



EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES, ELEVATING LIVES THROUGH BETTER GOVERNANCE

SUPPORTING PEACE THROUGH LOCALISED LEADERSHIP

There is a great value in empowering local governments.

Local governments are important vehicles for democratic and accountable governance of local communities, cultivating responsible citizenship from the ground, and ensuring the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner.

Strengthening institutional capabilities of sub-national structures is a strategic and imperative task to contribute to state-building and peacebuilding; it facilitates the provision of decentralized, efficient, and equitable public services.

This is an effective mechanism to address horizontal and vertical inequalities, ultimately consolidating the social contract.

In fragile contexts, local governance is a vital tool to guarantee stabilization, peace, boost economic development, maximize administrative efficiency, and ensure social inclusion.

Dialogue and trust are key for sustainable peace. Peace and development have to be locally owned and led. Local governance is the starting point for sustainable impact. In Somalia, local governments have additional importance as the drivers for sustaining peace, stability and building state legitimacy.

Practitioners who have worked extensively in the field have seen the urgent need to focus programming on local governance with the sole purpose to strengthen local peace, justice, and the delivery of inclusive and equitable services for all citizens

Three key elements support this argument: decentralized service delivery through local governments is more effective and efficient; the provision of public services underpins the social contract between government and its citizens; and inclusiveness and participation at the local level have a legitimizing value which strengthens the social contract and trust between citizens and government.

TOWARDS A STRONGER SOCIAL CONTRACT

1. OPD Attendance	2019	2020	21	140	114	13
Number OPD attendance under five yrs	368	408	116	212	206	171
2. Top 5 Diseases						
Upper Respiratory infections	236	208	198	35	36	87
Malaria	66	62	10	42	26	33
Pneumonia	20	20	38	23	23	11
Skin disease	22	38	26	29	17	23
Acute water diarrhoea	10	27	39	31	38	83
3. Delivery Services						
1. Normal Delivery Conducted at Health Facilities by QN and midwives	36	15	20	16	9	38
2. Complicated Delivery Conducted at Health Facilities by QN and midwives	0	0	0	0	0	0
3. Number of complicated deliveries referred to hospital or RHC	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. No. of Pregnant women referred to by Ambulance	0	0	0	0	0	0
5. Early initiation of Breastfeeding within first hr	35	15	30	16	9	87
6. Maternal Complications						
Death	0	0	0	0	0	0
APPH	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pre-eclampsia-hypertension	0	0	0	0	0	0
Malaria	0	0	0	0	0	0
Abortion	0	0	0	0	0	0
7. Maternal deaths						
Deaths due to pregnancy and related causes	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newborn (early neonatal) Deaths	0	0	0	0	0	0
Still Births	0	0	0	0	0	0

A snapshot of record keeping at a local MCH facility following the devolution of medical services in Mogadishu

Local governments have proximity to the citizens to deliver justice and promote local economic development by investing on local needs and strengths. In fragile context, elected/selected local authorities have the local intelligence to consolidate peace gains and harness long-term stability.

The ability for local governments and their municipalities to effectively deliver services and sustainably manage local economies depends on their institutional capabilities and financial resources at their disposal.

Therefore, a core task of the central governments is to strengthen the financial and institutional systems for local institutions to enable them to perform these critical functions.

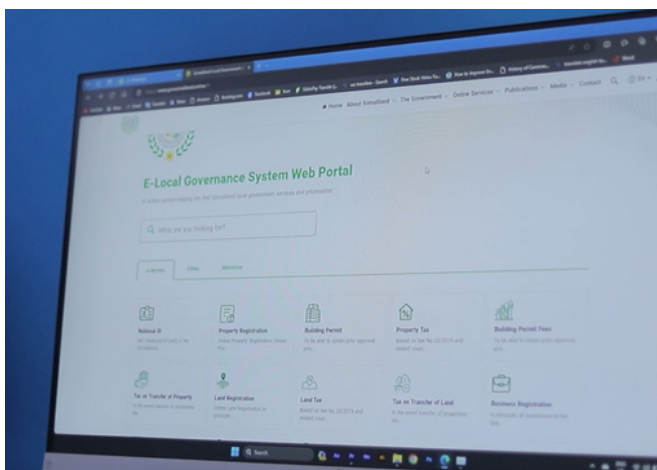
One instrument to incentivize performance is to build and agree on a fiscal transfer formula and a performance-based grant financing to provide incentives to local governments to improve their institutional performance and service delivery outcomes. Investing in these local government systems will help promote citizen participation, accountability, and state-citizen engagement.

