



Project title: Neighborhood College Concept  
Forum Location: Puntland Library and Resource Center  
Implementer: Somali Family Services  
Funder: National Endowment for Democracy

## Executive Summary

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Promoting democracy will not be possible without strong civil society organizations, complex network of women groups, media groups, and professional groups, NGOs, youth groups, religious groups and much other kind of groups that exist independently from government. Puntland has hundreds of such organizations--- Somali Family Services, Kaalo, WAWA, PSU, GTEC, Puntland Library and Resource Center, PDRC, and Media Association of Puntland. Despite of many challenges these groups give the citizens a way to make their views known to government officials and the general public. They also give citizens a means to take responsibility for protecting their rights and responsibilities.

Active citizen participation requires citizens who are willing to participate in civic life. Therefore, to increase civic participation and build strong government-citizen relations in Puntland, Somali Family Services held three, three days civic education forums on November 9-11<sup>th</sup>, November 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> and December 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> of 2010 in Garowe, Puntland. The forums attended by a highly enthusiastic diverse group of neighborhood chairpersons, secretaries, treasurers, IDPs, and government officials.

Twenty representatives from the eight neighborhoods attended the first and last three day forums while sixty-four participants attended the second forum. The second forum was designed as plenary session where the neighborhoods can state their overall needs and at the same time establish strong networking among them. The intention was to effectively indentify and understand the immediate concerns that these neighborhoods have, while extending an opportunity for them to share their concerns with the selected presenters.



The forums are designed to create space where state and local officials' citizens of Puntland can engage with one another to explain their various roles and needs. Somali Family Service's Neighborhood College Concept supports to promote and implement the "neighborhood college" concept in three major cities in the Puntland region of Somalia. "Neighborhood College" is a leadership and civic development program designed to help individuals learn more about local government, democratic processes, rights and responsibilities, and encourage them to participate in democracy building.

## **Background**

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Neighborhood college concept was created for the purpose of broadcasting unity and strong communication among neighborhoods in Puntland, while involving the neighborhood representative and the local government in serving the people to the best of their ability according to their resources that is available to them. Therefore, the targeted members were brought together so that they can have the time and space to discuss about their immediate needs and the best ways they can work together to overcome the challenges while achieving the know-how towards making decisions and the knowledge to better serve their community and the country as a whole.

In effort to harness and support neighborhoods, Somali Family Services took the initiative to identify government and civil society partners to implement the "neighborhood college" program while inviting neighborhood committees and local governments to partake forums in order to enhance information sharing and fostering harmonized community which strives for a better and developed systems and structures.

The twenty representatives in the first forum consisted of one secretary and one treasurer from each neighborhood, the remaining two participants, one was neighborhood coordinator, and one represented the IDPs. The second forum was designed as plenary session where the neighborhoods can state their overall needs and at the same time establish strong networking among them. The intention was to effectively indentify and understand the immediate concerns that these neighborhoods have, while extending an opportunity for them to share their concerns with the selected presenters. The third forum was designed to be similar as the first one, however, 90% of the participants were women which wasn't a surprise factor since the affairs of neighborhoods in Somalia are more likely dealt by women than men. Although the participants were anticipated to be 50% women and 50% men, participants from both forums equally contributed to the discussions. Therefore, the difference of gender balance between the two forums didn't cause a significant impact towards discussions.

In the three forums, there were total of eleven presents coming from different sectors both public (government) and private (nongovernmental). The six presenters from the government sector were from the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC), Ministry of Environment Wildlife and Tourism, Ministry of Information and Culture, Puntland AIDS Commission, Rafan Court, Puntland Police Commission, and The Local Government of Puntland. The remaining four, three came from education institutions such as Puntland State University and Garowe Teachers Education College, and one came from Puntland Development and Research Center.

## **Purpose of the report and audience**

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### **Purpose of the Report:**

The purpose for this report is to reflect on the days of the forum on; the details of the forum from participants to local government to the presenters, it will also project the implementation method of the forums, observations, the challenges and recommendations by SFS team.

