YOUTH AS AGENTS OF PEACE SOMALIA

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Youth as Agents of Peace Somalia

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Foreword

In December 2015, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously adopted the historic Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, recognizing young people as important partners in resolving and preventing conflict at all levels. The Resolution urged Member States to increase representation of youth in decision-making and consider setting up mechanisms that would enable young people to meaningfully participate in peace processes and dispute resolution.

Although recent studies on youth and development more often than not focus on youth involvement in violence and terrorism, the potential of youth as a peace factor is more rarely a subject of analysis. Thefore, the need to understand youth as agents of peace is critical in countries facing long-term fragility, conflict, and violence, such as Somalia. This report focuses on understanding youth perspectives on peacebuilding in Somalia, as well as how and why youth choose to build peace at local and national levels.

Youth as Agents of Peace: Somalia is the first joint country study conducted by the United Nations and the World Bank aimed at translating into practice the principles of the UNSC Resolution 2250, through direct and local engagement with young people and their communities in one of the most fragile and conflict-ridden areas on the African continent. Focusing on young people is particularly meaningful as Somalia's population is the youngest of the African continent overall. Against a backdrop of continued conflict, insecurity, and violent extremism facing Somalia, the study offers a positive vision for defining peace as articulated by young women and men. It concludes by offering an operational framework for supporting youth in peacebuilding.

The report's recommendations postulate a comprehensive understanding of youth, peace, and conflict going beyond solutions based solely on increased employment. For peace to be achieved, young people should have access to basic services, protection, development of skills and competencies, and meaningful engagement in governance at all levels. In addition, a "youth-led" approach in developing peacebuilding programs is regarded as essential, as is focusing on the unique needs of young women.

Each of our institutions brings a unique and complementary set of experiences and knowledge on achieving peace and development. Building on the directions of the global Progress Study mandated by Resolution 2250, *Youth as Agents of Peace: Somalia* offers a solid platform for strengthening our partnership toward maximizing tangible results with and for Somali youth. We also hope it will further understanding of the challenges and opportunities of operationalizing the youth, peace, and security agenda at the country level.

Youth embodies the hope and future of Somalia and will, with the necessary and well-deserved support, be the engine that paves the country's path to recovery and prosperity.

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Somali youths in a group discussion during a forum on Youth and Justice in Baidoa, Somalia on August 12, 2017. UNSOM Photo.

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
CEPRAD	Center for Peace, Research and Development
CM	community leader male
CSO	civil society organization
DPC	District Peace Committee
FGD	focus group discussion
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
FY	female youth
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
IDP	internally displaced person
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MoIFA	Ministry of Interior and Federal Affairs
MY	male youth
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NVSP	National Volunteer Service Program
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
GBV	gender-based violence
SYC	Somali Youth Club
SYL	Somali Youth League
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

Executive Summary

This work summarizes the results and recommendations of a qualitative study on youth engagement in peacebuilding in Somalia. It is based on the premise that it is vitally important to understand why young people participate in building peace and how they do so. In fact, this understanding may dramatically affect the ways in which development interventions are conceived and implemented in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

This work takes into account the historic 2015 United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2250, on youth, peace, and security, and the 2016 UNSC Resolution 2282, on the review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture. Resolution 2250 urges young men and women's greater representation in the prevention and resolution of conflict. Resolution 2282 reaffirmed Resolution 2250 and articulates the UNSC's vision for sustaining peace. This work aims to understand Somali young people's priorities with respect to peacebuilding and how youth can be supported to engage in building peace.

Six broad questions were addressed through the study: (1) How do young people define peace and peacebuilding? (2) What are the internal and external variables and incentives that impact youths' engagement in peacebuilding in their respective communities and at the national level? (3) How and in what ways do these variables impact youths' engagement in their respective societies? (4) What are the policies, institutions, and programs that enhance the role of youth as agents of peace? (5) What challenges prevent them from actively engaging in peace? and (6) How would youth like to be engaged in peacebuilding, as they define it?

Two types of qualitative data collection methods were used for this study: individual qualitative interviews and focus groups, which were conducted by trained Somali researchers. Individual interviews were conducted with youth, community leaders, and parents. The interview guides were modular in form; that is, a set of questions was asked of each category of respondent (youth, parents, and community leaders), along with additional specific questions relevant for each category. The 15–20 primarily open-ended questions (depending on the respondent category) address the individual's role in peacebuilding; their perception of the role of civil society generally, and youth in particular, in peacebuilding; their perception of support from communities and the government sector; and their recommendations for actions that could facilitate peacebuilding. The focus groups, which were held for youth participants only, featured five broad questions related to peacebuilding and youth. Data collection was carried out in Mogadishu and Afgoye in south Somalia, as this region continues to experience greater amounts of violence and has had a different experience with governance than Somaliland and Puntland.

Results show that peacebuilding in Somalia is not just about reducing or eliminating violence. While respondents clearly emphasized that Somalia needs to be safe and secure for all people—regardless of whether they belong to a majority or a minority, or regardless of their clan—they also stressed that a peaceful society includes strong, reliable, effective, and accountable institutions that provide services and opportunities for all. Peace, according to respondents, starts with the self—respondents emphasized how important it is for individuals to possess the attitudes and behaviors that make peace possible.

Responses highlight the close links between interpersonal and domestic violence (including gender-based violence) and both local (community) violence and national conflict (war). In fact, many said that both violence and peacebuilding efforts start in the home. Many said that they decide to participate in peacebuilding because they have experienced violence at home.

The importance of good governance must be underscored. Respondents were clear that there cannot be peace without good governance, as fair and representative government and civil society institutions are preconditions for peace. Somalis who participated in this study were overwhelmingly in favor of a system of governance that is not based on clan, but rather one in which each person has one vote and where public institutions apply the law fairly and effectively. Respondents say that the current system does not meet these conditions. The perception among participants is that only connected elites are represented.

Having responsible and effective local institutions is also a priority for Somali youth. Many respondents mentioned the importance of having local institutions—both in the public sector and civil society—that can provide services and opportunities. Many also said that local institutions involve local people and traditional systems, which lends credibility to national-level peacebuilding processes.

Jobs and essential public services (including education and health) are vital for peace in Somalia. Although there is no consensus on who can or should lead on delivering jobs, young people cannot imagine a peaceful Somalia without economic opportunities. Services—in particular, education—are also seen as a precondition for peace: Without education, there are no opportunities or knowledge of how to build a peaceful state.

Respondents also emphasized that opportunities must be available to all. Respondents emphasized that they regard job creation and access to services as a core responsibility of any government, one that should be a priority in Somalia. In fact, many of those who participate in peacebuilding do so in part to develop networks that could lead to job opportunities.

Youth expressed concerns about civil society institutions involved in peacebuilding. These were mentioned with regard to organizations at the local, national, and international levels. Young people stated that civil society organizations (CSOs) that participate in peacebuilding are ineffective because they have security concerns that limit their coverage; in addition, some seem to have a financial interest in these activities. (Civil society is seen as supporting specific interests or clans and being out of touch with citizens' needs and realities. This perception is important, as it shows some of the difficulties in engaging youth in peacebuilding through civil society; it also creates an imperative to identify effective peacebuilding actors and support their credibility. Strengthening support for youth-led CSOs is seen as a way to increase trust in civil society generally.)

Youth request that the government conduct outreach to them—they want to be involved in community development and peacebuilding efforts. In fact, youth want government to lead peacebuilding efforts, but demand that a broader variety of stakeholders be involved. Young people said that the government does not try to involve them; that they are unaware of the government's efforts; and/or regard any govenrment efforts as likely to be unrepresentative of their priorities and needs.

This study shows that most young people want to participate in peacebuilding, and most in fact do. However, when youth say they are participating in peacebuilding, they often mean they are improving themselves; that they have the right attitude; or are helping the vulnerable in their communities. In other cases, young people are participating in community watch groups, which often become a party to violence. Finally, they stated it was not possible for most youth to participate in peacebuilding activities at the national level, and that the government should make a greater effort to include a broad set of youth in peacebuilding and good governance efforts. Young people say that their participation in peacebuilding is constrained by lack of time, education, jobs, and awareness or knowledge of how to engage.

The ongoing conflict has had a particularly severe impact on young Somali women, who face even greater challenges regarding their engagement in governance, peacebuilding efforts, and reconciliation processes. Most young female respondents in Afgoye said that girls are "not counted," "excluded," or "left out" when asked about other reasons why they participate in peacebuilding. A young woman in Mogadishu said that she participated to "enforce equality." (#3FY, Mogadishu) Young women also face physical barriers to participating in decision making. Safety concerns—particularly in urban public spaces and public transport—restrict their mobility and prevent them from attending public consultations and community meetings.

The need to involve women was emphasized both in Afgoye and Mogadishu. Almost half of the young women interviewed in Mogadishu urged communities to promote peace by reducing discrimination against girls, promoting girls' education, and advocating for women more generally. In Afgoye, young women urged their community leaders, civil society, and government to raise awareness of women's issues and "to fight against girls' rape." (#5FY, Afgoye) Study respondents also consistently mentioned both the need to provide women-focused services and to address discrimination against women by service providers; young women particularly emphasized the role that communities and civil society can play in raising awareness of women's issues and eliminating discrimination against females.

Although the study focused on youth, parents and community leaders gave very similar answers to young people, both in Mogadishu and Afgoye. For example, many of the reasons offered by youth, community leaders, and parents as the basis for youth engagement in peacebuilding were similar: youth witnessing violence, including domestic violence; potential job opportunities; peer pressure; and parental guidance. There was a concern among nonyouth that young people had never witnessed a peaceful society. For peacebuilding to work in Somalia, much has to change.

The opinions, priorities, and recommenda-tions of respondents in this study provide a comprehensive appproach for promoting youth inclusion in peacebuilding and for increasing the effectiveness of peacebuilding activities in Somalia more broadly. Their perspectives show that peacebuilding will be challenging, but there is both interest in participating in efforts to brighten the country's future and thoughtful ideas for action by individuals, civil society, and local representatives. The report thus proposes an operational framework addressing issues such as access to services, jobs, and fairness of the justice system, as described by study respondents and informed by global evidence. The framework also envisages youth participation in the design and implementation of peacebuilding activities to ensure that governance, justice, and service delivery programs positively impact their lives.

Recommended measures are presented in five sections. The first describes ways that youth can be supported in taking responsibility for peacebuilding, through critical thinking skills development, peer-to-peer support, volunteering, psychosocial support, and peace education. The second describes ways to support violence reduction, reconciliation, and resilience at the community level as key preconditions for peacebuilding. The third discusses how to support young people's participation in local development. The fourth section describes ways to support youth livelihoods, entrepreneurship, and access to finance. Finally, the fifth section makes a case for improving the rule of law by reforming justice and security.

The report concludes by highlighting that the proposed operational framework should be regarded as a multi-dimensional package, rather than a menu of self-standing interventions. Ideally, these groups of measures should reinforce each other in view of beginning to address the grievances as well as the aspirations of the young generation in Somalia. While the proposed interventions prioritize local and community-based approaches, these would need to be complemented by longer term policy reform measures, such as security and justice sector reforms and education or health reform, also identified by youth stakeholders as key areas to be addressed for sustainable peacebuilding.

Chapter 1
Introduction and Background

Understanding Youth as Agents of Peace

On December 9, 2015, the UNSC adopted a historic resolution on youth, peace, and security. Resolution 2250 urges young men and women's greater representation in the prevention and resolution of conflict. Specifically, it "urges Member States to consider ways to increase inclusive representation of youth in decision making at all levels in local, national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflict… and, as appropriate, to consider establishing integrated mechanisms for meaningful participation of youth in peace processes and dispute-resolution."[1]

This resolution advocates for a holistic approach to peacebuilding, and builds on multiple resolutions that define peacebuilding as far more than reducing violence. It first builds on the 1992 UN document *An Agenda for Peace*, which defines peacebuilding as "action to solidify peace and avoid relapse into conflict."[2] Subsequently, the 2000 Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations defined peacebuilding as "activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war."[3] A broader concept was devised in 2007 by the UN Secretary-General's Policy Committee to inform UN practice (see box 1).[4] Notably, the concept of peacebuilding described in the recently issued, jointly published UN–World Bank report, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*, includes a recommendation to adopt a people-centered approach to preventing violence (see box 2).[5] This is consistent with the viewpoints of this study's respondents with respect to concepts of peace and peacebuilding, and with respect to recommendations for action by individuals, communities, the government, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

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1   UNSC 2015.
2   Bhoutros-Ghali 1992.
3   UN 2000.
4   UN 2007.
5   UN and World Bank 2018.

BOX 1: DEFINING PEACEBUILDING

Peacebuilding involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development. Peacebuilding strategies must be coherent and tailored to specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized, sequenced, and therefore relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives.

Source: United Nations, Decision of the UN Secretary-General's Policy Committee 2007.

Although recent reports on youth and development often focus on youth involvement in and motivations for violence, peaceful engagement among youth is more rarely a subject of analysis.[6] Indeed, young people are usually described in binary terms, as either perpetrators or victims of violence. Youth—particularly young men—are perceived as a threat to global security and stability. Because of this, the motivation to incorporate youth in issues of peace and security is born primarily out of a perception that they pose a potential security threat, rather than out of a desire to work with them as equal partners.[7] This perspective neither considers findings of research in the field nor contributes to evidence-based peacebuilding. In addition, working with young people because of an assumption that they are violent results in strategies and projects that are inherently flawed. Researchers who have addressed youth engagement in the prevention and resolution of conflict have found that engaging youth has positive impacts on peacebuilding, regardless of whether the engagement was generated by youth themselves or was the result of projects that aim to involve young people in peacebuilding. Moreover, given that today's global population is exceptionally young— one-quarter of the world's population is between the ages of 10 and 24,[8] while the estimated population of those under the age of 25 in Somalia is 60 percent[9]—and that only a minority of young people turn to violence in any context, researchers need to transform their focus on violence to understand young people as key stakeholders and actors in peacebuilding.

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6   For other recent studies that focus on peaceful behavior among youth, see Ankomah 2014 and Ensor 2013.

7   UN Youth n.d., 1.

8   Population Reference Bureau 2013.

9   UNDP n.d.

BOX 2: ADOPTING A PEOPLE-CENTERED APPROACH TO PEACEBUILDING

A people-centered approach should include mainstreaming citizen engagement in development programs and local conflict resolution to empower underrepresented groups such as women and youth. Service delivery systems should seek to make people partners in the design and delivery of public services through mainstreaming participatory and consultative elements for all planning and programming in areas at risk of violent conflict.

Source: UN and World Bank 2018.

The need to understand youth as agents of peace is critical in countries facing long-term fragility, conflict, and violence, such as Somalia. At the same time, Somalia has experienced multiple efforts to build peace and stability, all of which have had mixed results. Somalis are therefore well versed in peacebuilding approaches, have experience-based opinions on what has (and has not) worked, and are eager to discuss new ways to move the country forward. There have been cultural and traditional challenges to peacebuilding generally and to the participation of youth and young women in particular, as the findings of this study indicate; these include, for example, the prominence of male elders and the role of clans. However, Somali youth are particularly eager to discuss peacebuilding, as they see it as essential to their future well-being and the well-being of generations to come.