The Federal Government of Somalia's (FGS) Wadajir Framework (WF) for Local Governance stresses a bottom-up approach to developing governance structures at the local level with a critical emphasis on community participation and trust building.

The FGS aims to create a more representative local governance system through the roll-out of District Council Formation (DCF) that builds up from the bottom, breaks down some social barriers, mends the social divide through local peace initiatives, and re-energizes the spirit of working together for the common good.

Igniting citizen involvement in governance and development is equally important. Fostering a sense of civic engagement means encouraging residents to be morally and civically responsible members of the community. It means encouraging idea-sharing and participation in community improvement initiatives.

Citizens who are engaged in the progress of their community realize that every effort and voice does count, and that they, their families, and their homes are part of a broader social fabric. They realize that they have the power to be part of collective efforts to improve the public good. This type of individual and collective awareness is critical for the success of any community as it leads to a society that is more inclusive.



A shot of the interphase of the e-governance portal developed in Somaliland that facilitates locals to access government services online.

Building transparent, accountable, inclusive, efficient, and effective public sector systems is a challenging and long-term endeavor in any developing country. It is even more difficult when starting to reconstruct state capacity after decades of civil war in places such as Afghanistan or Somalia.

The social contract between the population and the state is not united and the instruments of its potential rebirth such as the institutional memory of the civil service, the resource raising compact, and the service delivery capacity greatly reduced. Building the public sector - the basic accounting, auditing, payment, human resource management, and resource mobilization systems - is therefore widely regarded as a precondition for state formation and functioning devolved institutions.

Providing more political and financial space to local governments can help promote inclusion and pluralism and thus increase the chances of a political bargain to emerge.

While such local governance reforms are fundamentally political, it is possible to nudge this process forward by working on potentially less contested community or district level local governance structures to help address the conflict over resources and to enhance participation and inclusion.

Often, the most trusted leaders are traditional and local, as is the case with Somalia.

FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY



Focused efforts to enhance public finance management at the district level yielded improved services-tarmacked roads, clean and green neighborhoods

Fiscal sustainability is a cornerstone for any caring, effective, and responsive local government. This fundamental fact has always been a central pillar to the understanding of the authors, only to be validated through their practical engagements with sub-national structures in Somalia and beyond.

In the Somali context, the limited resources at the disposal of local governments, often in the form of own-source revenues plus the always unpredictable, slow-moving transfers are not offsetting the mandated functions. In the absence of clear, formula-based, and effective fiscal transfer mechanisms, local governments depend almost entirely on how much revenue they internally generate, unlike the common practice in the greater region, where sub-national structures are heavily reliant on allocations from the national governments.

Assignment of functions and expenditure responsibilities are designed with little or complete disregard to available fiscal spaces, which leads to fiscal imbalances and unfunded mandates.

As per the approved local government laws, sub-national structures are mandated to provide basic social services.

This often includes provision of primary healthcare and primary education services, sanitation and waste management, resilience building, city planning, recreational activities and keeping laws and order to mention a few. The mandated functions are standardized for all local governments, but where fiscal transfers exist, for instance in Somaliland, Puntland state of Somalia and the capital Mogadishu, the transferred funds to districts vary from one to another without detailed elaborations. This leaves many services unrendered and many mandates unfunded.

Yet, with the help of programs like UN Joint Programme for Local Governance (JPLG), strengthened capacity to generate own-source revenue is widely documented in many districts, most notably in Somaliland and Puntland and most recently in the capital Mogadishu and Baidoa of South West State of Somalia. Although this is not sufficient to respond to all local needs, it nevertheless played a key role in providing public services in a much more systematic and coordinated manner.

However, it is not clear what exact processes within the constraints of the instruments of engagement of donors can be adopted to strengthen the existing role of local clan elders and catalyze this bottom-up conflict resolution.

More support, for example, can be channeled through the traditional systems to catalyze dialogue. Strengthening and working with respected local elders for state-building efforts and for promotion of trust in local governments is an important goal.