### **Report Audience**

- National Endowment for democracy
- Somali Family Services board of Directors, management and staff
- Neighborhoods representatives to use it as reference of this event and know how to replicate the forum, for local government to learn more about the neighborhoods and their role.
- SFS to keep documented record of forums and any other interested actors.
- Auditors and project evaluators

### **Methods of Dissemination**

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To maximize the impact of the civic education forums, create health debate and establish positive link between government and civil society, SFS has been working very closely with the major media outlet to broadcast the forums (Radio Garowe, Radio Daljir, Horn Cable). These media outlets have been SFS strategic partners in Garowe.

To further promote the impact of the Neighborhood College Concept, SFS asked the participants to choose three members among themselves who would partake live interview with Radio Garowe and discuss about the forums and their benefits. The live interview was designed with phone calls where outside people would call and raise questions, concerns and comments. The intention of this approach was done for two reasons; one to examine whether the participating members of the forum grasped the importance of these forums, and two to have the message reach to a wider population.

Somali Family Service paid for the interview slot from Radio Garowe, thus SFS requested the benefitted wThree participating members has been the radio audience. The trainees discussed on the radio about their session and then highlight the topics, questions and answers that arose during the program. They answered questions phoned in from the radio audience. Hence, it was designed more like a show whereby people could call, raise questions, concerns and comments.

### **Opening Remarks**

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The Executive Director of SFS, Abdurashid Mohamed Ali and the Chief Consultant and Knowledge Transfer Specialist, Yasmin Abdullahi Ali welcomed all participants and the presenters to the forums. Mr. Ali remarked that the neighborhood college concept “As an important tool once it is understood by all. It promotes the importance for neighborhoods to have ambassadors that represents and conveys the

message of the community while speaking the voice of the people and advocating a healthy and safe environment to live in. A neighborhood needs a good school, neighborhood watch, committee for decision making who is also a link between the people and the government and finally a central office of where everyone can come to address their concerns. It is also created for the individuals to learn more about the local government, democratic processes, rights and responsibilities while encouraging them to participate in the development process.”

Ms. Ali who opened the third forum expressed great appreciation for the presenters, neighborhood representatives, National Endowment for Democracy who funded this project and Somali Family Service who have taken the initiative to organize and implement these current activities and the previous ones. To further introduce Neighborhood College Concept to the participants and the presenters, Ms. Ali said, “As we mentioned in our previous forums, the neighborhood college concept is a leadership and civic development program designed to help individuals learn more about local government, democratic process, rights and responsibilities, while encouraging them to participate in the development process.” Ms. Ali continued and said, “The overall objectives of these forums are to invite prominent professionals from public sector (Government) and private sector (business owners), and to share and present the nature of their services and how these services are beneficial to the communities they serve.”

## **Discussions**

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The discussion part of the forum was a way to create active dialogue between all eight neighborhoods in Garowe plus the representing members in the local government. The forums designed to contribute in neighborhood collaboration towards working together as a community in order to build; a school system that both parents and teachers work together and know what their children are learning, environmental hygiene, working on building a security system in every neighborhood, knowing information of what is happening from every neighborhood and last but not least they wanted a voice in the government when there is a need.

## **Presenters and presented institution**

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- Idil Jama: Puntland AIDS Commission
- Hussein Bulale: Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
- Abdishakur Yusuf: Ministry of Environment Wildlife and Tourism
- Suleiman Said Nor: Ministry of Information, Communication, Culture and Heritage
- Ahmed Mohamed Hassan: Puntland Department of Police
- Mohamed Hirsi: Rafan Court of Puntland
- Ali Farah: Puntland Development and Research Center.
- Abdirizak Shole: Garowe Teacher Education College
- Deeq Warsame and Hassan Abdullahi Elmi: Puntland State University
- Abdirashid Abdi and Mohammed Farah Ali: Local Government Representatives

## **First Neighborhood College Concept: Presentation and Discussion Forum**

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### **A. PAC (Puntland Aids Commission)**

Idil Jama, a gender project officer who works with Puntland AIDS Commission and also works closely with the Puntland government, was the first presenter. Jama talked about the role of PAC and later dived into HIV/AIDS power point presentation.

