, donors and international actors appear to lack understanding of context, dynamics and implementation processes. The existing mechanisms for local level implementation – especially on the UN and donor side – seem to be in need of change and improvement. Working with a broad range of partners and monitoring implementation at a more local level might be a solution.