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SOMALIA

Working with CSOs:

Desk Study to Assess the Feasibility of the Great Lakes Civil Society Project



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Acronyms

AI	Amnesty International
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DDG	Danish Demining Group
DfID	Department for International Development
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
FSNAU	Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GCP	Great Lakes Project
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
IDP	Internally Displaced People
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
LNGO	Local Non-Government Organisation
MTR	Mid Term Review
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NSA	Non State Actors
OCHA	Office for Coordinating Humanitarian Assistance
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PSG	Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goal
PUNSAA	The Puntland Non-State Actors Association
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SNAF	Somalia National Armed Forces
SONSAF	Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum
SOSCENSA	Somalia South-Central Non-State Actors
TFG	Transition Federal Government
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
USD	US Dollar
USWO	Ubah Social Welfare Organization

Introduction



The Somali Compact, a component of the New Deal framework, will shape international engagement in South Central Somalia over the next three years (2014-16). The Compact provides “an overarching strategic framework for coordinating political, security and development efforts for peace and statebuilding activities.” In the case of Somalia, the New Deal has identified priority areas within all of the 5 Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs). It is within these PSGs that aid to Somalia will be channelled. However, a year into the process, there is still little clarity amongst implementing organisations, of whether this process accounts for Somalia’s 3 million people who are displaced and the volatile context, both in security and natural disasters in which Somalia exists. International organisations providing assistance in Somalia are in search of durable solutions and working with civil society organisations to ensure that a) international and national frameworks are consulting with the civil society in Somalia and b) the civil society represents the people of Somalia.

In this context, this report asks – “Is there a need for another civil society project in Somalia?”

1 / There is an established and recognized role for the civil society in Somalia. But:

- Does the Somali civil society encompass the interests of displaced populations?
- Is there a balance between advocating for the rights of displaced populations as much as their needs?

2 / There are numerous civil society programmes implemented in Somalia at present. But:

- What are the challenges that programmes working with CSOs are facing in developing the capacity of the civil society in Somalia?
- Where are the bottlenecks that prevent CSOs from operating in the way they are meant to?

3/ Pointing towards the international community and facilitators of larger regional frameworks (like the New Deal and Tripartite Agreement), this report questions whether:

- Enough efforts have been put into realistically engaging with civil society that represent the interests of the most marginalised people?
- Are these frameworks reflective of ground reality? What is the role that CSOs can play in ensuring that true ground needs are accounted for in these frameworks?

These are broad questions, which this study aims to answer through the prism of testing the feasibility of DRC’s Great Lakes Civil Society Project in Somalia. Though programmatic in nature, the report highlights broader challenges and bottlenecks in working with CSOs and their role as it tries identify a strategy and niche area for the GCP to have notable impact in Somalia, aligned with DRC’s regional programming objectives in the Horn of Africa.

On the basis of this study’s context analysis and findings, DRC will decide whether there is a potential to launch the project in Somalia. Preliminary indications suggest that there is potential, but the analysis in this study, fed by interviews with actors like Saferworld, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and donors like EU and DfID who have been working with CSOs in Somalia for the last few years will provide strategic direction to the GCP.

DRC’S GREAT LAKES CIVIL SOCIETY PROJECT (GCP) – A BRIEF PRESENTATION

Samuel Hall East Africa was commissioned by DRC in August 2014, to conduct a desk study to map the presence and programming of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Somalia in order to assess the opportunities and risks for DRC of working with civil society in Somalia. The mapping exercise is a first step to analyse whether the DRC-implemented and SIDA- funded project, the Great Lakes Project, can be feasibly replicated in the Somali context.

The Great Lakes Civil Society Project is a regional programme implemented since 2010 in partnership with CSOs in six countries of the Great Lakes region: Burundi, Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo), Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan. The GCP aims to enhance peace and security in the African Great Lakes region by strengthening the protection of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other displaced populations' human rights through local conflict resolution and to make sure that adapted policy frameworks are developed and implemented, through research, advocacy and policy development. The programme aims at holding the governments responsible and accountable to the commitments made to protect displaced persons in their country. To this aim, GCP supports national CSOs in documenting and analysing specific displacement and conflict issues, and translating these analyses into practical advocacy goals. Where possible, it encourages cross-border learning between CSOs and regional initiatives to provide integrated and regional solutions to displacement problems that span national borders and boundaries.

It was implemented in 2010 after going through an inception phase during which country specific assessments were conducted. These assessments

had a two-fold objective: first, understand the context, key issues, protocols, conventions and legal frameworks in the proposed countries of operation, and second, map CSOs to be potential partners and identify potential programme risks.

Key activities within this program and which have been conducted so far include:

1. In-depth research and analysis
2. Fostering external strategic partnerships
3. Enable CSOs to become strategic interlocutors between actors
4. Training programmes on key conventions and protocols
5. Advocacy of national policies
6. Policy development and analysis
7. Facilitate dialogue and discussions and improve communication between communities in conflict and local tensions
8. Documentation and knowledge management

The Great Lakes Civil Society Project (GCP): A vision

The project's vision is for civil society to hold governments accountable to the commitments made for protecting displaced persons in their country, by proposing realistic policy solutions to conflict and displacement.