#### **Role of PAC in the community**

- Controls all NGO's who work with HIV/AIDS and puts them in one umbrella
- Collects data around Puntland
- Create awareness by educating the public:
  - Schools
  - hospitals
  - neighborhoods
  - traditional birth attendants

After introducing the work of PAC, Jama delivered a comprehensive power point presentation which focused on the about the various types HIV/AIDS is transmitted, symptoms and signs, when to seek medical care, diagnosis, treatments, medications, follow-up, preventions, and prognosis. Jama emphasized the misconception and the stigma of the disease and asked participants to take part of eradicating the stigmatization of the infection in order to provide supporting environment for those who are living with the virus. Idil Jama mentioned the number of individuals who got infected in the result of brutal rape. She said that the number is probably exceeding what PAC has in the record but because victims are not reporting then they will miss the opportunity window to get treatment which is said to be within the first 72hours of infection. Jama encouraged the neighborhoods to be an active task force that advises the victims to report to the authorities so they can get their justice served and receive the immediate medical attentions they need.

First day's discussion focused on the presented topic by Idil Jama, and after the presentation, the participants asked questions of how they can be active forces that work with PAC and reduce the prevalence and the incident rates of HIV/AIDS while at the same time reporting the rape cases that take place in their communities. After questions and answers pertaining to HIV/AIDS, both Idil Jama and the neighborhood representatives realized the need for further education and in order to achieve that, the following action points were put down:

- PAC to prepare a visit to each neighborhood and increase the awareness and HIV/AIDS education
- Neighborhoods to set a date and a place where PAC can deliver its services to the neighborhoods
- Neighborhoods to advocate for rape victims and people who are living with HIV/AIDS in order to decrease and eventually remove the stigmatization
- PAC to have branch offices in each neighborhood once resources allow
- PAC to educate few individuals from each neighborhood, so they can convey the acquired knowledge to the rest of the community

The second half of the first day, SFS inquired the progress neighborhoods were making since their establishment and whether they work collectively. Representatives from each neighborhood admitted that they have no networking with each other, but with the support of SFS, they will better their working relationship and perhaps in the future even create monthly meeting where all neighborhood representatives get together and update their progress.

Neighborhoods also identified their achievements, challenges, and the support they would need to further progress. Neighborhoods such as Isra'(Israac), 1<sup>st</sup> August(1da agoosto), and Hanti wadaag, proudly expressed their achievement in establishing neighborhood watch groups that rotate shifts every night to secure the peace stability of their neighborhoods. Some other neighborhoods were proud to have established MCH centers in their neighborhoods. The rest of the neighborhoods are making progress but all expressed challenges in fund and human resource capacity. The following state the overall support neighborhoods would want to get in order to further progress and make a positive impact in the community:

- Capacity building for the neighborhood administrations
  - Educating office workers with computer skills, writing skills, and work ethics
- Creating environment where work can be done effectively and efficiently
  - Furnishing offices with chairs, desks, and desktops
- Involving traditional and elderly leaders in the neighborhood committees
- Create networking among neighborhoods in order to have a harmonized community

The discussion of the first day was closed with an agreement to have all 64 neighborhood representatives to meet on November 14<sup>th</sup> 2010 so they can express their concern and present their cases in front of local government servant.

## **B. Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC) Department of Statistics (DoS)**

Hussein Bulale, the head of statistics in the department of statistics, joined us the second day session of the first forum to present the work of the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. Bulale talked about the role of MoPIC and DoS.

### **Role of MoPIC and Department of Statistics**

- MoPIC is custodial of all statistics related activities and data collection in Puntland.
- MoPIC is a governmental institution with momentous contribution towards achieving sustainable, socioeconomic development.
- MoPIC coordinate and direct development efforts through planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation of socioeconomic development in coordination with the public and private sectors, and civil society organizations while enhancing the economic, financial, and technical cooperation with various countries for a better standard of living for the people of Puntland.