This report focuses on understanding youth perspectives on peacebuilding in Somalia, as well as how and why youth would like to build peace at local and national levels. The report was developed in close collaboration with UN partners, including the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, UN HABITAT, and the UN Youth Advisor in Somalia (Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia), and interested World Bank Country Management Units. It is the first country level, analytic effort jointly developed by the World Bank and a UN agency that is directly linked to Resolutions 2250. More broadly, it builds on the jointly published UN–World Bank flagship report, *Pathways for Peace*;[10] the *2011 World Development Report on Conflict, Security and Development*,[11] and the *World Development Report 2015: Mind, Society, and Behavior*.[12]

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10   UN and World Bank 2018.

11   World Bank 2011.

12   World Bank 2015.

Assumptions, Scope, and Methodology

The study builds on two frameworks of youth development. First, it considers the Youth Inclusion Framework,[13] which posits that economic, cultural, social, and political factors act independently and in complex, synergistic ways to either facilitate or impede young individuals' positive engagement with their society. Second, it takes into account the Positive Youth Development Framework, which is based on the idea that young people need four simultaneous forms of support to succeed: (1) support for basic developmental needs; (2) protection (preventing and responding to violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect); (3) preparation (building youth competencies and skills to become informed, healthy, and productive citizens); and (4) engagement (creating channels for dialogue and participation).[14]

Six broad questions were addressed through the study: (1) How do young people define peace and peacebuilding? (2) What are the internal and external variables and incentives that impact youths' engagement in peacebuilding in their respective communities and at the national level? (3) How and in what ways do these variables impact youths' engagement in their respective societies? (4) What are the policies, institutions, and programs that enhance the role of youth as agents of peace? (5) What challenges prevent them from actively engaging in peace? and (6) How would youth like to be engaged in peacebuilding, as they define it?

The study is broadly based on three key assumptions:

1. **In order to develop a framework for youth engagement in peacebuilding, it is vital that youth be directly involved in defining—and therefore understanding —peace and peacebuilding.** Eliciting youth definitions of these concepts and terms was an important aspect of the study, as was clarifying their reasons for engagement and their perceptions of peacebuilding programs' utility. Chapter 2 summarizes young people's definitions of peace and peacebuilding, providing a backdrop to the rest of the analysis.

2. **Peace is not the opposite of violence, and is defined contextually.** Much like conflict, peace is defined differently depending on an individual's culture, experiences, perceptions, and priorities. Peace is usually defined in positive terms, but its specific description is based on a society's values and history. Similar to conflict engagement, those who participate in peacebuilding may not see their actions as efforts to build peace, and those who consciously participate in what others label as peacebuilding may do so out of interests not related to eliminating the effects of violence or war. Peacebuilding can in fact include activities across a wide range of sectors, including education, employment, health, and governance.

3. **Youth may decide to engage in peacebuilding or violence for the same reasons.** These reasons include: (1) a desire to change one's personal life; (2) a desire to change what is wrong in society; (3) a desire to be respected or regarded as important, or to simply "belong;" and (4) an interest in economic betterment—through money and/or networks.

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13   World Bank 2014.
14   French, Bhattacharya, and Olenik 2014; USAID 2017.

Although there are broadly accepted age categories, youth is not defined solely by age. Indeed, the concept of "youth" is both contextually and culturally fluid and relatively consistent across international agencies that run policies and programs aimed at this population. Becoming an "adult" can happen at different ages and be based on different factors for different individuals. This is an important, if overlooked, idea: The nuances inherent in individual and group differences in youth transition and elder/adult roles in communities— and the vital relationships between youth and adults/elders—can point toward effective engagement across an individual's lifespan. The UN defines "youth" as persons between the ages of 15 and 24, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States. The definition can be based on, for instance, that offered in the African Youth Charter, where "youth" means "every person between the ages of 15 and 35 years."[15] In Somalia, in accordance with the African Union's definition, "youth" is most commonly defined as those between 15 and 35 years old.

Two types of qualitative data collection methods were used for this study: individual qualitative interviews and focus groups. Trained Somali researchers carried out individual interviews with youth, community leaders, and parents. The interview guides were modular in form; that is, a set of questions was asked of each category of respondent (youth, parents, and community leaders), along with additional specific questions relevant for each category. The 15–20 primarily open-ended questions (depending on the respondent category) address the individual's role in peacebuilding; their perception of the role of civil society generally, and youth in particular, in peacebuilding; their perception of support from communities and the government sector; and their recommendations for actions that could facilitate peacebuilding. The focus groups, which were held for youth participants only, featured five broad questions related to peacebuilding and youth; these were also facilitated by trained Somali researchers. The qualitative data were analyzed using the Glaser-Strauss editing style.

Two qualitative sampling design methods were used for this study: purposive and snowball. The first method—purposive sampling—involved identifying specific categories of study participants; in this case, they are male and female youth aged 15–29; parents of youth involved in the study; and community leaders involved in youth programs (school teachers, clinicians, local politicians, religious leaders, and other change agents). Snowball sampling procedures were also used to identify respondents. Through this method, the interviewer asked study respondents to recommend that other people who met the selection criteria participate in the study. The respondent provided the interviewer's contact information to others s/he believed would be interested in the study so potential participants could contact the interviewer. To protect participants' confidentiality, at no point did the interviewer ask for the names or contact information of potential participants. A youth organization in Mogadishu trained three enumerators. Participants agreed to be interviewed by the enumerators individually, and youth also participated in focus group discussions (FGDs). Overall, 98 people participated in the study in September and October 2016.

Data collection was carried out in Mogadishu and Afgoye in southern Somalia, as this region continues to experience greater violence and has had a different experience with governance than Somaliland and Puntland. Mogadishu was selected because it is the country's main urban area and includes people who belong to all major clans. Mogadishu

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15   UNESCO 2017.

has a large displaced population, and the city is largely accessible to both civil society and government. Young people there are more likely to have been exposed to peacebuilding efforts and to have had a chance to be engaged. Afgoye, on the other hand, is one of Mogadishu's 17 districts; it is relatively close to the capital and thus accessible for research purposes, but is primarily rural. Communities in Afgoye are considered similar to other rural communities in of security reasons. This was important because Somalia is primarily rural—Afgoye therefore provided a more representative sample. Under the security circumstances that prevailed in Somalia at the time of the study, this selection was the most feasible while also being methodologically sound.
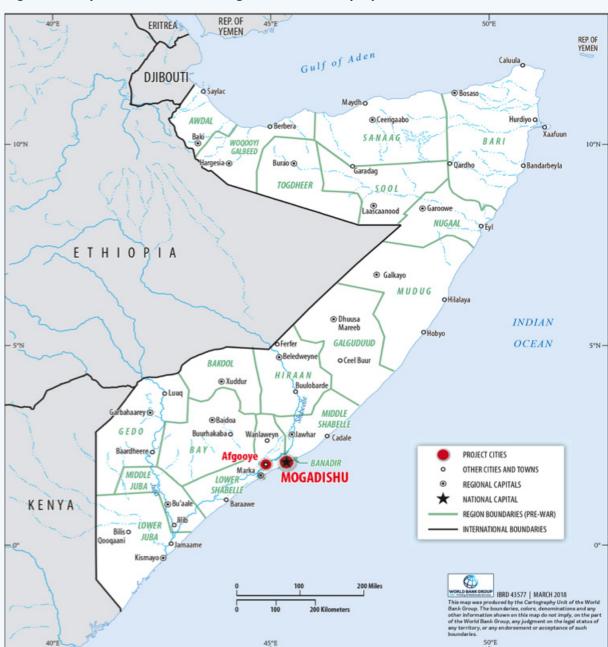
Figure 1 Map of Somalia indicating the location of project

The team engaged young women and men of different socioeconomic status and with different educational profiles and labor market participation. The team sought to ensure, as much as possible, that diverse viewpoints were represented in other categories of respondents. It is important to note that the study included both school-based youth and youth not enrolled in educational institutions (formal or otherwise). This required a more comprehensive approach to identifying and engaging youth, including collaborating with a broad range of public and private sector entities involved with youth and the broad issues of peacebuilding and violence prevention. Sample recruitment methods also aimed to ensure the inclusion of disabled and other populations that may be more difficult to engage. Youth participants were identified through key national and local youth organizations; recreation centers in which youth are engaged; schools and universities, including religious schools; workplaces that employ youth; and informal neighborhood gatherings.

Forty-seven young women and men participated in the study; 24 in Afgoye and 23 in Mogadishu. There were 24 male participants and 23 female participants who ranged in age from 18 to 30, with a mean age of 24 in Mogadishu and 23 in Afgoye. Fourteen of the Mogadishu youth had graduated from university, seven from high school, and two from primary school. Seven of the Afgoye youth had graduated from university, thirteen from high school, three from a madrassa (a religious school based on Koranic teachings), and one did not respond to this question. There was minimal gender difference in terms of who had completed university: a total of 10 female participants did so, compared to 11 male participants. None of the youth respondents in Mogadishu was working; three in Afgoye were working, and one reported being a volunteer.

All of the parents interviewed in both Mogadishu and Afgoye were female; the average age of the parents in Mogadishu was 41 and in Afgoye, 37. Seven of the parents in Mogadishu had graduated from high school, 4 from a madrassa, and 1 from a technical school. None of the parents was a university graduate. In contrast, in Afgoye, 1 parent had graduated from high school, 1 from a middle school, 2 from a primary school, 1 from a madrassa, and 6 reported no formal education. Parents in Mogadishu had an average of 5.2 children, and participants ranged from having 1 child to having 10. In Afgoye, the average was 3.4, with a range of 1 to 8. Eight of the parents in Mogadishu were working at the time of the study; none of the parents in Afgoye was working.[16]

Most of the participants who represented community organizations were men (10 of the 12 in Mogadishu and 9 of the 12 in Afgoye). Most had completed an undergraduate degree: 7 of the 12 in Mogadishu had done so, with 5 completing high school. In Afgoye, 7 had completed an undergraduate degree, 4 had completed high school, and 1 had a degree from an institute. The average age was 41 in Mogadishu, with a range of 24 to 55. In Afgoye, community organization representatives were younger: the average age was 33, with a range of 28 to 40.

The study had several implementation challenges. First, as in any country with a variable security situation and severe restrictions on travel, it was difficult to find researchers who were both familiar with research methods and willing and able to travel to Mogadishu and

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16   It is possible that respondents did not state that they were working if their primary occupation was agricultural or another form of informal, unskilled work.

Afgoye. Second, Afgoye's security situation was particularly variable during the course of data collection, which restricted teams' access. In fact, the security situation in Afgoye deteriorated significantly after data were collected. Third, delays caused by the security situation resulted in significant variability in the timing of the data collection. Because many of these factors affect most research carried out in Somalia, the data collected in this very dynamic and precarious situation is very valuable.

Conflict and Peacebuilding in Somalia— A Short Background[17]

Somalia faces a broad range of development challenges, many of which are closely linked with the country's history of conflict and peacebuilding efforts. At its origins, Somalia was made up of pastoralist and agro-pastoralist groups operating under uncodified customary law and informal institutions. These groups were divided by lineage (clan) or geography and often lacked formal leadership structures, solving problems on an as-needed basis instead. Within these identity groups are distinctions between those who are considered noble and common, and these differences continue to influence access to resources, political representation, and marriage opportunities. Relations between the numerous and fragmented groups are organized by traditional law, often involving collective compensation and consensus.[18]

Somalia's system of governance has been in flux for many decades. Until colonial times, the main system of governance involved informal groups and clans following traditional law. Colonial rule under Great Britain and Italy introduced two somewhat distinct European-based systems of government, generating a situation in which colonial and traditional systems operated in parallel. Somalia's first political party, the Somali Youth Club (SYC), later named the Somali Youth League (SYL), was founded in 1943. It played a key role in Somali independence and in the early days of the country's democratic governance.[19] Once the Somali Republic was formed in 1960, Somalis were also divided by borders, as they lived not only within the Republic but in what today are Djibouti, Somaliland, Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia.

Recent conflict in Somalia stems from events that took place during the Cold War. The country's strategic location led to external influences, which ultimately lead to the collapse of Siad Barre's government in 1991, triggered violence between clans, and resulted in the emergence of warlords. The 1991 civil war resulted in 25,000 deaths and generated significant displacement. In some parts of Somalia's south, warfare featured the expulsion of people who belonged to specific clans, which lead to further fractionalization and long-standing grievances. The humanitarian intervention of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) also fueled conflict, as it created further competition over resources. After declaring independence in 1991, the country divided into Somalia and Somaliland, the latter a self-declared independent republic in the north in former British colonial territory. Puntland also became an autonomous regional state in 1998, avoiding much of the violence

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17 This section is based on a review of existing published and unpublished (e.g., government and CSO) documents. It is intended to provide a context for the findings of the study, which are presented in Chapters 2–5.

18 World Bank 2013.

19 Lewis 1999.

that beset the rest of Somalia.[20]

Since 1991, there have been multiple attempts to establish a functioning government in Somalia. The Transitional Federal Government (TFG) has been important in the country's history; it formed in 2004 and governed from Kenya until 2006. The TFG tried to give fair representation to the country's clans, but many felt they were under-represented.[21] The group faced opposition from warlords who controlled part of the country, as well as from the Islamic Courts Union (ICU),[22] initiated in the 1990s and comprised of the many local tribunals set up by Islamists.[23] In fact, the Islamic Courts started to develop a level of popular legitimacy, and by 2006, various armed groups were using their principle of law and order.[24] However, a recent assessment indicates that "a real or perceived lack of judicial independence, including a clan-based appointment process, limits the ability of those who do not fall under the protection of a dominant clan and who are from vulnerable or marginalized groups (such as women or internally displaced persons) to access an impartial tribunal within the formal court structure."[25]

In 2006, the ICU was able to remove warlords and gain control over the southern parts of the country, including Mogadishu. However, Ethiopian forces, in collaboration with the TFG, ousted the ICU from the capital in late 2006, causing the ICU to fragment. These events strengthened the ICU's militant wing, Al-Shabaab.[26]

Violent extremism in Somalia has been influenced by several factors. According to some researchers, extremism in Somalia is related to the shift that began in the 1960s in the type of Islam primarily practiced in the country; the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and other reformist schools of Salafism became more prevalent. Other factors included the conflict in Afghanistan. Indeed, it is particularly important to note that some of the key founders of Al-Shabaab were Somalis who fought in Afghanistan.[27]

Al-Shabaab, which means "the youth" in Arabic, is a particularly relevant player in conflict in Somalia. The group is currently the largest one aiming to oust the Somali government and has been responsible for much of the violence in the country. Al-Shabaab aims to establish a society based on a rigid interpretation of Sharia law.[28] The group's origins are unclear, but it became prominent as the ICU's military wing, conducting attacks that drew criticism from local and international actors, as well as some of the ICU leadership. The group continued to be part of the ICU until the ICU disbanded after being driven out of Mogadishu by UN-backed Ethiopian troops in 2006. Much of Al-Shabaab's strength was then derived from its opposition to foreign troops in Somalia.[29] Starting in 2007, Al-Shabaab more clearly linked itself with the broader jihadist movement, reportedly forming relations with Al Qaeda, aligning itself with

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20   Gomsrud and Gaas 2010.
21   Hanson and Kaplan 2008.
22   Gomsrud and Gaas 2010.
23   Pham 2016.
24   Barnes and Hassan 2007.
25   Zacchia, Harborne, and Sims 2017.
26   Gomsrud and Gaas 2010.
27   Marc, Verjee, and Mogaka 2015.
28   Stanford University 2016.
29   Stanford University 2016.

that group both in ideology and in tactics. The group also started to attract foreign fighters.[30] As of the beginning of 2017, the group had lost territory, high ranking commanders had been killed—some in drone strikes—and many members had defected.[31]

The TFG gave way to a new government in 2012. This was Somalia's first democratically elected government in over 20 years, and it led the international community to agree to the Somali Compact with the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS). The 2013 Law for the Administration of Districts and Regions in Somalia, together with the New Deal, Somali Compact, and Vision 2016, paved the way for the development of the Wadajir National Framework, which outlines a process to create permanent and legitimate administrations at district and regional levels and reestablish district councils and administrations in southern and central Somalia. The four pillars of the Wadajir National Framework—Social Reconciliation, Peace Dividends, Civic Dialogue, and Local Governance—were expected to allow for broader reach and engagement of communities in stabilization and state-building processes. This framework and related agreements have been a source of contention among Somalis, some of whom believe that they overly reflect outsiders' views regarding the culture and context of Somalia.

