



Puntland Library and Resource Center: A Community Center for Dialogue and Peace

Established by Somali Family Services in 2007, the Puntland Library and Resource Center is the first and only public library and resource center in the region. The Resource Center provides a comprehensive collection of reading materials, a computer lab with Internet and IT services, large conference halls, a coffee shop and much more.

In addition to maintaining a large collection of books, the Resource Center has distributed over 2 million volumes to local schools, the government and community NGOs. Each year over 6,000 community members visit the Resource Center to read while another 13,000 visit the Center's state-of-the-art computer and IT lab. While the Center is working toward gender parity, currently over a third of all visitors to the Center are women and girls. This accomplishment is especially notable given the extremely low school enrolment and literacy rates for girls (15% and 13%, respectively).



In addition to providing these much-needed services to the community, the Resource Center plays a critical role in advancing SFS's work in Puntland by engaging civil society, promoting good governance and peace-building, and empowering women and youth.

Engaging Civil Society, Promoting Good Governance and Peace-Building



As civil society is a key pillar of democracy, SFS holds capacity-building trainings, workshops and forums for other civil society organizations (CSOs). The Resource Center provides the necessary space for civil society, local government, traditional leaders, and other stakeholders to engage in the open dialogue that is critical for democratization and peace-building.

Through the Resource Center, SFS has facilitated over a dozen successful workshops, including forums on promoting human rights in Puntland, democracy and governance, Puntland's security and peace-building, and trainings of Members of

Parliament. The Resource Center offers a critical link between community services and democracy, demonstrating the tangible benefits of the democratic system of governance.

Empowering Women and Youth

SFS works with women, girls, youth and other marginalized groups to ensure that they have a stake in and benefit from the political and economic development of Puntland. SFS utilizes the Resource Center to provide job skills and other training to set youth on a path to productive employment rather than violence.

In the last year alone, SFS has trained nearly 200 youth in job skills, business, marketing and other hands-on skills at the Center. In addition to providing practical training, the Resource Center also empowers women and youth through access to the Internet and its Computer Information Center.



Building for Tomorrow

SFS works daily to empower citizens, strengthen civil society and help rebuild the Puntland government in an effort to create a responsive, accountable government. To achieve these goals, SFS envisions building on the success of the Resource Center through the addition of new recreational facilities, art and sports programs, and vocational training.

SFS believes that recreation and sports are not only critical to build healthy lifestyles, leadership development, and skills, but that they can also plant the seeds for sustainable peace through an understanding and appreciation for the rules of the game.

To better serve the needs of community's children, youth, and families, SFS is currently exploring the construction of a playground, a recreation room, as well as a basketball court.