- Department of Statistics of MoPIC designs, implements, and compiles all socioeconomics and administrative statistics data.
- Department of Statistics collects the necessary statistical information from all sectors during the preparation period of the FYDP, and lay down procedures that enables the state to have reliable databases.

Bulale discussed the Puntland Census that was to start in the following weeks. Bulale also talked about Puntland's five year plan which included all the sectors. One of the neighborhood representatives raised question of the method the department of statistics collects its data. Bulale stated that collecting data is resource consuming and due to our limited resource, we don't have the capacity to collect data as we would love to, however, we are fortunate enough to have UNICEF to compile data which we also use for our reports.

Bulale talked about the current Puntland census project funded by UNICEF that MoPIC and its Department of Statistics is undertaking. Bulale informed the participants on the upcoming events that require the help of the neighborhood representatives which include; the five year strategic plan, census 2011 and suggestion from the community on safety and security.

Bulale continued and said that if the people of Puntland work together and report the number of people in their houses, the number of people died, the number of new born, the employed and the unemployed number. It will aid the department to have valid and concrete numbers and in addition, the different sectors such health sector can know the number of people died in each region and perhaps measure the incident and causation of their death. Also the department of labor can have the number of unemployed and can accordingly plan how to reduce the unemployment rate, while the education sector will prepare facilities for the increasing population.

Bulale and the neighborhood representatives agreed to make an effective progress, and they agreed that the collaboration of all groups is an absolute necessity. On that note, the following points were put in place in order to achieve what Bulale said and stated above.

- Neighborhood planning
  - In the future census, each neighborhood should appoint a person to collect the census data of each family in that neighborhood.
- Department of Statistics to train the appointed individuals on data collection methods
- Both the Department of Statistics and Neighborhood representatives to work together when the people of Puntland is part of the Department's work.

### **C. Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism**

Abdishakur Yusuf, Director General of Ministry of Environment Wildlife and Tourism, presented the importance of their office since they are the newest office in Puntland. Yusuf states the roles of the Ministry and its current work. The presentations focused on Environment and the effect of pollution on human, animal, and environmental health, and the Puntland Census done by the Department of Statistics in the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. The Director General of Ministry of Environment, Abdishakur Yusuf educated the participants on the above stated concerns.

## Role of Ministry of Environment Wildlife and Tourism

- Ministry of Environment, Wildlife, and Tourism aims to lead a sustainable environmental system to ensure improved livelihoods and advance the state economy through improved sustainable natural resource management practices.
- In an effort to improve sustainable natural resources, Ministry identifies some emergent and positive community driven natural resource management practices.
  - Wildlife protection and conservation practices are taking place in some communities in Mudug and Nugal regions fines are imposed on poachers.
  - Some communities are already doing making progress in supporting the resource management practice by making enclosures out of rocks and metal drum instead of trees.
  - Laws instituted some of the communities to control charcoal burning.
- Ministry also identifies some key factors that might or have both immediate and long term negative impacts on the natural resources of Puntland such as;
  - Proliferation of milk and charcoal camps
  - Growth of urban centers exerts natural resources, such as water
  - Wanton clearing of trees for charcoal production-many pastoralists who lost their livestock turned to charcoal burning labor
  - Poor disposal of non degradable plastic bags

Yusuf educated the neighborhood representatives on the upcoming project that needs everyone participation in planting 60,000 trees in 4 years and monitor the progress. He also discussed the possibilities of eradicating the use of charcoal for cooking means. "In the near future, the Ministry is planning to provide an alternative source of cooking energy," said Yusuf. He emphasized that the absence of other cooking energy alternatives, the need to cut bushes and trees to produce charcoal will not fade away. The Director General said, "We are working on having the business sector invest in stoves so people can have other source of cooking energy while making sure that all the spare parts of the stoves are available and convenient for consumers to have whenever they need. At the same time, we will have charcoal burners to have job replacements, so they too can have means to provide for their families."

