

DDG Learning Brief: Gender, Security and Justice in Somalia

As the Somalia Stability Fund's gender, equity and social inclusion (GESI) Strategy rightfully states: "[P]rescribing and policing gender norms and relations, in other words controlling society's experiences of femininity and masculinity, along with social exclusion practices, is arguably at the very heart of the protracted and violent struggle for political and ideological power in today's Somalia." DRC/DDG recognizes the different needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of people across gender, age, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic group or physical ability. DRC/DDG tries to create space for these differences in its programming, aiming to create equal access and opportunity for everyone to participate in and benefit from our interventions.

Within the "Time is Now" programme, DRC/DDG has aimed to incorporate principles of Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 16 and UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013) and 2122 (2013). DDG's Gender Strategy for Security and Justice Programming goes beyond narrow dichotomic views that perpetuate disempowering gender stereotypes.

Gender-sensitive security

DRC/DDG supports and implements a gender-sensitive security sector reform (SSR) approach because it understands that any successful security strategy needs to address the vulnerabilities of women, men, girls and boys as well as the resources available to them and the strategies that they employ for their own security. SSR interventions based on such understanding are more targeted and responsive, and thus more effective and sustainable. Moreover, security institutions that listen and respond to the needs of all parts of a community will be perceived as more legitimate and accountable.

How?

Inclusion is a long-term process, but in the span of the SSJP project, it has been possible to see significant improvements in gender-sensitive security. This was made possible through the following DRC/DDG initiatives:

- Building strong linkages between the community and security providers through community-policy dialogue and cooperation (CPDC) and disseminating information on citizens' rights and police responsibilities.
- Including women, young people and minority groups within CPDC forums.
- Producing gender-centred participatory action research pieces that are used for advocacy and influencing.
- Gaining senior-level commitment and support for gender mainstreaming and more inclusive hiring practices.
- Advocating and lobbying for more women in the security sector through CPDC.
- Identifying women and mentoring them to be part of the training process.

Impact

The following achievements and success stories illustrate the impact of this project on gender-sensitive security provision:

- In Dollow, where there were no female police officers, CPDC committee member and IDP camp resident Amina Issack Hussein volunteered to join the police, in order to serve her community and improve access to justice for women. She now works as a police officer at the Dollow police station and is working to establish a gender desk.
- District-level CPDC and Security and Justice Forums have taken up numerous women's priorities that were not being sufficiently addressed, including rape, domestic violence and the inability to move safely at night; these resulted in improvements such as recruitment of more gender officers, increased night-time patrols, road clearance, installation of lights, stronger response to family incidents and greater attention to the connection between substance abuse and sexual assault.



Gender-sensitive Access to Justice

DRC/DDG understands that Somalia, like many other African countries, has a pluralistic legal system. Supporting the system to be more transparent, representative, accountable and responsive to communities' needs is at the heart of DRC/DDG's work on access to justice.

In the "Time is Now" project, DRC/DDG has aimed to improve inclusive representation and participation in local-level conflict resolution mechanisms in order to address specific risks and vulnerabilities. It also worked closely with the Somalia Legal Aid Network (SLAN) in order to better address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) by improving assistance to survivors, referral networks and local institutional capacity. All of those initiatives are part of DDG's bottom-up approach to eliminating outdated and harmful attitudes and practices towards gender identity and expression.

How?

This project is part of a long-term investment and learning process on how to address people's needs and promote more accountable, inclusive, transparent and ultimately more just systems. This was made possible through the following DRC/DDG initiatives:

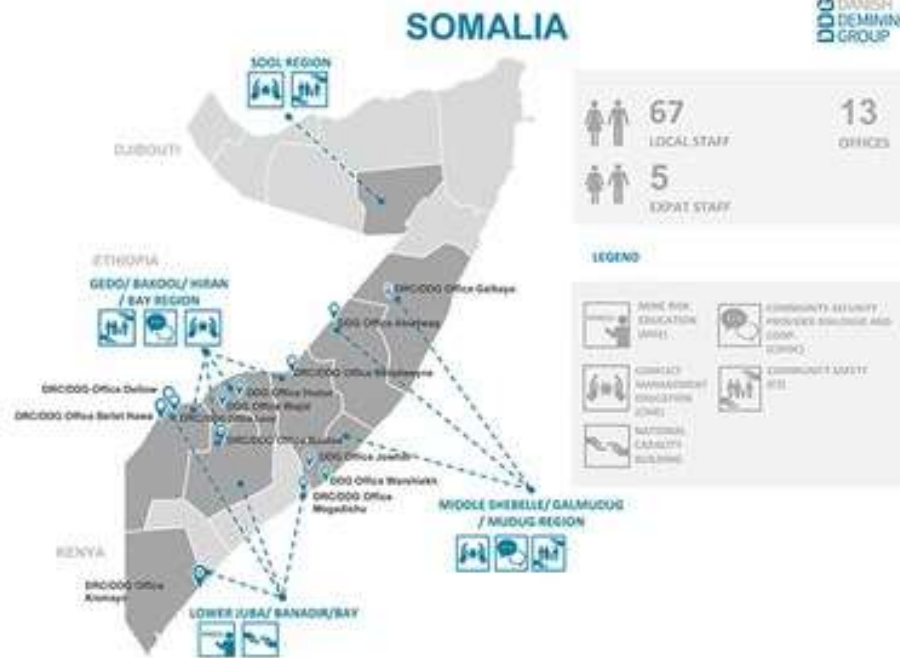
- Supporting the discussion on gender and human rights with customary and religious authorities.
- Supporting the establishment of the Guurti+ as more legitimate and inclusive conflict resolution mechanism.
- Training Guurti+ and Peace Committee members in mediation and third-party neutral conflict resolution techniques.
- Supporting a transparent and inclusive Xeer documentation process.
- Providing support to SLAN members in Hirshabelle, South West State and Jubaland.
- Supporting learning among implementing partners on gender-sensitive approaches to access to justice.
- Showcasing the work of DDG, LPI, LAW and Africa's Voices in the Police Accountability Working Group.

Impact

The following achievements and success stories illustrate the impact of this project on gender-sensitive access to justice:

- In Baidoa, the Chairperson of the Malaaq, Mr. Mowlid (a good example of a 'converted man'), pushed vigorously for the inclusion of minority clan women into the Malaaq+, and sensitized the other Malaaq members on the importance of active participation by women, especially in responding to SGBV cases.
- With DDG support, its partners WOCCA, SWDC and CEDA have delivered legal assistance and advice, psychosocial support and material assistance to SGBV victims, including case management services and referral for medical assistance and follow up, as well as psychosocial support training for women leaders, elders, youth leaders and police.
- A recent lessons-learned study found that the involvement of women representatives on the Guurti+ had provided them with greater social capital and enhanced the Guurtis' outreach to and legitimacy among local women; the study also found that women were widely perceived as highly active members of the Guurti+.
- DDG's support for the Guurti+ and district-level Security and Justice Forums have resulted in stronger coordination and referral of cases between customary, statutory and religious institutions, providing SGBV survivors with a wider range of options in seeking justice.

QUICK FACTS



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