In February 2017, Somalia once again selected its leaders through a modified democratic process. The 2016 electoral process was not a universal suffrage election, as conditions were not yet in place for a one-person, one-vote ballot. Instead, a system of indirect elections took place to select the 275 members of Parliament. In particular, 275 electoral colleges, each consisting of 51 delegates selected by the 135 Traditional Elders, elected the 275 members of the House of the People of the Federal Parliament of Somalia. A total of 14,025 delegates were selected to decide who would be their representatives in the House of the People.

The economic situation in Somalia has deteriorated significantly since the beginning of the drought in 2016. More than half of the population needs humanitarian assistance and severe deprivations exist in education, water and sanitation, and basic healthcare services.[32] For example, in 2018 6.2 million Somalis (50 percent of the total population) faced food insecurity, and over 4.4 million were expected to require emergency water and sanitation. Through 2017, 80,000 children stopped attending school, and 121,00 were at risk of dropping out of school.[33] The situation—a classic intersection of man-made and natural disaster—would not have come to pass had the population not exhausted their savings and coping mechanisms during times of conflict; aid could be more easily delivered were it not for security constraints.[34] This impact on the population has, in turn, led to increased tensions and conflict over access to natural resources generally and land and water in particular. Addressing issues of conflict and peacebuilding are therefore more important now than ever.

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30   Stanford University 2016.
31   UNSC 2016a.
32   FGS 2018.
33   FGS 2018, p. 40.
34   ICG 2017.

Youth and Conflict in Somalia

Somalia's population is even younger than that of the African continent overall. More than 70 percent of Somalia's population is under the age of 30,[35] and nearly two-thirds (62.9 percent) is estimated to be under the age of 24. According to the 2014 United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) population estimation survey, there were 4.6 million adolescents and youth 15–35 years of age who together comprised 38 percent of the Somali population; 15 percent were between 10 and 14 years old.[36]

The economic conditions in Somalia impede youth development. In 2016, 50 percent of Somalis lived in poverty, with wide regional and urban/rural variations: 57 percent of those living in Mogadishu lived in poverty, compared with 26 percent of those in urban areas in the North East.[37] In the same year, nearly half (46 percent) of Somali youth ages 15–24 lived in households below the poverty line, and nearly one in three youth lived in households with conditions of extreme poverty. There are regional variations, with the northeast rural areas are having the lowest prevalence of youth poverty (less than 20 percent) and northwest rural areas the highest (just over 60 percent). The prevalence of poverty among youth in Mogadishu and Afgoye is just over 40 percent.[38] More than half (54 percent) of Somali youth live with at least two of the multi-dimensional measures of poverty: inadequate education, access to water, poor sanitation, and/or access to information, in addition to consumption deprivation.[39]

Prior studies indicate that youth believe that lack of access to and quality of basic services— education, health, and social services—represent a serious impediment to their personal advancement, and to peace. For example, the 2016 National Strategy and Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism reported that structural conditions related to basic services contribute to violent extremism. Importantly, several of the 17 SDGs are essential elements to peacebuilding; these include, for example, ending poverty (Goal 1), promoting good health and well-being (Goal 3), ensuring quality education (Goal 4), and promoting peace, justice, and strong institutions (Goal 16).

Somalis lag behind most low-income African countries with respect to access to and quality of basic services. Education is a quintessential example of the paucity of these services. In 2016, just 52.9 percent of Somali children were enrolled in school, compared to 70 percent for low-income African countries overall; just 45 percent of children living in poor households were enrolled in school.[40] This has significant impact: UNFPA estimated that in 2014 less than half (45 percent) of Somali youth aged 15–35 could read and write.[41] UNICEF estimates that nationwide, only 30 percent of children are in school, out of which 40 percent are girls.[42] The education gap is not only split by gender, but also by geography. While 40 percent of the population in north Somalia has access to basic education, only 22 percent

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35   ICG 2017, p. 30.
36   UNFPA 2016.
37   Pape 2017, p. ix.
38   Pape 2017, p. 49.
39   World Bank, 2017, p. 54
40   World Bank, 2017 p. 15
41   UNFPA 2016.
42   UNICEF n.d.

of the population in central and south Somalia has such access.[43] The geographical gap also exists between rural and urban environments; the primary school net attendance ratio rests at 9.2 percent in rural Somalia and 30.1 percent in urban Somalia.[44] Additionally, UNICEF's 2011 MICS4 found that "significant numbers of secondary-age children (14–17 years old) are attending primary school."[45] Educational opportunities in Somalia are limited and the youth illiteracy rate is one of the highest in the world, at 62.2 percent.[46] Nearly half (45 percent) of Somali youth do not attend school, with health issues being the first cause of absenteeism for youth; absent teachers are the second most common reason for lack of attendance.[47] In fact, UNICEF and other donors have identified poor infrastructure—including scarcity of safe drinking water and sanitation facilities—as critical issues.[48] Just 58 percent of Somalis have access to improved water sources and 10 percent have access to improved sanitation. The impact of this poor infrastructure on youth and adolescents is severe, affecting health, development, and educational attainment. [49]

Conflict and insecurity have resulted in limited opportunities for Somalis and youth in particular. Youth unemployment stands at 75 percent.[50] This is perceived as contributing to young Somalis' vulnerability to illegal migration, organized crime, and/or violent extremism.[51] The UN–Somali federal government's report on their joint program on youth employment found that "youth employment is without question one of the critical challenges facing Somalia on its path to stability and economic recovery."[52] It also presented available data— for example, from the International Labour Organization (ILO)—that indicate that Somalia has one of the highest rates of joblessness in the world, in particular among youth. The ILO's labor force survey estimates the youth unemployment rate at 22 percent for selected districts in southern Somalia.[53] However, for most African countries, including Somalia, measures of unemployed youth are less relevant than measures of employed youth. Among the poor, few can afford to be unemployed, as there is typically no social protection for unemployed persons. Focusing on the unemployment rate thus fails to take into account this reality. As a result, vulnerable employment and working poverty are widespread; the ILO estimates underemployment to be at 25 percent, without taking into consideration the widespread phenomena of "discouraged

Residents of Mogadishu city attend celebrations to mark the Somalia National Youth Day at Banadir stadium in Mogadishu, Somalia on May 15, 2017. The day marks the founding of the Somali Youth League (SYL), which was Somalia's first political party founded in 1943 and spearheaded the struggle for independence. UNSOM Photo /Omar Abdisalan

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43   UNDP 2010, p. 7.
44   UNICEF 2013.
45   UNICEF n.d.
46   Index Mundi 2015; Hiiraan Online 2013.
47   World Bank, 2017, p. 55.
48   World Bank, 2017, p. 55.
49   World Bank, 2017, p. ix.
50   ILO 2017.
51   Mercy Corps 2015.
52   FGS and JPYE 2015.
53   ILO 2017.

workers"—predominantly young people who are available and willing to work but have given up searching for jobs.

Somali youth who perceive limited opportunities for themselves make life choices that have a significant impact on them, their family, and their community. Findings from the Rift Valley Institute's study on the impact of war on Somali men pointed out that youth respondents could not see easy solutions to their situation other than by acquiring wealth, legally or illegally, or to leave the country (*tahriib*), or even to join al-Shabaab (for which they would receive a salary).[54]

Moreover, real or perceived discrimination in access to economic and educational opportunities, especially among youth, has been cited as a potential driver of conflict.[55] Somalia has deep-seated inequities with respect to access to educational opportunities. The children of the political and economic elite study abroad in foreign schools and universities and return as a "diaspora" that has easier access to NGO and government jobs, while most of the average young people have minimal, if any, access to basic education, which is of poor quality.[56] Many young people report that they are resigned to unemployment. They also report unjust treatment by employers. The most marginalized youth (minority clans,[57] politically unconnected youth, or young women) describe being routinely cheated by employers who tend to underpay them and/or treat them poorly, with no avenue to appeal.[58]

The choice to take up arms is based on a number of factors. These include unemployment, fear of victimization, and lack of education.[59] In one study, 27 percent of former Al-Shabaab members indicated that their decision to join was based on economic factors.[60] These benefits were not necessarily realized, however. For example, defectors from Baidoa noted in interviews that even if they had been drawn to Al-Shabaab to seek a better livelihood for them and their families, none found economic freedom from joining the group.[61] For example, one former combatant noted that his own pay was modest: $20 or $30 every few months during his three-year stint with the armed group, which was never enough to provide for his four children and wife. "On a personal level, there was nothing to gain," he recalls. "I thought Al-Shabaab were real about Islam's call for justice for all. But it was based on a big lie. The commanders got it all."[62]

Perceptions of corruption among public officials, as well as police harassment, cause young people to seek justice—or basic livelihoods—through other means. A recent study by Mercy Corps indicates that early experiences with violence—being roughed up by state security

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54   Gardner and El-Bushra 2017.

55   Mercy Corps 2015.

56   Mohamud 2014.

57   Minority group clans included the Bantu (the largest minority group), Benadiri, Rer Hamar, Brawanese, Swahili, Tumal, Yibir, Yaxar, Madhiban, Hawrarsame, Muse Dheryo, Faqayaqub, and Gabooye. Custom restricts intermarriage between minority groups and mainstream clans. Minority groups often lack armed militias and continue to be disproportionately subjected to killings, torture, rape, kidnapping for ransom, and looting of land and property, with impunity by faction militias and majority clan members. Many minority communities continue to live in deep poverty and suffer from numerous forms of discrimination and exclusion.

58   US Department of State 2014.

59   Federal Republic of Somalia 2016.

60   Botha and Abdile 2014.

61   Interviews with disengaged combatants, Baidoa Reintegration Camp, July 2015.

62   IRIN News 2014.

forces, for example—are associated with pushing young people into violent groups.[63] A young Somali woman who participated in the Mercy Corps study stated, "Often you will hear people say joblessness is the biggest problem for the youth…and unemployment is a major problem, but underneath that is hopelessness and a belief that there is no fairness. Young people get angry and frustrated and look for something to do."[64] Young men in Mogadishu are routinely picked up by police and jailed simply for being young or for possibly being an Al-Shabaab sympathizer, with or without justification other than age.[65] The practice of *asi walid*, a custom whereby parents place their children in boarding schools, other institutions, and sometimes prison for disciplinary purposes and without any legal procedure, continues throughout the country. There are reports of children who have been in detention for years.[66]

Government failures and perceptions of exclusion are considered to be drivers of youth violent extremism in Somalia. Somalia is the lowest ranked country with respect to an international assessment of public perceptions of corruption.[67] Although membership and participation in Al-Shabaab has diminished, there remain few consistent, transparent, and accessible opportunities for youth to be included in governance and decision making. This lack of participation continues to resonate among Somali youth, who feel that they have been almost entirely excluded from political processes and decision making.[68]

Violent extremists, including Al-Shabaab, have become popular among some youth. Al-Shabaab's philosophy of anti-clannism and alternative justice make it especially popular: when a youth worker in central Somalia was asked about the underlying appeal of Al-Shabaab, she commented, "Al-Shabaab became powerful here because they were able to tap into people's frustrations." She rejected the idea that the group could be simply rooted out by bullets and drones. "Al-Shabaab is just a symptom of larger problems."[69]

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) multi-country study of violent extremism had inconsistent findings with respect to the influence of religion on whether people engage with violent extremism. For example, although 51 percent of respondents across the three countries selected religion as a reason for joining extremist groups, self-reported higher-than-average years of religious schooling appears to have been a source of resilience. The study concludes that fostering greater understanding of religion—through methods that enable students to question and engage critically with teachings—is a key resource for preventing violent extremism.[70]

The ongoing conflict has had a particularly severe impact on young Somali women, who face gender-based violence (GBV) unrelated to the conflict and who face even greater challenges than young men regarding their engagement in governance, peacebuilding efforts, and reconciliation processes. This is consistent with general findings regarding gender and conflict. According to the *Pathways for Peace* report, "Cross-country studies

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63   Mercy Corps 2015.
64   Mercy Corps 2015.
65   US Department of State 2015.
66   US Department of State 2014.
67   Transparency International 2012.
68   Chatham House 2012.
69   Mercy Corps 2015.
70   UNDP 2017.

find evidence that high levels of gender inequality and gender-based violence in a society are associated with increased vulnerability to civil war and interstate war and the use of more severe forms of violence in conflict…[in fact] changes in women's status or vulnerability, such as an increase in domestic violence or a reduction in girls' school attendance, often are viewed as early warnings of social and political insecurity."[71] In contrast, countries in which there is less GBV and the factors that contribute to it—for example, those with lower levels of violence against women, labor market participation, and income disparities—are less likely to experience interstate conflict.[72]

In Somalia, GBV is prevalent and women are subjected to violence from the domestic sphere to the community level. In 2016 alone, there were over 7,200 reported cases of GBV.[73] Given the fact that GBV is consistently underreported globally, and particularly in areas of conflict, this number likely represents a small proportion of GBV in Somalia. Numerous factors feed into the acceptability of GBV, including those that reflect social norms, the legacy of conflict and breakdown of protective norms, and other challenges, such as recurring climatic shocks that increase vulnerability and deficiencies in the legal framework. Young women are often removed from education early to partake in domestic duties. This results in lower levels of literacy; only a quarter of women (24 percent) in Somalia aged 15–24 are literate.[74] Young women also have lower digital literacy. This hinders their access to information and limits their knowledge of decision-making platforms. The customary practice of marrying early further limits women's economic opportunities and participation in decision making; 45 percent of Somali women are married before the age of 18,[75] which means they always have a male figure as the main household decision maker—first their father and then their husband. Somali women have on average six children over their lifetime, which significantly increases their domestic care duties. Safety concerns—particularly in urban public spaces and public transport—restrict the mobility of girls and women. The lack of rule of law and effective, equitable governance fosters a system of impunity with respect to GBV, further contributing to its prevalence.