Yusuf announced to sustain Puntland's natural resources; it needs collective effort both from national and international communities, and the government. Thus, neighborhood representatives were encouraged to join the fight to conserve the natural resource for a better future for their children, livestock, and environment.

The participants and Yusuf put the following points down in the hopes of improving the current environmental status and preventing future land erosion and overwhelming pollution that will amputate the future of our children and their children:

- Alternative energy
  - From coal to stoves



- Ministry of Commerce to provide the commodities needed to implement the proposed alternatives and Ministry of labor to provide alternative jobs for those who worked as coal burners: (Consumers always have the access to get these alternatives)
- Environmental sustainability
  - Tree planting
  - Plastic bag recycling

#### **D. Garowe Teachers Education College (GTEC)**

Principle of Garowe Teacher Education College, Abdirizak Shole, was one the two presenters invited on the third day of the first forum. Shole introduced the historical background of GTEC; including its founders and funders. He talked about the admission process and the requirements for the prospective students.

##### **Background History of GTEC**

As stated on GTEC's website, the concept of developing a primary teachers' education college in Puntland started in year 2000. It was in response to the lack of trained teachers to facilitate the delivery of quality education in primary schools. In year 2001, Diakonia was able to source and secure funding from SIDA for the construction of the college which was completed in year 2004.

##### **Admission requirement for diploma of secondary teachers**

- Have a Secondary School Leaving Certificate for the last two school years and attained minimum grade B, preferable grade A
- Sit entrance exam (Math and English)
- Complete all required forms for admission included four passport size photo
- Birth Certificate

##### **Admission requirement for diploma of primary teachers**

- Have a Secondary School Leaving Certificate for the last two school years and attained Grade C and above
- Sit entrance exam (Math and English)
- Complete all required forms for admission included Four passport size photo
- Birth Certificate

##### **Admission requirement for diploma of secondary students**

- Should be a girl in which attained grade D and above from Secondary exam for the last two schools years
- Certificate letter
- Birth Certificate
- Complete all required forms for admission included Four passport size photo

Abdirizak Shole expressed how GTEC is putting great effort to increase the capacity of teachers, and their effort is not limited to that but it goes far and beyond. As stated above, GTEC also encourages girls who didn't complete their high school years, to come and join GTEC in order for these girls to get the support they need to obtain their high school diploma. Shole clearly explained that this approach wasn't meant to isolate the boys from this opportunity but as the reality presents in Somalia, girls' education and boys' education are not valued the same. Girls, in addition to their school work, they attend house work and are the care takers of their young siblings; because of that, girls face pressure and responsibilities that negatively affect their educational progress. Therefore, GTEC extends opportunities for such girls to empower them and provide opportunity for them to finish their high school diploma, and if they wish to become teachers, they can apply the teachers' program at GTEC like any other prospective students.

### **E. Puntland State University (PSU)**

The administrator of Puntland State University, Deeq Warsame, was the second presenter of the third day. The purpose of inviting Warsame and Shole on the same date was to have Shole talk about the primary and secondary education, while Warsame talks about the higher education, so that the neighborhood representatives can have the full spectrum of the education sector before the third forum in which the Ministry of Education will be invited to present the work it does.

Warsame also discussed the history of PSU tracing back to the Garowe School of Management, a women's school in Garowe offering courses in accounting, computer skills, business English and business management. A year later and the graduation of 60 women, the school was renamed to Puntland Community College which offered two year programs. In 2004, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program and USIU Nairobi, PCC was expanded to include 4-year programs and renamed to Puntland State University.

Deeq Warsame encouraged neighborhood representatives to come and visit the university with their children. He said, "Educational tour ignites children's imagination of their future aspirations."

The third day of the first forum SFS invited two presenters from education sector; one that provides teachers to elementary and secondary schools, and the other provides higher education to those who have completed their secondary education. The effort was to give participants all sides of education from teaching the teachers to teachers teaching the students. After the presentations, participants expressed massive gratitude for the new learned information and requested the following from both presenters:

- To send student volunteers to the neighborhood offices to educate the office workers.
- To allow neighborhood representatives to tour in their institutions.
- To find a scholarships for at least one person from each neighborhood to increase the educational capacity of that neighborhood.
- Schools to aid neighborhoods with computers and desks.
- Neighborhoods to have and prepare a working environment if the institutions provide volunteers.