The Horn of Africa and Yemen: A strategic commitment

The Horn of Africa and Yemen region is considered to be one of the most turbulent regions in the world – with long running inter and inter-state disputes-conflicts and large displacement – often unpredictable. The inherent displacement crisis in the region is triggered not only by conflicts but also hugely by environmental and consequently socio-economic uprooting.

According to UNHCR, there are over one million Somali refugees in the region. An additional 1.3 million civilians are displaced internally in Somalia. However, the displacement crises in this region have often been met with limited durable solutions due to a wide range of challenges- such as, among others, limited engagement by the host communities, fewer national civil society actors actively engaged in the advocacy and policy lobbying for durable solutions as a result of limited or lack of capacity to undertake such issues, inactive or absence of legal and national policy framework that can facilitate durable solutions to displacements in the local context but also at national level.

The GCP: A "Bottom-Up" Rationale

Looking into the possibility of changing the displacement crisis in the region, a bottom up approach that involves civil society entities is seen to be one of the best options.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROGRAMME

The GCP programme was based on the following justifications:

FOCUSING ON THE LOCAL

- a. **Local actors and local stakeholders:** Formal policy frameworks do not encompass all local actors and local stakeholders, who are highly influential in determining conflict trends and resolution, especially in the cases of displacement where local presence is an important factor to report ground conditions and dynamics as they evolve. Capitalising on these local-level change agents and processes can not only help prevent or resolve conflict but can also contribute to refining and increasing the relevance of formal policy frameworks.
- b. **Local contexts and local dynamics:** Regional and national policy frameworks are crucial entry points for holding governments accountable to the commitments made for protecting the displaced. In addition, existing policies and strategies for addressing displacement have a limited impact on beneficiaries when they do not take into account local specificities, contexts and dynamics. More often than not, awareness of these frameworks is poor amongst local populations.

BOTTOM-UP APPROACH: ROLE OF CSOS

- a. **CSOs as Intermediaries:** Civil society has a strategic role to play in offering policy solutions to conflict and displacement and in influencing policy makers' decisions from the national to the regional level. Moreover, they are also strategically positioned to strengthen local voices and hold governments accountable. In order to maintain this strategic positioning in the long term, strong technical abilities, internal mechanisms and institutional set-ups are required to ensure the sustainability of the CSOs' work over time.
- b. **Voices of the displaced:** For people who do not have ground support and government representation due to their displaced nature, CSOs can act as their representation in local governance, dispute resolution and decision making processes.
- c. **A long-term process:** A programme like this is based on the understanding that impact will show in the long term. Building a civil society base in fragile societies leaves the people with a mechanism through which to voice their frustrations and needs to their local authorities and support projects that have more short-term

impact. It also aids in the equitable distribution of scarce resources.

CROSS-BORDER ELEMENT

- a. **Working together across borders:** Displacement is not a country-specific issue and therefore solutions can also not be country specific. Displacement spans across borders and frontiers and there is a need for civil societies on both sides of the border to work together to assist displaced communities. This is also applicable in the case of Somalia and Kenya. More so now, with rising insecurity in Kenya, endangering Somali refugees living in the country and nascent services and structures of governance in Somalia.

Key Questions

Is it worthwhile replicating the Great Lakes Civil Society Project in Somalia?

If yes, it timely to launch the GCP in Somalia?

The report will conclude on the progress made so far in the programme, and clarify whether it may be relevant to explore it further in the context of Somalia, within the framework of the New Deal and of current donor strategies.

The final chapter will answer these questions and provide a roadmap for DRC to assess the viability of its programme – a particular programme that does not involve direct aid and is inherently a long-term process.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In line with the key questions, this study has the following objectives:

Context Analysis and Legal Overview of Somalia

- i. Analyse and document scope for working with CSOs in the current environment in Somalia with particular reference to the New Deal and Somali Compact.
- ii. Analyse and document legal and policy frameworks related to refugees/IDPS in Somalia. At the regional level, review legal refugees/IDPS frameworks and implementation mechanisms

Mapping of CSOs for programming in Somalia

- i. Identify and analyse current (and recent) civil society programmes in Somalia
- ii. Identify and describe previous and current programmes and projects supporting civil society (partners, donors, focus and objectives)

- iii. Map the stakeholders and assess their willingness to listen to CSOs
- iv. Analyse the civil society network in Somalia as relevant to the GCP
- v. Identify potential partner CSOs for GCP

Feasibility Study of GCP in Somalia

- i. Analyse the GCP: lessons learned from the Great Lakes Region
- ii. Assess the applicability of GCP in Somalia's current context
- iii. Analyse challenges and opportunities for the programme
- iv. Formulate recommendations.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report follows the same logic as the objectives outlined above. Chapter 1 discusses the socio-political context and relevant legal frameworks in Somalia. Chapter 2 maps civil society actors and programmes and highlights the features of the civil society in Somalia. Chapter 3 discusses the feasibility of the GCP in Somalia and lastly, provides practical recommendations for DRC in working with CSOs in Somalia.