Peacebuilding Approaches in Somalia

Local peace processes illustrate the rich traditions of mediation, reconciliation, and consensus building that exist in Somali society. Consensus decision making is a key principle of Somali peace making. As the parties in conflict have the power to reject any settlement they do not favor, only decisions reached by consensus carry real authority. Consequently, Somali-led peacebuilding processes commonly feature an incremental approach. Local Somali-led processes are also consensus-based, functional, and pragmatic, focusing on threat reduction as a means to manage and decrease conflict.

The Somali government is playing an increasing role in peacebuilding, particularly through its national disengagement program that targets defectors from Al-Shabaab. Led by Somalia's

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71   World Bank 2018.
72   Hudson et al. 2012.
73   Nwogu 2017.
74   UNICEF Somalia n.d.
75   UNICEF Somalia n.d.

federal government, this program has several stakeholders. In October 2011, the Somali government adopted the National Security and Stabilization Plan 2011–2014. Among its key recommendations was to develop initiatives that address the needs of disengaged fighters. In April 2013, the federal government published a road map for a national program on how to handle disengaging combatants and at-risk youth in Somalia, and created a national disengagement framework with input from various stakeholders. The framework provides for the establishment of reception centers under both African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and Somali forces, and transition centers at both national and local levels. The government also has a draft National Strategy and Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism[76] that builds on previous strategies and focuses on youth. The National Development Plan (2017–2019), promulgated in December 2016, includes as one of its 10 goals "increased employment opportunities and decent work particularly for the youth" as one way to address a structural driver of youth engagement in violent conflict.[77]

A number of stakeholders have contributed to the government's peacebuilding efforts, and in different ways. For example, the Norwegian government provided financial assistance for handling disengaged combatants; the UN political office for Somalia and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) devised the standard operating procedures for reintegrating ex-combatants in Somalia;[78] and the German government is currently funding the Baidoa Reintegration Center.[79]

Activities to Engage Somali Youth in Peacebuilding

Youth have been engaged in peacebuilding in Somalia since the early days of independence— through local organizations, informal groups, houses of worship (e.g., mosques) and individual initiatives. In recent years, Somali youth have also become leaders in developing tools for social change and in organizing Somali youth for peacebuilding. Three Somali peacebuilding initiatives that engage youth are described below:

1. **Pact's PEACE II cross-border programming.** Pact's PEACE II program aimed to encourage young people to get involved in peacebuilding-related leadership and decision making. By helping youth acquire conflict transformation skills and transformative leadership qualities, PEACE II intended to improve their self-esteem and show their elders that they possess leadership qualities. In turn, this would help youth earn a place in decision making on matters related to peaceful coexistence between cross-border communities.

2. **Peace Committees are examples of traditional peacebuilding structures in Somalia**. They are now being set up based on the Wadajir National Framework for Local Governance, housed at the Ministry of Interior and Federal Affairs (MoIFA). District Peace Committees (DPCs) usually have between 15 and 21 community members who are selected by a larger group based on a two- to three-day consultative workshop. The group has representatives from various sectors, including youth and women leaders, private sector

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76   Federal Republic of Somalia 2016.

77   FGS 2016.

78   IOM Somalia 2016.

79   UNSOM 2016.

participants, religious leaders, elders, internally displaced persons (IDPs), local CSOs, and clans. The main purpose of the DPCs is to serve as a conduit between the local governance bodies (transitional, interim, and permanent administrations); they are the group that the government would want international donors and NGOs to work through, to avoid having to set up new groups for each community project. The DPC is hybrid institution that brings together traditional and formal mechanisms for conflict resolution.

3. **Quraca Nabadda ("Tree of Peace") National Movement.** The Quraca Nabadda is now a key pillar of the Wadajir National Framework for Local Governance, and intends to form district councils in all of Somalia. Youth are key participants in Quraca Nabadda leadership; they serve as community volunteers and group participants. The social cohesion program is regarded as a catalyst for social change and transformation.

Participants attend the Somali National Youth Conference held in Mogadishu on December 17, 2017. UNSOM Photo / Ilyas Ahmed

Chapter 2
Defining Peace

A just and economically viable society without violence

A peaceful society means that we have a stable community. It would include having a just society, one that is economically viable and one that does not have violence as the mode of creating security. (#1FY, Mogadishu)

This chapter focuses on describing respondents' definition of peace. It provides information essential to understanding the goals and objectives of respondents' peacebuilding priorities and activities.[80] Local definitions help to clarify local priorities and values, which in turn can facilitate the design of better and more sustainable peacebuilding activities and strategies.

A Somali Definition of Peace

AN ABSENCE OF VIOLENCE FOR ALL

A peaceful society is characterized by security and stability, is not at war within, and is not violent. In a peaceful society, there is friendliness among neighbors and no fear of stepping outside the house. Intercommunity harmony is guaranteed and violence is rejected as a social norm. (#4FY, Mogadishu)

According to the majority of respondents, peace is largely defined by its opposite—the absence of violence (and crime). Respondents across all categories described a peaceful society as one with norms that promote peace, and where people live in harmony. One young woman stated, "A peaceful society is a secure community. It is one where you do not have to be afraid to go outside your house. It is one that does not have bombings on a regular basis…where neighbors talk to one and other." (#6FY, Mogadishu) Similarly, another young woman described it as a place where people "do not use the gun to create a false sense of stability." (#3FY, Mogadishu)

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80 A note about parents and community leaders: This chapter has focused on young people's definitions of peace. However, the definitions used by community leaders (sometimes themselves youth) and the parents of youth did not significantly differ from those of youth.

Respondents describe a peaceful society as one that is free from extremism. According to a female youth in Afgoye, a peaceful society is one "that does not fear extremists or war lords." (#8FY, Afgoye) A young man in Mogadishu said in a peaceful society, "groups like Al-Shabaab do not find a safe space to thrive," (#9MY, Mogadishu) and some young people emphasized that in such a society, extremists would be unable to recruit.

According to respondents, a peaceful society does not have inter-clan conflicts. A young man from Mogadishu stated, "A peaceful society is one where people trust each other. Clannism is not the way of organizing everything." (#5MY, Mogadishu) A young woman agreed, stating that "a peaceful society is a united community that does not have clan differences. [It is] a place where the Somali national identity is strong." (#5FY, Mogadishu)

It is also important for a peaceful society to provide security for minorities and those who disagree with majorities or power-holders. As a young man from Afgoye said, a peaceful community is "a secure community [where people] can speak freely if there are issues within the community that individuals do not agree with. People in the community are not afraid to speak out and do not fear for their lives." (#6MY, Afgoye) According to another young man, a peaceful community is one where "people can live together even after terrible violence." (#2MY, Afgoye) A young woman agreed, "It is a safe place and is not a place where you will be beaten up because you are from the wrong clan." (#4FY, Afgoye)

GOVERNANCE, JUSTICE, AND THE RULE OF LAW

> *A peaceful society is a secure society that has a strong regard for the rule of law. It is one that has good leadership. It is one that is just and not one that arrests people without reason. (#1MY, Mogadishu)*

A lack of violence is not sufficient for a peaceful society; respondents consistently mentioned good governance, justice, and the rule of law as being necessary preconditions for peace. In fact, a third of female youth respondents from Afgoye and half of male youth respondents from Mogadishu stated that a peaceful society is one that has rule of law, justice, and good governance.[81]

Governance, according to respondents, is the foundation of peace. As a senior government official in the local administration emphasized:

> *Peace is most important. We need that to start. But it must be a real peace, not an artificial one…The artificial ones are ones that look like there is stability but in reality, we are just waiting for the big one that will blow everything up, maybe literally. We need to support true social cohesion and reestablishing peace as a legitimate foundation… if we continue to just pretend that the violence has not happened we will only build the house on the sand, not on a strong foundation. (#1CM, Mogadishu)*

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81   Interestingly, female youth in Afgoye and male youth in Mogadishu were far more likely to mention the importance of governance, justice, and the rule of law. Male youth in Afgoye were far more likely to mention the importance of services and jobs.

In fact, most parents and community leaders in the study mentioned the importance of good governance as a foundation. Many remember what it means to be a part of a society with good governance, as most of these respondents were young during the first decades of the Somali state. For example, one civil society member said:

> *A prosperous community is one...that has a solid foundation of good governance. I only partially remember good governance in my childhood. But that type of organization and structure brought people the ability to prosper. (#3CM, Afgoye)*

A mother from Afgoye also said:

> *"I dream often of such a society and I witnessed this when I was young before the civil war." Meanwhile a senior government official stressed, "A peaceful society means a community that has peace, security, stability, and most of all governance." A young woman from Afgoye also emphasized the need for good institutions. She said in such a society, "conflicts are prevented and ... their structures...[en]sure this type of action would not happen over and over again." (#5FY, Afgoye)*

Respondents stated that good governance requires participatory decision making and institutions that are strong, inclusive, and unbiased. According to this study, peaceful communities select their own leaders, who are chosen based on their capacity rather than on their wealth or the threat of violence. One civil society respondent said that in his opinion, "the civil war is still going even though we have an elected government—our government really is just the parliament and the president. But most of the leadership of our country [today] are warlords."

Good leadership and a lack of corruption were often mentioned as requirements for peaceful society. A female youth in Afgoye said such a society "is led by honest, trustworthy men." (#2FY, Afgoye) Another youth said, "It is a stable community that has good leadership and a positive self-image." (#11MY, Afgoye)

Some respondents emphasized the importance of local governance. One community leader said, "Without a strong local government service delivery and local support is impossible. And both are required in a peaceful society." A young woman agreed, saying that a peaceful society has "local governance in place that can make sure that there are local services." (#3FY, Afgoye)

There is consensus among the respondents that peacebuilding and justice are intertwined. One parent from Mogadishu noted that she did not feel that she "live[d] in a peaceful society [because Somalia is] unjust today and [is] full of criminals and war crimes." Another parent stated that "a peaceful society has a judicial system. [If we lived in a peaceful society] we would need the rule of law and a government that is not made up of warlords." A young woman stated:

Justice is also the mother of peace. We are talking about justice so much today because I feel that it is very much lacking in our society. Our communities suffer so much from the lack of justice. … In my life, I have never been at peace…violence in my community seems to be standard. (Female, FGD Mogadishu)

In fact, some respondents believe that injustice is at the core of violence in Somalia. As a young woman in Mogadishu stated:

Conflicts and lack of peace were first brought by lack of justice. The civil war was originally started because there was no justice. However, it has continued for the last 26+ years because there is now no governance in the country. In order for the country to have development peace must be present, but we also need justice to achieve the stability for peace structures to become strong enough and resilient to the many issues that are plaguing Somalia. (Female, FGD Mogadishu)

A peaceful society adheres to the rule of law, according to respondents. Many young people said a peaceful society is one that "uses the rule of law to support the uncorrupted laws of the land," (#12FY, Afgoye) or one that "uses the rule of law to rule itself in a fair and just way." (#10MY, Afgoye).

It is particularly important, according to this study, to make sure that justice and the rule of law are administered in a fair and equitable manner. Justice should not be influenced by corruption or powerful groups. As one male youth stated, "The rule of law helps to enforce justice for everyone, not just the rich and the powerful." (#12MY, Afgoye) "A peaceful society is one that uses the rule of law to create a system of justice that is not dependent on who you know and if you have the gun or money," a young woman echoed. (#10FY, Mogadishu)

Some young people stated that they feel rules are unfairly applied to them. One youth summarized:

As the youth of Mogadishu, we do not regularly see justice. Many of our fellow youth have issues with the police and other elders because we are the youth or the "shabaab." Young men in particular are constantly harassed or sent to jail. If you do not have the right clan connections, you are very vulnerable in Mogadishu. (Male, FGD Mogadishu)

A LACK OF EXPERIENCE WITH PEACE

Perhaps unsurprisingly, many youth stated that they did not really know what peace was. As one young man from Afgoye said, "We have not had it [peace] for over 26 years. I just want to experience it once in my life time. I have only known war and conflict since I was born."

Respondents in this study are particularly worried about future youth—children currently between 5 and 15 years old. As many commented, today's children have a bleak future,

with even fewer opportunities today than in the past. While access to quality and equitable education and healthcare is a fundamental foundation of peace, such access has been limited in Somalia. Respondents say that other impediments to a peaceful future include deterioration of politics, worsening of the civil war, and deterioration of security in major towns such as Mogadishu.

A Comprehensive Approach to Building Peace

> *Youth take part in peacebuilding in my location: they are involved in theatre groups, they teach other youth reading and writing in informal "schools," and serve as youth representatives of the district peace committee. Youth are involved in helping secure the neighborhood. They are a part of the neighborhood watch that is in place to help protect the residents from attacks from Al-Shabaab. In the past it was more dangerous to be involved in such activities but today it is not so bad. (Female, FGD Mogadishu)*

TAKING PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Young respondents feel strongly about doing whatever they can to improve Somalia. When asked about their engagement in peacebuilding, youth in this study consistently described a deep responsibility to promote peace. They stated that they are involved in peacebuilding "for Somalia"—that is, because such activities improve their country. They also said that they are involved to "help my people" and because it is the right thing to do. Young people also expressed a responsibility to help the poor, their families, their neighborhoods, and children in particular.

Peace is thought to originate first in one's self; it is also needed in the family and at local levels before there can be a broader, national peace. Many respondents therefore include in their description of peacebuilding activities such as building their skills, educating themselves, and having a positive, nonviolent attitude. For some young people, building peace involves being a productive member of society. As a young woman in Mogadishu stated, "I am involved [in peacebuilding] by busying myself with seeking a job." (#6FY, Mogadishu) This sentiment was echoed by another female youth who said young people are involved in peacebuilding when "they chose to study at the university" (#10FY, Mogadishu) and by a young woman in Afgoye who said that young people participate in peacebuilding when they "busy themselves with studying." (#10FY, Afgoye) Yet another young woman from Mogadishu stated that "when youth make their own future and do not rely on family connections and other things" they are involved in peacebuilding. (#12FY, Mogadishu)

Abstaining from violence is also mentioned as participating in peacebuilding. In fact, one-third of female youth from Mogadishu described *not* participating in conflict as the main way youth are involved in peacebuilding. For example, a female respondent said that youth participate in peacebuilding "when they refuse to take part in conflicts." (#3FY, Mogadishu) The answer was echoed by at least three female youth in Afgoye. Another female youth stated that "youth (males) are involved [in peacebuilding] when they make the choice not

to get involved in the local conflicts and militia." (#8FY, Mogadishu) Some youth formally pledge to not become involved in violence.