## **Second Neighborhood College Concept : Plenary Forum**

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### **F. Local Government Representatives:**

The second forum as mentioned in the executive summary was intended to bring all the representatives of the eight neighborhoods. Abdirashid Abdi and Mohammed Farah Ali who work for the local government and are liaisons between the government and the neighborhoods led this forum in an effort to understand the concerns of each neighborhood and convey their messages to the local government.

Abdirashid Abdi took the initiative to explain the work of the local government and expressed his deep understanding of both sides; neighborhoods and the local government. He encouraged all neighborhood representatives to strategize ways to be self sufficient and find a new approach that leads to sustainable offices that strengthens the progress and the collaboration of neighborhoods. He said, "Now that the eight neighborhoods were reduced to seven and two of the neighborhoods were diffused to one, we should have more man/woman power to achieve more than we could before."

For the first time in Puntland Library and Resources Center, all members of the eight neighborhoods in Garowe and their local government representatives were together in one room to discuss the importance of meeting. All members were eager to meet one another and to exchange conversations with the local government.

The second forum started with heated discussions among neighborhoods. All neighborhood representatives appeared to have the need to express their concerns. Abdirashid Abdi, the local government representative was leading the discussions and all questions were addressed to him. Neighborhood representatives asked him what the government does with their tax money. Others complained about the education and health costs, and lack of infrastructure. Although the questions were very sensible, appropriate answers were not easy to find due to several reasons: one the Puntland Administration is still young, two there no adequate policies that protects its citizens, and three there are no enough resources both human resource and financial resource to cover the needs of all the citizens. Still, Abdirashid found satisfying answers and in order to promote self sufficient, he asked the representatives to take ten minutes to strategize ways to self sustain without external support.

Representatives were broken into groups of similar jobs; treasure with all the other treasures, secretaries with other secretaries, and so forth. After ten minutes, each neighborhood was asked to regroup and share their findings, and then chose a spokes person to present their strategy. It was an eye opening moment when all the spokes persons expressed that at the moment, they are not capable of doing their jobs without external aid, but that they are hopeful that the day they stand on their feet will be very soon.

The following are the points put down when individuals completed their presentations:

- Regular meetings with the local government and the 7 neighborhoods
- Have a working schedule for neighborhood representatives
- Form a committee of whom is responsible for all the financial arrangements
- Have a system of which money should be collected from every neighborhood for infrastructure
- Raise awareness for meetings using local media

## **Third Neighborhood College Concept: Presentation and Discussion Forum**

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The third forum of Neighborhood College Concept was held approximately six weeks later from the last forum. During this forum, SFS aimed to enhance the participants' comprehension of Community Policing, Human rights, judiciary system, and Researching & information sharing. The main objectives were:

- To promote a working relationship between the police and the neighborhoods while educating neighborhood representatives about community policing in order to:
  - Listen and to address neighborhood concerns.
  - Bring community resources together to solve problems.
  - Impact specific crime problems.
  - Reduce repetitive calls for service.
  - Educate the public about its Police Department.
  
- To enhance communities' knowledge and understanding regarding Puntland constitution, different types of law, and the Judiciary System so they can:
  - Make sure they are acting lawfully at all times and at the same time protect themselves against tyranny.
  - Make use of contracts and agreements, they will fair much better if they are familiar with the laws of where they live.
  - Understand the power of a written and signed contract over a verbal agreement.
  - Protect themselves against unlawful imprisonment and unjust accusation.

SFS allocated and invited expert presenters In order for participants to understand the importance of community policing, the functions of the courts, human rights, research and obtaining information.