TAPPING POSITIVE ASPECTS OF URBANIZATION



A cross-sectional view of the child friendly park built in Hargeisa, Somaliland in partnership with the local government

Many countries are witnessing rapid urbanization and Somalia is not an exception. The prolonged civil strife coupled with the recurrent and lately alternating drought and flooding - forced many families to displacement, often in primary and secondary cities.

The climate change related shocks and rural-urban migration in the search of better economic and livelihood opportunities, and greater access to services further exacerbated the situation. This, however, places an even greater burden on the meager municipal services, that are already insufficient at best, and nonexistent at worst.

Waste management- solid, liquid, and medical wastes- a key and basic local government function is such primary victim of the exponential, uncontrolled and unguided urban growth. The absence of designated collection and disposal sites and limited municipal capacity coupled with a laissez-faire communal attitude have led to the buildup of waste on unused parcels of land.

Local governments are the natural and first line responders to any calamities. This is because of the proximity to local communities and that is exactly why local governments are mandated to perform such crucial, daunting, and costly functions.

Nonetheless, in the Somali context, though local governments are mandated such tasks, they either lack the institutional capacity or fiscal muscle to respond to climate change induced short-term shocks and enduring stresses.

Yet, because cities are the engines of economic growth and central hubs for all trading transactions, urbanization could yield positive outcomes when carefully and skillfully tapped and utilized, particularly in primary and secondary cities.

Land-based finance, leaner fiscal discipline as well as building partnerships with the private sector and diaspora communities could unlock the much-needed financial and human resources necessary for service delivery, investment, and infrastructure development.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE AS A BUILDING BLOCK FOR STATE BUILDING

United Nations JPLG aims to contribute to peace, development, and equitable service delivery in Somalia by developing the capacities of local governments to deliver inclusive services and increase the responsiveness and accountability of the local authorities.

More effective local governance systems that are responsive to people's need and aspiration, inclusive and resilient to crisis have an essential role to play in delivering improved quality of life and forming resilient state-society relationships based on shared understanding of respective roles and responsibilities.

Fifteen years of sustained JPLG support has created strong Somali ownership

A transformative change in mindset is deemed crucial for the effective planning and delivery of social services, acting as a catalyst for improved local governance. Remarkably, a positive trajectory was, however, noted in the districts where JPLG has been operational, resulting in a more streamlined and sustained provision of public services.

No matter how resource-constrained districts tend to be, a significant portion of district budget is allocated to service delivery as part of district annual work plans. Sustaining and strengthening this trend is vital to ensure efficient provision of public services in an inclusive manner with the potential of creating shared prosperity.



Workshop participants visit to the Garowe municipality billing office to see how the pilot digital tax payment system works.

The Swiss Government supported JPLG program works with many local governments in Somalia with the end objective of establishing functional local governments and systems that contribute to consolidating and advancing development.

Fifteen years of sustained JPLG support has created strong Somali ownership; support to local governments has proven to empower local stakeholders to take charge of their development and governance processes.

By fostering collaboration and capacity-building among government institutions, civil society organizations, and community leaders, the support ensured that initiatives are tailored to the unique needs and contexts of each region.

This approach not only promotes sustainable, inclusive, and resilient communities but also strengthens local ownership, ensuring that progress achieved is deeply rooted in Somali culture and values, ultimately contributing to the long-term peace and development of the country.

ENHANCED AND SUSTAINED LOCAL SERVICES

Acceleration of service delivery has brought long term visible change with the local governments championing services and providing stable and sound politics.

District planning, domestic revenue generation, open and transparent budgeting, and new emerging young leaders have demonstrated the power of decentralized governance system.

Somali owned and managed procurement cycles, taxation, planning, human resources, and training delivery have shown the ability to scale across the country.

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JPLG IV feels validated in its core approach to support local governments as one of the most important avenues to peace, development, and prosperity in Somalia.

The core of the program, although adapted to changing circumstances, diversity of institutional landscapes and lessons learned, will therefore remain focused on supporting the development of Somali-owned and managed system.

Finally, localized, Somali-owned and led local governance interventions tend to significantly contribute to restoration of peace and stability, stronger social contract, accountability, and provision of public services.



JPLG supported the mobile application and web portal where locals can access local government services and pay taxes, fees, and other charges in Somaliland

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