Several respondents also felt strongly that building peace starts at home. Many of these respondents said that violence in the home is a precursor to violence elsewhere. Peace, according to them, is not possible when there is violence at home. Two young women summarized it this way:

> I think peacebuilding starts in our homes and with our families. This is not something that should be seen as coming from NGOs and the government. I think it is personal. (Female, FGD Mogadishu)

> I will start from my home with peacebuilding—making sure there is no violence and conflict in my home. And that my children grow up knowing peace, unlike me. (#6FY, Mogadishu)

A community leader echoed:

> "Peace awareness means having an ability to know how to stop violence not only in the community but also in your home." (#10CM, Afgoye)

REDUCING VIOLENCE, PROMOTING RECONCILIATION AND RESILIENCE

> For me, peacebuilding means stopping the violence and helping people find a way to come back to living with people that have done horrible things to each other. (Male, FGD Afgoye)

Many youth build peace by having the courage to take on activities to prevent crime and violence. For example, a large number of respondents stated that peacebuilding involves joining security forces or becoming involved in community or neighborhood watch activities.[82] As one FGD participant said, "Violence can be stopped by regular citizens because they have the courage to take a risk. I have seen this in my community as we started a youth community watch program to stop petty crime." (Male, FGD Afgoye) Another said:

> I have seen some youth who were engaged in peacebuilding. In many neighborhoods there were several armed thieves (at night) who carry out acts of robbery mugging people of mobile phones and their possessions. Following consultation between the community leaders and the youth, the youth decided to do rotating street patrol to protect the residents. Crime has reduced in the neighborhoods where these types of initiatives are taking place. (FGD Mogadishu)

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82   Neighborhood watch groups are a long-standing approach to maintaining community safety. In 2015, beginning in the Wabeeri district of Mogadishu, they were designed to mobilize communities and help people cooperate with local police to report suspicious individuals, vehicles, and weapons. The process formally links the police force's Community Policing and Public Relations Division, the city's district commissioners, and the Benadir Regional Administration. However, many community and neighborhood watch groups are unregulated.

In fact, more than half of male and female respondents in Mogadishu mentioned being involved in neighborhood watches as the main youth peacebuilding activity, and the majority of young men in Mogadishu personally participate in neighborhood watch activities. Participating in neighborhood watches—both those formally organized by CSOs and those informally organized by community members—is also common in Afgoye; 17 percent of young women there mentioned community watch as a way young people build peace, and one-third of female respondents stated that they personally participate in these activities.

Several youths mentioned becoming involved with peacebuilding activities to reduce the risk presented by mines and explosives. Some young volunteers said they contribute to peacebuilding by informing the community of the danger posed by explosives remnants; they also take specific actions (such as reporting danger to police).

Others engage with and/or support social healing activities. One youth described:

> I have witnessed youth participating in peacemaking. Even I myself am a member of such a group called Towifq that was established in Afgoye town. We support dispute resolution and awareness with the elders and with the youth of the town. (Male, FGD Afgoye)

A young woman in Afgoye mentioned a variety of diverse, creative approaches, including opportunities for youth to engage in theater groups that focus on peace and violence.

Respondents mentioned that reconciliation is essential for building peace. Reconciliation was mentioned most by community leaders in Afgoye, about half of whom discussed the deep clan divisions and emphasized the need to reconcile people of different clans. Below are several examples of how community leaders in this town describe the need to reconcile clans:

> [Peacebuilding] means working together to achieve peace. It means social reconciliation and stopping community clan conflicts. (#1CM, Afgoye)

> Peacebuilding means many things. It means stopping clan conflict and finding a way to limit the day-to-day violence and it also means developing new structures that can help make society a better place. (#4CM, Afgoye)

> It means youth needing to participate in peacebuilding activities. They can start to know other youth from outside their clan and community. Intermarriage sometimes helps but when the clans fight the women often suffer greatly. (#8CM, Afgoye)

Although young people less frequently mentioned reconciliation between people of different clans, many young people believe helping different community members get along is key to peacebuilding. Some young people described their involvement in such initiatives in depth:

> I wanted to learn about social healing and be able to teach my community about where it is needed because of tension and conflict that always seems present in my community. In the past few months I feel that I promoted

reintegration and built community peace because I was involved in a local community healing program as a volunteer. This engagement has taught me the power of being a peacebuilder and doing my part to start the social healing process that is needed in Somalia today. (Male, FGD Mogadishu)

I led four small groups of 15 people with a co-facilitator in supporting a social healing process. One of my groups was a youth football team that meets each week to play football. For the last three months, we used one day that we usually played football to sit and talk about how we have all been affected by trauma. Myself I had not talked to my neighbor for almost two years, but because of this program and my engagement in it I took the courage to ask my neighbor to have a tea at my house so that we could talk about what had taken place between us. We had over 28 groups of this and most of the community facilitators were young people. (Female, FGD Mogadishu)

Some other examples include a male youth from Mogadishu who said young people contribute through mediating between neighbors, a female youth who "helps create a space where girls and women can get together and talk on a regular basis," (#1FY, Afgoye) and another who "helps support the good neighborhood relations that we have in our smaller location." (#3FY, Afgoye)

SERVICE DELIVERY AND JOBS

Another essential aspect of peaceful society is the availability of services and employment. Youth in particular emphasized the need to have development and empowerment opportunities, and stated that education, healthcare, and jobs would make these possible. Male youth from Afgoye particularly emphasized the importance of these issues.

Respondents focused on the idea that peaceful societies provide people with opportunities. Two youth from Afgoye summarized:

A [peaceful society is a] very happy place where younger people love to live because they have opportunities and believe that it does not matter who they are as they are important citizens. (#12MY, Afgoye)

If there is peace through peacebuilding there will be economic stability and there will be jobs for the youth. (Male, FGD Afgoye)

Parents also emphasized that men and women need jobs, and that youth need to be able to finish school. They said that youth need to have access to civil society and government jobs in their own country (implying that they currently migrate to find such work). Community leaders further observe that in peaceful society, youth have a secure future through quality education and employment.[83]

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83   As we note in Chapter 4, dependency on public sector employment is not a solution. Educating youth about basic economic policies and realities could strengthen their ability to engage in public discourse.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Youth recognize community development and volunteering activities as peacebuilding activities. As one female youth stated: "[youth] are indirectly involved [in peacebuilding], like when they help in local sanitation and in keeping our district clean." (#2FY, Mogadishu) Others visit sick and vulnerable people within the locality, while others "support other young women that are finding issues of violence in the home." (#2FY, Afgoye) Some also consider financially supporting development activities as peacebuilding. For example, a young woman in Mogadishu stated that young people participate in peacebuilding "when they get employed and then help the community by giving a part of their salaries for the improvement of the community." (#4FY, Mogadishu)

Respondents also consider peacebuilding to include volunteering to teach children or youth from vulnerable or marginalized groups. A young woman in Mogadishu said that youth participate in building peace when they "educate young children that have no other option for education." (#5FY, Mogadishu) Another young woman described her contribution to volunteering for young children in the following way: "I provide free education to children who cannot afford it. I started this initiative and now have brought several of my friends into the volunteer work." (#7FY, Mogadishu) Echoing the importance of support for vulnerable youth, a young man stated:

> Youth in my community are very supportive to other youth who have not had the chance to be educated. They have opened up free learning centers for them and with their friends have been active in teaching children. This type of self-organizing is not difficult and it is becoming more common in Mogadishu. Many of the young adults feel that education is one the most powerful actions around [which] to build peace.

A female high school student in Afgoye also commented, "I participate to work and be able to help the poor…and my parents," while another said "I help out to teach younger students that have little to no resources to fund their own education. I am also working on fundraising so that they can also join a new school." Young people stated that a lack of access to education makes youth more likely to engage in violence.

INVOLVING LOCAL AND TRADITIONAL STRUCTURES

Some respondents emphasized that peacebuilding needs to include local and traditional structures. This theme seemed particularly important for community leaders, who thought the breakdown in traditional structures during the civil war had critically weakened local conflict resolution and reconciliation systems. Reestablishing these systems is seen as potentially the most appropriate mechanism for reconciliation. Using traditional structures for this process is also thought to bring community elders into the process. As stated by a community leader from Afgoye:

> *[Peacebuilding] means searching for peace through community structures. It means supporting the traditional structures that have been destroyed and broken down by 26 years of civil war. I would like to see our country beginning a process of deep healing and reconciliation. (#2CM, Afgoye)*

More generally, respondents emphasized that working with local authorities is essential, as this promotes feelings of ownership and trust among local leaders. Local authorities are also essential in their role providing services to citizens. Notably, not all Somali cities have local government structures yet, but there are mechanisms with which to engage—including, for example, district councils and peace committees that have been created through the aegis of the peace and development strategies described in Chapter 1.

Is Building Peace Possible?

For many of the respondents in this study, peace in Somalia is but a dream. Most respondents indicated that they did not know if it is possible for there to be peace in Somalia. This was the case even for young people involved in peacebuilding. According to a youth from Mogadishu, "youth want to be involved yet are very pessimistic that their involvement will make a difference." Another mentioned that the "2025 vision is only a dream. The youth do not take such a dream seriously. They would like to see it but do not see a path toward reaching it." A young woman echoed: "I really do not know if any of us in this room have ever experienced peace. How can we build something we do not know about?" (Female, FGD Afgoye)

The lack of hope was echoed over and over by the vast majority of youth in Afgoye:

> *Youth need to regain hope and a common purpose. The youth of today are the war generation; they do not know governance or true peace. They are growing up with a lot of anger and resentment and little to no hope. Youth are leaving the country every day in many numbers because there is little to no hope for the future. (FGD Afgoye)*

> *Peacebuilding needs to be supported but I am still not sure how successful it can actually be. It is important and I want to see peace in my community but I am not sure how we can do it. Peacebuilding feels like just another nice word from the outside but I am not really sure how it can work. I want rule of law and I want to not be afraid that the police will arrest me because I am in the wrong place at the wrong time. We want the petty crime in our communities to stop and we also want and need jobs for the youth. These are all things that peacebuilding can bring us and are urgently required in our community but I do not really see the way to peace. (Male, FGD Afgoye)*

It is hard to talk about peacebuilding when it feels like our district is exploding more every day. Even with all the peacebuilding initiatives that have been undertaken in just the last few months you can see that there is no real peace. (Male, FGD Afgoye)

The term peacebuilding is not practical to me…there is nothing that can actually stop violence in our communities. It is everywhere in our homes and in our streets, in our political structures. Today we could not even hold this meeting in Afgoye because of the lack of stability and the political assassinations that are taking place. (Female, FGD Afgoye)

The majority of youth in Mogadishu also described peace in Somalia with a lack of hope. In fact, almost all participants in the Mogadishu focus group said they do not know how youth can contribute to peacebuilding, especially given the little hope they have that any of their actions will achieve results. Perhaps surprisingly, even youth who actively engage in peacebuilding lack hope:

Youth are participating in the development of the country and also in the peacebuilding. They are engaged at every level—district, region, and national. There are youth organizations that support all sorts of activities and initiatives in Mogadishu. I am not sure if any of it makes any difference. (Male, FGD Mogadishu)

[Youth] have fewer opportunities today than ever. More of today's youth continue to take that dangerous route to Europe than ever before even though people know it is completely dangerous. Why would youth in 10 years have a better system? Our politics is not getting better, the war is only getting worse, and it feels more dangerous in Mogadishu than ever before.

Conclusion

Study participants use a broad and comprehensive definition of peace. Although an absence of violence is described by most as a precondition for peace, respondents emphasized the need for good governance, and in particular for participatory forms of governing that have strong institutions and leadership and can provide justice and rule of law for all. This is not enough, however, since a peaceful society must also provide services and opportunities for its citizens; in addition, citizens within such communities must trust each other. Building peace may be a challenge, given young people's lack of experience with it and the lack of hope expressed by the majority of respondents. However, there is a strong desire to see peace in Somalia.

Chapter 3
Youth Engagement in Peacebuilding

All we want is a better future

A lot of our generation has grown up only knowing violence and war. We do not really know what it means to be governed by a government. We know about warlords and pirates, and corruption and theft. We know a lot about the extremists. We are the generation that basically said enough was enough in 2007 and started the Islamic Courts…we did not want the foreigners in our land. We know that we want a different life—one that is … based on justice. However, even those moments proved to be evil and without a better future for us. All we want is a better future. (Female, FGD Afgoye)

Reasons to Engage in Peacebuilding

Young respondents say they participate in peacebuilding for a wide range of reasons. Many say they have seen the effects of violence and want to act against it. They also mention wanting to improve their communities and help those who are more vulnerable. They mentioned the influence of their friends, family, and religion as motivations to build peace. Finally, many said being involved in peacebuilding activities is a way to further their own self-interest.

Many young people in the study said that they participate in peacebuilding because of the effects of violence and their experience with it.[84] One young woman said that youth participate in such activities "to protect their lives" (#1FY, Mogadishu), and another said youth participate "to protect their neighborhoods." (#9FY, Afgoye) Youth most commonly mentioned firsthand experience with the civil war (losing a family member, surviving an explosion, witnessing violence, and wanting to make a difference), as well as frustration with the political situation as reasons to participate in peacebuilding and to desire a better future. Parents and community leaders in both Afgoye and Mogadishu agreed that having experience with violence is a powerful motivator for youth to engage in peacebuilding.

Many respondents connected their motivation to build peace with their experience with domestic violence. As a community leader in Afgoye said, "Youth decided to support peace in order to stop violence in their community but also in their own homes. There is a lot of domestic violence today in Somalia. I believe the youth have grown up knowing violence and now they have said they are tired of it, as most of the country has said." (#2CM, Afgoye)

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84   Half of young women in Mogadishu said they have suffered from violence and conflict, including having family members killed, having been robbed, and having heard explosions.

Improving the community and country are also cited as reasons to participate in peacebuilding. Male youth in Mogadishu said they participate to address illiteracy, to help secure their communities, and for broader societal reasons (for example, to help his clan, address favoritism/clannism, and participate in change). Similarly, a young woman stated that her motivation to participate in peacebuilding was to "support [her] people," (#3FY, Mogadishu) while another said she participated in these activities to "help poorer children." (#7FY, Mogadishu) Parents in Afgoye also mentioned that youth wanted to support progress and development.

Most young people—along with many parents and community leaders—cited the influence of family members as a reason for youth to engage in activities that build peace. In fact, half of the male youth respondents from Mogadishu said they participate in peacebuilding because their parents encourage them to do so. These youth, however, were also the ones more likely to define peacebuilding activities to include participating in neighborhood watches, being a good person, finding employment, and working to benefit the community. Of the female youth from Mogadishu who participate in peacebuilding, 40 percent said they do so because of their parents' encouragement and example. Community leaders in Afgoye also consistently mentioned parental guidance as an important factor in whether or not youth engaged in peacebuilding activities.

The influence of friends who volunteer for educational and peacebuilding programs was sometimes mentioned as a factor in youths' decision to participate in peacebuilding. As one young woman commented, "I am involved in peacebuilding activities because most of my friends are involved in such activities." (Female, FGD Mogadishu) One young man in Afgoye stated that "coming together and being united as young people is also important in peacebuilding so that the youth can interact with each other socially." (Male, FGD Afgoye) Parents and community leaders also cited peer pressure as a reason for youth to get involved in peacebuilding activities.

The importance of having a supportive political figurehead, the forthcoming political transition, and the need to influence peaceful change are also rationales for participating in peacebuilding. A female youth said that "the good character of the leaders of the government" (#4FY, Mogadishu) helped contribute to youths' interest in engaging in peacebuilding. The government's willingness to involve youth in politics was also seen as a reason why more youth in Mogadishu participate in building peace. It is interesting to note that respondents in Afgoye did not mention this as a reason to engage in peacebuilding.

Several young people stated that their religion encourages them to participate in peacebuilding. Male youth in Afgoye mentioned religious teachings that encourage peace, and, conversely, their hatred of conflict and violence. Interestingly, male youth in Mogadishu said that they do not participate in religious activities, yet one-quarter mentioned religion as a motivator for being involved in peacebuilding. Among female youth from Mogadishu, half said that they often go to the mosque, and almost half said that religion and the teachings of the Koran motivated them to build peace.

Other young people mentioned that their education encourages them to participate in peacebuilding. One young woman in Mogadishu stated that her motivation to participate

came from her education "dictating" her participation to her. (#3FY, Mogadishu) A third of female youth in Afgoye also stated that education made them realize that they should be involved in peacebuilding. One young woman also said that she educated children because if children continue to be uneducated, "we will continue to have problems." (#3FY, Mogadishu)

Media—including social media—can motivate youths to build peace. All groups of respondents mentioned the effects media have on young people. Parents also mentioned that exposure to media can influence positive change. As stated by a community leader in Mogadishu:

> *The youth realized the benefits of peace because they have seen examples elsewhere in the world. Today we are no longer isolated, we are now a part of the global community. Especially with the reach of social media. (CY, M)*

Many young respondents said they participate in peacebuilding for personal gain. In particular, it seen as a way to gain access to education, respect, and jobs, or to gain access to networks which could then help provide access to resources. A male university student in Afgoye, for example, said he participates "to increase [his] education level to get good job." Almost half of young women in Afgoye also stated that such activities could help them increase their education levels, obtain employment, pursue their life goals, and support their families. A young woman said she participates in peacebuilding "in order to have prosperity." (#2FY, Mogadishu) Community leaders in both Mogadishu and Afgoye also mentioned potential job opportunities as reasons youth participate in these activities.

Quite importantly, most female youth in Afgoye said that girls are "not counted," "excluded," or "left out" when asked about other reasons why they participate in peacebuilding. A young woman in Mogadishu said that she participated to "enforce equality." (#3FY, Mogadishu) Community leaders in Mogadishu mentioned discrimination against youth as a reason they get involved. These testimonies show how involvement in peacebuilding is seen as a way to address group exclusion.

Several respondents spoke about community healing. Youth said they contribute to community health in various ways and via multiple approaches, including by attending community peacebuilding meetings and playing sports. One male youth in Mogadishu said that he "wanted to…be able to teach my community…because of tension and conflict that always seems present in my community." He continued:

> *In the past few months I feel that I promoted reintegration and built community peace because I was involved in a local community healing program as a volunteer. This engagement has taught me the power of being a peacebuilder and doing my part to start the social healing process that is needed in Somalia today. (Male, FGD Mogadishu)*

Institutions that Promote Engagement in Peacebuilding

Somali youth have the opportunity to participate in peacebuilding through diverse organizations at community, district, regional, and national levels. The most commonly cited organization was the neighborhood or community watch group, which is an informal institution that plays a policing or public safety role. More formal organizations mentioned include youth-focused and youth-led service organizations, educational organizations, religious organizations (including mosques), CSOs that provide services to the community generally, and the media. Formal organizations, however, do not have a good reputation for promoting peace among this study's respondents. According to all groups interviewed, such organizations do not allocate resources fairly and in fact promote clannism and favoritism in how they implement activities.

Although many formal and informal organizations claim to promote peace, not all youth are aware of their existence. In Afgoye, for example, half of the female youth respondents did not know of any organizations involved in peacebuilding and one-sixth do not think these exist at all. Similarly, only one young woman in Mogadishu mentioned being involved with an institution that promotes peacebuilding—the district authority. The other young women were unable to name any such organizations in their community.

It seems that when young people claim peacebuilding organizations do not exist in their community, they are not counting community-based organizations, such as neighborhood and community watch organizations and youth clubs. In fact, female youth in both geographic areas, male youth in Mogadishu, and community leaders in both geographic areas mentioned involvement in peacebuilding through community watch groups. One-sixth of female youth in Afgoye mentioned community watch organizations as the only peacebuilding organizations in their community, and one-third of the female youth in Afgoye said they participate in these activities. However, male and female youth in Afgoye also report being involved in and forming youth organizations (and male youth did not mention involvement in any other organizations). One female youth in Afgoye said she is "involved with the local youth group that does different interventions around Somalia, but mostly [participates in activities at] home." (#4FY, Afgoye)

There are several formal institutions active in Mogadishu and Afgoye. Respondents mentioned that religious groups, peace advocacy organizations, and private sector groups implement activities to promote peacebuilding. These organizations run activities to raise awareness on various issues; to promote training, job creation, and other forms of economic empowerment; to provide health and educational services; and to advocate for peace. Parents in Afgoye also mentioned CSOs' involvement in development and infrastructure improvement, women's issues, construction/rehabilitation activities, civic education, youth employment, and youth inclusion. Female youth in Mogadishu also mentioned health-focused CSOs, while community leaders in Mogadishu mentioned activities that generally support peacebuilding, strengthen security, and reduce poverty.

Respondents were generally dissatisfied with the role NGOs play vis-à-vis youth engagement in peacebuilding, and believe such programs have limited impact. Some CSOs have a negative reputation among many respondents, who said these organizations operate

for their own self-interest and keep the majority of the funds they receive. A young man in Afgoye said "the civil society in Somalia has not helped youth, instead it has taken funds from the international community for youth programs but very few youths have been impacted." (Male, FGD Afgoye) Similarly, another young man stated:

> Civil society in Somalia is made of people who take advantage of the situation in order to enrich themselves. I do not trust NGOs, for the most part they invite you to meetings like today to hear what you have to say but nothing comes of it. They are the new rulers and governors of Somalia along with the internationals that fund them. Neither group wishes to see Somalia rise from the ashes. (Male, FGD Mogadishu)

Some female youth in Mogadishu stated that activities provided by CSOs were not available to women. In addition, youth in both Mogadishu and Afgoye describe CSOs as making decisions based on favoritism and clannism.

Organizations were also criticized for lacking quality programming. Some young women in Mogadishu criticized such organizations' lack of educational and life skills activities, saying that these were not available. Those who were aware of such activities said they were of poor quality (#3FY, Mogadishu) and expensive (#7FY, Mogadishu). Similar criticisms were made of employment promotion activities. Respondents mentioned several reasons they think the programs are inadequate, including: (1) the organizations have limited resources for the programs, which results in limited training and centers; (2) youths lack awareness of the existence of these programs; (3) activities are not designed with youth participation in mind; and (4) youth have little opportunity to participate because of their own lack of education and resources.

NGOs and civil society more broadly were also criticized for their reconciliation activities. Reconciliation, according to respondents, needs to occur at local levels, and when it is carried out by outsiders it reflects the outsiders' interests. As one young focus group participant said:

> Reconciliation seems to be a word that NGOs and the civil society use all the time, but I have not really seen people reconciling because of an NGO. The elders are the people that work better for the reconciliation processes and efforts. NGOs, it seems, are just out for money. They focus on peacebuilding because it is a topic that never gets tired and it is easy to do nothing but continue to ask for money from the donors. (Male, FGD Mogadishu)

Organizations that work in these areas are also regarded as ineffective because of their associated security concerns. As two young women, one in Mogadishu and one in Afgoye, stated: "CSOs are afraid, they do nothing," and, "There is fear of both government and opposition forces." In fact, a third of young women in Afgoye said that civil society is not effective because of security concerns. Yet another quarter said that civil society is not active in Afgoye at all.

Some respondents did praise a few of the activities implemented in their communities. Some said that awareness-raising programs had positive impacts. Male youth in Mogadishu said that CSOs were effective in terms of providing treatment services for the sick, and noted that their activities had the potential to decrease violence in the future. Parents in Afgoye said that CSOs have had positive outcomes, have a history of providing support for graduates, engage youth in construction/rehabilitation activities (and employment), and strengthen youths' understanding of peace. One community leader in Mogadishu also mentioned that "the number of youth joining conflicts decreased" as a result of CSOs' activities. Other community leaders in Mogadishu suggested that CSOs have contributed to higher youth school attendance, improved security, and reduced poverty.

In addition to these organizations, parents and community leaders in both Afgoye and Mogadishu reported that youth were engaged in peacebuilding through government institutions and intellectual/elite groups. Respondents listed six types of programs the government runs to engage youth in peacebuilding: training/education; awareness (e.g., through the media, including national TV and other media outlets); supporting sports activities/ tournaments; supporting youth employment and job creation; religious programs; and youth exchange programs. Both parents and community leaders in Mogadishu mentioned general programs that encourage youth to participate in politics. The respondents tended not to specifically mention the level of government agency that sponsors the activities. However, the local government was named by one young woman in Mogadishu, who described a center operated by the Center for Peace, Research and Development (CEPRAD):

> *There are good opportunities that people like the deputy mayor has made possible. He has been active in supporting young people in Mogadishu. Today we have a youth center because of his engagement. Through this center there are many opportunities for young men and women alike. I attended different sessions at the center and I also use it for my positive socializing as many of my friends are also participants at the center in Abdiaziz district. (Female, FGD Mogadishu)*

Unfortunately, the majority of parents and community leaders in both Afgoye and Mogadishu said they know that the government is interested in promoting peacebuilding but that they are not personally aware of any government-sponsored programs. Some said the government is not doing anything to promote youth involvement in peacebuilding, and that even though government-sponsored programs exist, they are ineffective. None of the young women interviewed in Afgoye or Mogadishu could cite any government policies or activities that aim to involve youth in peacebuilding.

Enabling Youth to Participate in Peacebuilding

Youth respondents underlined the constraints to participating in peacebuilding, and considered participating in national-level peacebuilding to be particularly challenging. Female youth from Afgoye said that they have participated in peacebuilding, but only at the local level. A young woman from Mogadishu said that district leadership should reach out to youth to get them more involved, and another said there was a need for the district-level administration and communities to work together.

Education was mentioned by all categories of respondents as essential to facilitating young people's participation in peacebuilding. Educated youth and parents say that education is a key driver in engaging young people to participate in peacebuilding and that youth need to be educated to be able to engage in wider peacebuilding efforts. Many respondents stated that educated youth contribute to a more productive society. As noted by a young male university student in Mogadishu, "We need to have more education of the youth if they are going to become productive members of society." Another pointed to the relationship between education and societal progress: "Education can make you progress and it can also help society to progress." Respondents also noted that education is vital and opens up minds: "Education has been important in helping me see the importance of civic engagement." The broader role of education in strengthening ethical understanding was stated in the following way by another male university student: "Education helps you understand right and wrong." According to one young woman from Mogadishu, increasing young people's participation in peacebuilding requires "increasing youth knowledge of politics." (#8FY, Mogadishu) As several young women in the Afgoye FGD said, education is one of the most influential factors in whether youth become volunteers and work to better their community.

At least one respondent in each of the categories specifically mentioned that employed youth have resources that enable them to engage in peacebuilding. Conversely, many mentioned that lack of employment hinders youth from voluntarily participating in peacebuilding.

Not having enough time to engage was also mentioned as a key reason why youth might not participate in peacebuilding. Young people say that they are too busy with their education, finding work, or working to be able to participate. Other reasons for their lack of involvement in peacebuilding included being unable to afford to do so (resource limitations related to employment), being busy with raising/supporting a family, and needing to study.

Many young people report not knowing how to participate in peacebuilding. For example, in the Mogadishu FGD, almost all participants said they would not know how to engage. Numerous other youth said the same thing, both in Afgoye and Mogadishu.

Conclusion

Young Somalis care about the future of their communities and their country, and want to build peace. In most cases, young people find ways to contribute to such efforts, either by educating themselves, finding gainful employment, improving their communities, building relationships between people in their communities, or keeping their communities safe. In many cases, young people also help protect the poor and vulnerable, helping victims of domestic violence and children.

However, institutions that support peacebuilding are weak, and young people do not think they meaningfully contribute to peacebuilding. The few organizations in which young people participate to promote peace are largely local and rely solely on volunteerism. Larger initiatives are in place, but young people have little trust in them and see them as favoring the elite for jobs and opportunities.

Obstacles to youths' participation in peacebuilding include not having enough time, resources, or education. Some young people also wonder how they can participate, and emphasize that they have not had the opportunity to learn how to build peace.

Anisa Mohamed Ibrahim, a youth delegate, said, "I am happy that I voted and therefore exercised my right. This gives me confidence to be an example to other youth, to show them that I have a voice and can determine the future of our country by voting leaders of our choice." This was in Baidoa, Somalia on December 02, 2016. UN Photo / Abdikarim Mohamed

Chapter 4
Creating a Peaceful Somalia

The youth must be united and find a common vision of the future and work to make it happen. (Male, FGD Afgoye)

Everybody should make him/herself ready to carry the responsibility of peacebuilding. (Female, FGD Mogadishu)

Somalis have a clear idea of what a peaceful Somalia would look like and how different stakeholders would need to engage to make this a reality. However, respondents express a lack of hope for the future and are particularly concerned about the opportunities that will be available for those even younger than they are. The study shows how important it is for the Somali government to enable peace, and provides guidance for civil society or other stakeholders aiming to build peace in the country. This work also shows that Somalis—and in particular Somali youth—have concrete, implementable ideas for moving their country forward.

Youth Priorities and Recommendations

Respondents provided very concrete ideas for building peace in Somalia. Their ideas all correspond to local definitions of peace and peacebuilding (described in Chapter 2), and to their analysis of who is best positioned to promote peace and mechanisms to engage youth in peacebuilding (described in Chapter 3). Respondents' recommendations, however, provide greater nuance on how peacebuilding can immediately and practically be supported in Somalia.

SOCIAL SERVICES AND JOBS

The most frequently cited ideas for building peace in Somalia were centered around restoring basic services and creating jobs at the local level. According to respondents, local actors should lead in this area; this includes local authorities and CSOs that have a demonstrated commitment to the community in general and to youth in particular. Given this commitment to and understanding of the local context, they are best positioned to institute social services that respond to local needs.

Respondents in this study see a clear link between building peace and improving infrastructure and access to services. Physical infrastructure is also critical to the provision of basic services, particularly in rural areas in which services are minimally available. A community leader in Afgoye suggested that his vision was "for Somalia to get better infrastructure and all the

roads are rebuilt again. This would help people move around and not be stuck in places that have no services like in the rural communities."

It is particularly important to restore education and improve its quality. Respondents criticized the current quality of and access to public education, and many recommended that communities encourage and support not-for-profit private educational and training centers and programs. Others, however, emphasized the importance of public education and said the government, not civil society, should take the lead in this area. Related to education, a consistent theme was the importance of mentoring and coaching young people; according to respondents, CSOs should play a key role in ensuring that mentoring and coaching is available for all youth. A quarter of young women interviewed in Afgoye and Mogadishu thought that civil society should make it a priority to implement peace education programs. A specific example included the idea to engage youth in mentoring generally and to use storytelling to help them appreciate their common history and how it binds them together. About a quarter of young women in Afgoye mentioned that civil society could support youth training programs. Young parents are concerned that they have not personally experienced peace, and want their children to be educated about peace. As one young woman said, "I want to educate my children about peace and make sure that they have a different life than I had up to now." (#5FY, Mogadishu)

Respondents think education needs to be closely linked to jobs. One youth from Mogadishu explained:

> In the last 25 years of war and conflict, youth have not had the opportunity to study and become educated. Our parents are more educated than we are because of the conflict and violence that we have grown up with. My generation is starving for education. We believe it is a ticket out of poverty and away from the daily violence. The problem is now we are seeing those just a bit older than us working hard and graduating and yet still having NOTHING to do. How can we change this? Peacebuilding is about changing the structures that do not work…This is such a structure. Either we are not learning much and yet paying for an education or there really are no professional jobs in Somalia. That means that for my generation we have very few choices…one of those is to leave for [another] country. (Male, FGD Mogadishu)

Most youth said that unemployment must be addressed as part of peacebuilding. Two-thirds of young women and half the young men interviewed in Afgoye said that employment was their main priority; almost half the young women and more than half the young men in Mogadishu agreed. Many respondents said that one of their main priorities was that opportunities be created for work, and that it was the government's responsibility to create jobs. Some respondents also said that civil society is well positioned to address the challenges associated with youth unemployment, and should do so by investing in targeted employment programs for youth. It is important to note, however, that respondent answers show that young people believe that government and civil society can create jobs directly by hiring young workers. Respondents imply that government and civil society funds are best used to directly hire youth. This is problematic. While youth should be given the opportunity

to work for the government and for CSOs, there need to be clear, economically rational, and achievable employment policies in place. Dependency on public sector employment is not a solution. Educating youth about basic economic policies and realities could not only strengthen their ability to engage in public discourse, but also their ability to obtain jobs.

A large number of respondents emphasized that services and jobs must also be available for women. In fact, two-thirds of female youth interviewed in Afgoye mentioned as a priority increased access to health, education, or jobs for women, and stressed the need for the government to support gender equality. They discussed both the need to provide women-focused services and to address discrimination against women by service providers.

At least a quarter of respondents in each category mentioned the importance of healthcare. Respondents did not provide ideas on how to improve the sector except to say it should be accessible and inclusive.

REFORMING SECURITY AND JUSTICE

For many young people, reforming the justice and security sectors is a key priority. Several respondents feel that security forces unfairly target young people and blame them for violence, which brings uncertainty and fear into their lives. Young people in Afgoye mention that there are "false imprisonments"—that is, young people who are arrested for simply being young or because they are suspected of being violent, despite proof—and that too many youths are in the prison system. Young people believe that both the military and the police are responsible for this, and it creates a tension between young people and these institutions. Parents agree: Some respondents in Mogadishu say that police in that city are attacking residents more than Al-Shabaab ever did, and this makes youth feel particularly vulnerable. Afgoye FGD participants summarized their recommendation as follows: "Create professional discipline military and police forces that do not see the youth as the enemy." (FGD Afgoye)

To improve the security sector, respondents say it should be professionalized and inclusive. Youth in particular strive to be part of this sector, but think that corruption makes access to these jobs unattainable. "Recruitment practices need to be fair and transparent," one female youth recommended. (Female, FGD Afgoye) Another said that "those that are in the army today need to be better cared for." (Female, FGD Afgoye)

Perhaps most importantly, respondents want the government to strengthen the justice system to ensure adherence to the rule of law. As a youth in Mogadishu clearly stated, "Justice is the pillar of all things and must be considered when developing the future of the country. Without justice there will never be peace." In particular, some mentioned that it is important that the justice system not make decisions that are biased toward the wealthy or particular clans. Youth also think the courts unfairly blame them for violence and terrorism. Increasing the transparency of the courts is therefore important. As one youth said, "Young people are blamed for insecurity and even terrorism in today's Somalia. I do not believe that there is any justice in this. If you are poor and young there is not hope that you will ever have any justice." (Female, FGD Mogadishu)

GOOD GOVERNANCE AND ELECTIONS

According to respondents, peace in Somalia requires good governance. To build it, respondents said that peace in Somalia requires that the government be comprised of professionals, not political appointees. Two-thirds of young women interviewed in Mogadishu said the government's priority should be to increase the trust of citizens, reduce corruption, and increase youth participation in politics. A quarter of young women interviewed in Afgoye also said that addressing issues of fairness and corruption should be the government's main priority.

Respondents stressed the need for the Somali government to be representative at all levels. Many described this in terms of holding free and fair elections based on international tenets of democracy—with a one-person, one-vote system—and having fair and just leadership. Respondents described their current system as unrepresentative because of the prominence it gives to clans and clan leaders. Political systems are formed and led by the older generations, who have very little understanding of the modern challenges facing young women and men. This disconnect reinforces the growing gap between a very young nation and its aging legislators. As one female youth from Afgoye said, a peaceful society "selects its own leadership and does not rely on only looking at those with the gun or with money." (#8FY, Afgoye) Parents specified that good governance requires that power not be entirely vested in the president or parliamentary leaders, who are out of touch with people's day-to-day realities. There is therefore a need for enduring, sustainable structures that persist even when there is a change in national or regional leadership.

PROMOTING COHESION

> I do believe that we need to have some deep healing within our society.
> There has been too much violence aimed at each other both in the past but
> it continues today. We do not trust each other at all. Everyone is trying to
> be better than the other and no one is really working together with others.
> (Male, FGD Afgoye)

Respondents described the deep need for Somalia to be unified. For some, this meant having a common government and flag and for the government to have control over its territory. As a community leader in Afgoye explained, "My vision is that Somalia will get out of conflicts and be able to manage its affairs in the region and internally. I hope that we will have a better form of governance that serves all the people and not just a few of the elites or those with guns and weapons."

Eliminating clannism is seen as both essential for peace in Somalia and an outcome of peace. However, this would require an overall paradigm shift in politics, from clan-based to issue-based. As a young man in Afgoye commented, "Youth must be united in the various regions and not pulled apart by the clan system that has destroyed the country for the last 25 years." A community leader agreed with the need to eliminate clannism:

> We hate all people that are not us. The clannism that we carry is a sickness,
> really. While we all hate what is going on, no one is willing to take the

first step toward a peaceful society because we know that our clans will not back us up. The civil war is still going even though we have an elected government—our government really is just the parliament and the president. But most of the leadership of our country are warlords. (#11CF, Afgoye)

Respondents described very practical mechanisms to promote cohesion. Several mentioned the need for community leaders to engage local youth and other stakeholders in activities. Local leaders also stressed the need for national efforts to include local perspectives. Despite criticism of the civil society sector, all respondent groups mentioned the need for it to productively and transparently support peace processes in areas where it is best placed.

The need to involve women was emphasized in Afgoye and Mogadishu. Almost half of the young women interviewed in Mogadishu urged communities to promote peace by reducing discrimination against girls, promoting girls' education, and advocating for women more generally. In Afgoye, young women urged their community leaders, civil society, and government to raise awareness of women's issues and "to fight against girls' rape." (#5FY, Afgoye) More generally, female respondents believe that all stakeholders need to do more so women feel like they have a seat at the table.

Activities that directly promote reconciliation between groups are also encouraged. A young man in the Mogadishu focus group described an activity that could help promote social cohesion:

> *I participated in an art project that focused on mapping my identity as a young man, a Somali citizen, and a resident of Mogadishu. This project more than anything in my life gave me the confidence to begin to express myself. I have found that since that time and because my artwork has been displayed I have become more outspoken and engaged in issues that have to do with peace and justice. The experience gave shape to my new worldview that peace is possible. (Male, FGD Mogadishu)*

Responses show a clear need for Somalia to learn from the past and document the present to avoid making the same mistakes in the future. A young woman in Afgoye suggested that:

> *The community can narrate to the youth of today how there was once a peaceful Somalia that had a working government and social services. Literacy was prioritized. I would ask the elders to tell stories about the difficulties we are going through and how these impact the life of our children. They can help give us hope that the current conflicts can help us bring about peace.*

Some see the potential for CSOs to play a role in documenting the history of the conflict and its impact on individuals and society. As one young man in Mogadishu said:

Civil society needs to document how things are like in conflict and war so that if we ever get peace our people will understand what happened so that we never return to this type of life. It is not the type of life meant for humans.

Developing Youth as Peacebuilders

Youth respondents strongly believe that they will play a pivotal role in contributing to peace in Somalia. They state they will do so by engaging in programs to strengthen their own capacity to contribute to peacebuilding—including, for example, pursuing education, participating in trauma healing programs, joining activities with other clans, and learning from community elders the best mechanisms to employ for peace. Strengthened capacity can help them be involved in political activities, including democratic political events.

DEVELOPING THE YOUNG GENERATION

Somali youth believe that one of the best ways to build peace is to help youth develop themselves. This is especially true for more vulnerable youth, who may feel unable to help others without establishing themselves first. As one young woman said, "I have to first start with myself and make a life so that I can survive." (#8FY, Mogadishu) Many of the young women in the Afgoye FGD were clear in saying that youth had no organizing body, and that in order to have a better life they need to focus on themselves and better their life through education and, hopefully, a job. One respondent also said that youth need help "to think about their future." (#12FY, Afgoye)

Young people emphasize the importance of getting support and encouragement for their peacebuilding activities. Many said that communities need to value them, "show [a] welcoming attitude to youth, especially girls." (#2FY, Mogadishu) According to one young woman whose comment reflected those of many others: "Youth must begin to feel that they are valued or they will not enter into supporting the peace for the nation." (Female, FGD Afgoye) Youth want to engage their peers in peacebuilding. Several said they urge friends to build peace and encourage each other to participate in peacebuilding to the best of their ability.

It is particularly important to support young women and girls. A third of female youth interviewed in Afgoye spontaneously mentioned that this study should emphasize that girls feel they have no value, and that this, along with problems such as early marriage, make it difficult for females to engage in peacebuilding. "Our community doesn't value girls," (#1FY, Afgoye) one young woman lamented. Another agreed: "Girls' views are not taken into account." (#3FY, Afgoye) A third echoed: "Girls have no say in the community or even in the family." (#9FY, Afgoye) These young women emphasized the role that communities and civil society can play in raising awareness of women's issues and eliminating discrimination against females.

Youth respondents say that they are capable of forming youth-led organizations to spearhead peace. Youth need to work collectively, according to some, if their actions are to have an impact. "Youth must unite and coordinate with each other for us to become a force for peace," one woman stated. (#2FY, Mogadishu) Others agreed, saying, "The youth must be united in vision if such goals are to be met. I do not think it will happen unless there is a youth movement;" (#5FY, Mogadishu) and "The youth must begin to stand up for the peace as a larger group of youth." (#7FY, Mogadishu)

ENABLING ENGAGEMENT LOCALLY AND NATIONALLY

Youth can most easily become engaged in peacebuilding activities at the local level. Youth are clear that they want to help develop their neighborhoods and communities. "I will start in my neighborhood and do what I can to be engaged for the progress of peace and development," (#7FY, Mogadishu) explained one young woman. Another young woman confirmed this idea, saying that the youth should "strengthen the peace in both the nation but also in the city of Mogadishu." (#8FY, Mogadishu) Respondents believe that civil society should provide financial support to youth groups to establish their own community-based, youth-led organizations; doing so can contribute to the formation of local governance structures, which are essential for service delivery. CSOs' role in peacebuilding activities can be wide-ranging, including, for example, "support[ing] work of youth who are volunteering to clean the neighborhoods," as one community leader in Afgoye suggested.

Youth want to help build institutions. According to one young man from Afgoye, youth must "work to strengthen peace through supporting the development of the rule of law and making justice accessible to all." Respondents say that youth can become elected officials to help achieve peace, but can also contribute as members of public and private sector organizations. Youth say they want to engage in activities designed to address family and community violence, the paucity of adequate education and health services, and the country's gender equality issues.

Young people want to be part of the civil service sector and the army. Several youth respondents mentioned a desire to enroll in the security forces to protect their communities and country. As a young woman in Afgoye suggested, "There should be more of the present day youth in the national army." She also mentioned that "recruitment practices need to be fair and transparent." Similarly, a young man in Afgoye said the government must "engage young people in leadership positions and also begin to recruit them into the civil service." (Male, FGD Afgoye) However, others questioned whether this would happen given the lack of transparency in current recruitment practices.

Many also mentioned wanting to engage in political processes. "The youth must participate in the political processes in order to make a difference as a generation," one respondent said. "Girls [should] participate in the political process," she emphasized. (#6FY, Afgoye)

Conclusion

Youth have concrete ideas for promoting peace in Somalia. These ideas are based on their own experience and priorities, and provide a basis for broader recommendations. Respondents' ideas on how to best engage youth also show that there are clear and concrete steps to engaging young people in peacebuilding that are practical and can provide a way forward.

Players from Banadir Football Club celebrate their victory over Gaadiidka Football Club in a match organized to mark the International Day of Peace at Banadir Stadium in Mogadishu, Somalia on 21 September 2017. UNSOM Photo / Omar Abdisalan

Chapter 5
Recommendations

The opinions, priorities, and recommenda-tions of respondents in this study provide a comprehensive approach for promoting youth inclusion in peacebuilding and for increasing the effectiveness of peacebuilding activities in Somalia more broadly. The perspectives described show that peacebuilding will be challenging, but there is both widespread interest in participating in efforts to brighten the country's future and thoughtful ideas for action by individuals, civil society, and local representatives. Recommendations are summarized in five sections below. The first describes ways that youth can be supported in taking responsibility for peacebuilding. The second describes ways to support violence reduction and reconciliation— key preconditions for peacebuilding. The third discusses how to support young people's participation in local development. The fourth section describes ways to support livelihoods and entrepreneurship for youth in Somalia. Finally, the fifth section makes a case for improving the rule of law and undertaking security sector reform.

Through these sections, this chapter creates an operational framework for supporting youth in peacebuilding, as part of development programming implemented by Somalia's government, the United Nations, the World Bank, and other development actors. This framework builds on the Youth Inclusion Framework, which underlines the importance of economic, cultural, social, and political factors on youth development, and the Positive Youth Development Framework, which states that youth need four forms of support to succeed: (1) support for basic developmental needs; (2) protection; (3) preparation (skills and competencies); and (4) engagement. Most importantly, the proposed operational framework incorporates peacebuilding measures that reflect Somali youths' definition of peace and their perceptions of factors that have an impact on peacebuilding. This means addressing many issues regarding access to services, jobs, and fairness of the justice system, as described by study respondents. Community leaders can be supported, as they provide ways for young people to participate in activities at the local level. However, youth should not be considered as mere recipients or beneficiaries of government and civil society activities. The framework therefore envisages youth participation in the design and implementation of peacebuilding activities to ensure that governance, justice, and service delivery programs positively impact their lives.

Enabling Young People to Take Responsibility for Peacebuilding

This work makes it clear that young people in Somalia are eager to build peace. Supporting them in these efforts means first building on youths' individual capacities and on the strength of their commitment to peacebuilding. Young people asked for support in education— including for young children—and, in particular, for peace education.

Peace education can have positive impacts in Somalia. Many respondents specifically mentioned the need for education that can lead to cohesion and peace. Peace education should be offered at two levels, both within the school system and at the community level. The latter may involve NGOs, religious institutions, and other entities. These programs should employ evidence-based, active learning techniques and be culturally and contextually appropriate, focusing on specific knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to peacebuilding. Above all, they should contribute to youth empowerment and the emergence of youth-led community and local development initiatives.

Training of Somali youth in life and job skills   PHOTO / UN-Habitat

BOX 3: LEBANON'S NATIONAL VOLUNTEER SERVICE PROGRAM

Lebanon's National Volunteer Service Program (NVSP) was launched in 2013 to increase social cohesion and employability among Lebanese youth aged 15–29. To achieve these objectives, NVSP provides participating youth civic engagement opportunities and soft skills training to increase their employability and improve social service delivery.

One of the most innovative features of NVSP is that at least 30 percent of youth who participate in a NVSP-financed project must come from communities outside of where the project is implemented. Volunteering outside of one's own community is considered a best practice by development psychologists, who claim that a change in context is a prerequisite for improved trust, respect, and cooperation among people from different backgrounds. Volunteerism can also provide youth the opportunity to participate in an unpaid work experience and improve their soft skills, such as the ability to work in teams, innovate, manage, and resolve conflict, as well as learn responsibility and flexibility at work. As part of the effort to scale up the project, Syrian refugee youth in the targeted communities are now able to participate in project activities. The scale up is contributing to improved social stability and service delivery. To date, around 7,150 youths and close to 150 different NGOs, universities, schools, and municipalities have been directly involved in the project's activities. This includes 3,600 youth who have participated in the implementation of 58 volunteering projects throughout Lebanon.

In addition, NVSP has created important public goods, including: (1) an online portal, which enables the project's implementing partners to post volunteering opportunities and eligible youth to apply for them, thus effectively serving as a matching platform; and (2) a soft-skills training curriculum, which has been tailored specifically for Lebanon (characters, cultural references, dialect, etc.), and can be accessed both by participating youth (through in-class training) and any interested youth through the online portal (e-learning). The NVSP impact evaluation showed that the program had a statistically significant impact on social cohesion in the country, measured by levels of tolerance and sense of belonging to one's community.

Source: NVSP 2018.

Other types of nonformal education would also help promote peace and develop Somalia's youth. For example, community-based learning activities could help young people learn practical skills in either peacebuilding, critical thinking, or citizenship. Young people could be supported in acquiring communications, leadership, and problem-solving skills, which would help them promote peacebuilding activities and also help them in other areas of their lives. In learning these skills and teaching them to others via peer-to-peer activities, young people can become role models in their communities. Programs that emphasize social, emotional, and planning-related soft skills can be powerful violence-reduction tools, and recent behavioral programs have shown positive outcomes.[85]

Youth volunteerism must be given a prominent place in Somalia's development and peacebuilding agenda. These are the activities in which youth most often engage, and getting formal recognition and support for them could further encourage youth participation. In particular, supporting youth who help the vulnerable could have the dual effect of empowering youth and improving the conditions of vulnerable individuals. There are examples of effective youth-focused volunteer programs designed to both encourage volunteerism and strengthen employable skills in conflict-affected areas. In Lebanon, the National Volunteer Service Program (NVSP) has for five years demonstrated the impact of a program designed to strengthen social cohesion and improve both employability and social service delivery (see box 3).

Though not mentioned by young people in this study, activities that engage youth in the arts could also be supported. Engaging young people in theater, for example, can build young people's skills in empathy, storytelling, and communication of peace and reconciliation messages. Promoting youths' skills in the arts can encourage innovation and creative thinking, as well as provide a forum for expressing ideas. Involving youth in music can encourage teamwork, develop focus, and provide a way for young people to become aware of music as a form of culture. All of these skills can bolster young people's ability to lead and take responsibility for peacebuilding.

The specific impacts of violence on youth also need to be addressed. The large number of respondents who mentioned GBV shows it is imperative to find ways to help victims while addressing the factors that may normalize such violence. In addition, many respondents said they had witnessed war or other acts of civil conflict, making it necessary to institute programs to address issues such as posttraumatic stress disorder and mental health.

Gender issues need to be taken into account at community and household levels. Young women can be leaders in their communities and be well positioned to serve as peacebuilders. Awareness-raising initiatives need to specifically encourage young women to participate and recognize them for their initiative and engagement. Constraints to their participation should be addressed—it would be important to work with community leaders and male youth to change the norms surrounding women's engagement. Young men also commented on the need to ensure gender equity. At the same time, there is a great need to support victims and witnesses of domestic violence. Involving these individuals in capacity and peacebuilding activities can be transformational, as they can begin to see themselves as valuable agents and increase their support networks within their communities.

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85   Blattman and Ralston 2015.

Reducing Violence, Promoting Reconciliation and Resilience

Among the study's respondents, there is demand for programming that directly promotes reconciliation and social healing. Respondents who said they had participated in such activities described them as having valuable impacts. The need to reconcile people of different clans seems particularly important.

Communities should consider instituting incentives to encourage youth to participate in peacebuilding. According to young respondents, this would include promoting community-level peacebuilding initiatives and setting up and operating youth empowerment and social innovation spaces. Communities, according to youth, can also play a role in discouraging clannism as a basis for social organization and in fostering and supporting youth integration programs that run across clans. Communities can also encourage collaborative and integrated efforts between community members and youth, strengthening peacebuilding efforts through civic dialogue. This can include, for example, convening youth consultations to discuss effective approaches to peacebuilding and addressing social issues, such as family violence and gender equity.

Youth-led peacebuilding activities should also be supported. Such activities can have a dual effect of building peace while strengthening youth capacities and networks. Youth can be trained as discussion mediators or facilitators. More practically, young people can be taught to understand how low-level disputes can escalate and how to de-escalate such situations. This important skill can help them prevent violence in their own lives and communities and build emotional awareness, which has positive repercussions across many areas of life.

Finally, reducing violence and promoting reconciliation should ensure that needs of former combatants and other war-affected youth are addressed. Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs provide a start for such activities, but need to be improved and expanded to address former combatants' psychosocial and livelihoods needs. In addition, various categories of young people affected by conflict who have left their communities—either as fighters, IDPs, or refugees—need support for their socioeconomic reintegration. A reconciliation process needs to be instituted to increase the trust between these young people and the communities to which they are returning.

Youth Engagement in Community and Local Development

Building peace requires stakeholders to form partnerships with key institutions. There is a particular need for local and national government institutions to collaborate with each other. One potential way to increase trust with citizens, and especially youth, is to expand community development programs. The peacebuilding impacts of such programming could be significant, as they could provide a much-needed venue for people from different backgrounds to find common ground.

Respondents consistently mentioned both the value of talking to people with whom they disagree and the need for local-level infrastructure and services. Overall, youth engagement in community decision making may strengthen young people's sense of belonging, self-confidence, and social capital.[86]

Although it is important for the state to lead in peace and development activities, it is also critical to improve the credibility of civil society. The weak reputation of civil society limits the ability of these institutions to have an impact. Given that they have greater reach into less secure areas than other institutions, it is important to build their capacity and credibility. In addition, civil society's reputation as an advocate for more accountable and transparent government needs to be built from the ground up, as this will be an essential role for this sector to play in a peaceful Somalia. To improve civil society's reputation, there is a need to control corruption within the sector, ensure that decisions are made transparently, and improve the results of the sector's activities and its accountability for reaching results.

Local administrations and civil society should support youth-led local initiatives as a way to involve young people in the local development process. Youth revealed a preference for prioritizing recreational and other communal activities and spaces.[87] Support for these endeavors would enable youth to gain experience in management, organizational leadership, and activism in the provision of local infrastructure and services. Supporting these youth-led groups to become involved in core development activities—such as health and education services—could also simultaneously improve local access to these services and partially address one of youths' main concerns.

Promoting Youth Livelihoods and Entrepreneurship

In jobless economies such as Somalia's, there is a stronger case for interventions that speed transition to youth self-employment and entrepreneurship. Rather than supporting supply-side youth employment interventions, this would include (1) supporting economic opportunities for informal sector youth, including youth from underserved urban areas, regions, clans, and rural youth; (2) supporting youth business development and entrepreneurship grants and access to finance; and (3) implementing cash-for-work programs. More specifically, in fragile states, capital injections—i.e., cash and capital goods—stimulate employment and raise long-term earning potential.[88] All of these interventions should be developed with a strong gender-sensitive approach to ensure that young women have access to these opportunities.

It is critically important that support for youth livelihoods and entrepreneurship be holistic. This means supporting young people not only with skills, including business development skills, technical skills, and socioemotional skills (such as skills that help young people develop the right mindset for work and entrepreneurship). Youth livelihoods and entrepreneurship activities need to be designed contextually, with a clear understanding of local (neighborhood, community) economies, and in close collaboration with successful local businesses and national/regional/international businesses that are able to employ and buy services and

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86   Adam and Oshima 2014.
87   World Bank 2014.
88   Blattman and Ralston 2015.

goods from youth. Such a comprehensive, localized approach is essential in a context such as Somalia, where security constraints and contextual factors can make economies that are only kilometers away from each other have very different characteristics. Box 5 illustrates the positive impact of a new entrepreneurship training curriculum, especially on women, which could be successfully adapted to Somalia.

Youth entrepreneurship and innovation should be fostered and build on positive local and global linkages, including with the diaspora. Comprehensive entrepreneurship support would include launching business incubators that offer business development services for youth micro-businesses and start-ups, coworking spaces, coaching, access to matching grants, and other sources of financing and crowdsourcing with diaspora support, along with efforts to connect young entrepreneurs to domestic and international markets.

Finally, an important issue to note when developing livelihoods and entrepreneurship initiatives is the need to manage perceptions of fairness around these activities. The high demand for such activities in Somalia often results in many potential beneficiaries being left out. Activities to support young people in these areas need to have clear communications and grievance redress strategies that make it possible for interested youth to understand why they were or were not selected to receive this type of support. Criteria for selecting these beneficiaries need to be clear and based on easily established facts when possible.

Abdihakim Ainte, a co-founder, and member of iRise Hub speaks during an interview at the innovation hub's premises in Mogadishu, Somalia on September 18, 2017. UNSOM Photo / Omar Abdisalan

BOX 4: TEACHING PERSONAL INITIATIVE BEATS TRADITIONAL TRAINING IN BOOSTING SMALL BUSINESS IN WEST AFRICA

Standard business training programs aim to boost the incomes of the millions of self-employed business owners in developing countries by teaching basic financial and marketing practices, yet the impacts of such programs are mixed. Recent collaborative research done by a World Bank team comprised of the Africa Gender Innovation Lab and Development Economics Group and researchers at the National University of Singapore and Leuphana University provides evidence for the effectiveness of personal initiative training, especially for the increase of female entrepreneurs' business success.

A psychology-based personal initiative training approach that teaches and promotes a proactive mindset and focuses on entrepreneurial behaviors proved to be more successful than traditional entrepreneurship training, based on a sample of 1,500 microenterprises in Lomé, Togo, selected from applicants to a government project financed by the World Bank.

Applicants had to be in business for at least 12 months, have fewer than 50 employees, operate outside of agriculture, and not be a formally registered company.

A randomized controlled trial assigned microenterprise owners to a control group (N=500); a leading business training program (N=500); or a personal initiative training (N=500). Four follow-up surveys tracked firm outcomes over two years and showed that personal initiative training increases firm profits by 30 percent, compared to a statistically insignificant 11 percent for traditional training.

Women who received personal initiative training saw their profits increase even more, by 40 percent as opposed to an only 5 percent profit increase achieved by women who received traditional business training. The training was cost-effective, paying for itself within one year.

Source: Campos et al. 2017.

Reforming Justice and Security

This work shows that there is an urgent need to professionalize government institutions and hold them accountable for their activities—particularly institutions in the justice and security sectors. One of the clearest requests is for these institutions to hire professionals on the basis of their knowledge and skills, and for these staffing decisions to be made transparently. The hiring pool needs to be expanded and diversified. This is particularly important for the security sector, as only professionalized, diverse, and accountable military and police forces are thought to be able to provide security on a national scale. A security sector reform and communications strategy could be put together that guides these institutions so they better protect citizens regardless of politics or clan.

It is also important to improve the reputation of the justice system to ensure that Somalis do not perceive that others are being unfairly imprisoned. As part of these reforms, it would be important to abolish programs that forcibly place children and youth in boarding schools as punishment. Finally, it is vitally important to reform the police and security sector more broadly and provide human rights training.

The system for monitoring and regulating community watch groups should be strengthened. Although these groups officially report to the Ministry of Justice, and young people regard them as a way to engage in peacebuilding, there is also the risk for them to engage in violence, as in many cases community watch groups engage in fighting armed groups or become armed groups themselves. These groups should be monitored to ensure that they do not engage in violence, discriminate against specific groups, or promote extremism. Their specific role and geographic areas of involvement should be regulated. Other local, government-supported security promotion activities that include community participation in nonviolent ways could be developed.

Somalis need to see a positive government presence at all levels to increase their trust in state institutions. This means controlling the territory with a well-trained and respected security sector and providing good quality government services. The government should make it a priority to communicate with citizens and let them know about the roles played by different institutions, various programs, policies, and services offered, and the challenges and limitations associated with these. The government should get citizens' feedback and let them know how their feedback is used. The government should also take the lead in promoting a national, inclusive identity. On the security front, it is critical for the government to address the issue of forced recruitment. Many respondents stated that they live with the fear of being forced to join an armed group, or having a loved one be forced to join. Although it is difficult and complex to address this issue, doing so could dramatically improve the relationship between citizens and their state.

Conclusion

The operational framework and peacebuilding measures proposed in this chapter should be seen as a multi-dimensional package, rather than a menu of self-standing interventions. Ideally, these groups of measures should reinforce each other in view of beginning to address the grievances as well as the aspirations of the young generation in Somalia. While the proposed interventions prioritize local and community-based approaches, they would ultimately need to be complemented by longer term policy reform measures, such as security and justice sector reforms and education or health reform, which were also identified by youth stakeholders as key areas to be addressed for sustainable peacebuilding.

FARDOWSA HUSSEIN ALI, YOUTH
"I want to live in a city that is peaceful where I can access what other youths in other cities in the world have, like being able to walk freely without fear. A city where I have access to free education, proper health services, clean water and other basic things that will allow me to lead a meaningful life." UNSOM Photo / Ilyas Ahmed

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