### **G. Community Policing:**

Ahmed Mohamed Hassan, Police Chief of Nugal Region, introduced and explained Community Policing to the participants. Hassan stated "in the 60's some countries started Community Policing when their communities realized police alone could not stop crimes". Hassan explained to the participants the difficulties of police monitoring every activity at each neighborhood and the need for community to work with police to prevent crimes and to store peace in the city. The police Chief said "in contrast to people, police is not always in the crime scene. That's why Community policing is very much needed". He assured police commitment to work with community to form Community Policing, and pointed out various benefits for Community Policing including police-community trust building, crimes-preventions, and people familiarizing with rules. He concluded his speech by illustrating the following ways in which the community and the police can work together and raise awareness of the importance of community policing:

- Make connection between community and police through training workshops.
  - The chief of the police, Mr. Hassan will prepare and hold a training workshops for the neighborhoods
  - Neighborhood will set aside a day to host members of the police force so they can educate them the best way of keeping the neighborhoods safe
- Teaching each neighborhood's community the essence of Community Policing.
  - Improving community awareness of Community Policing until community become self-sufficient to have their own police.
- Community to play a major role in keeping peace.
  - Community to report to police about suspicious activities, so that crimes could be prevented before it happens

Questions and answers session followed his speech. Muhibo Yusuf, a neighborhood committee explained the misconduct of police and expressed the need for police to train its members and restrict them to abide the law. The police Chief agreed with her, at the same time he reminded everyone of the little peace we have and told them the government priority is to maintain security. Hamdi Mohamud, another neighborhood committee told the Chief of police that police don't take the public information very seriously, and when community informs police of suspicious activities on their neighborhoods, the police are not quick to respond and they arrive when situations got sour. The Chief responded, "We receive quite number of reports each day, although huge number of these reports are hoax and lacks authenticity, we still do our best to evaluate each case thoroughly and respond to them accordingly in the timely manner that our circumstances allow us." To ensure that each case is reported and community policing is taken as serious matter, the chief gave his contact number to each neighborhood committee representative and assured them they can report to him directly.

#### **H. Updates of Neighborhoods Activities:**

The second part of the first day was dedicated to inquire the updates and the progress made since the last forum. The Chief Consultant and Knowledge Transfer Specialist, Yasmin Ali, asked participants to choose one person from each neighborhood to present the updates and progress his/her neighborhood has made. Neighborhood's chair-persons presented their accomplishments as the following:

- **Waberi:**
  - Maintaining the existing Mother Child Health clinic by making sure the equipments are always functioning, and constantly broadcast MCH to all the residents of the neighbor.
  - Created effective administrations to emphasis the role of every person for the neighbor.
  - Created task groups to collect information from the seven neighborhoods
- **Hantiwadag:**
  - Educate the neighborhood to work independent.
  - Established neighborhood cleaning program to achieve sustainable clean environment.

- Implemented violence elimination program by engaging youth to activities they like such as sport.
- **Hodon:**
  - Contributes to clean environment by allocating garbage pits in separate places and put signs to make people aware.
  - Built adult education center and bring student from PSU to teach.
  - They collect money from the residents of the neighborhood weekly for Food Distribution to the poor.
- **Horsed:**
  - Assigned a team to report neighborhood suspicious activities in order to achieve stable peace.
  - Estimated the neighborhood population in part of ministry of planning collaboration.
  - Cover pothole.
- **Isra:**
  - Collects money every Friday from residents for the purpose of cleaning the neighborhood.
  - They achieved to convince an agency to provide a school for the kids in the neighborhood because of their remote location of any kid's school.
- **Wadajir:**
  - Despite being the dumping ground, it has shown progress in terms of garbage management.
- **1<sup>da</sup> Agosto:**
  - Stable peace: created youth group to keep peace.

The day ended with summarization of Neighborhood Collage Concept. Werda Osman, SFS Consultant and Knowledge Transfer Specialist asked participant to demonstrate their willingness to work with police in order to reduce crimes. Participants discussed and debated Community policing and showed their enthusiasms to work with police, they also promised to teach their neighborhoods Community policing and the importance of working alongside police.

## **I. LAW and Judiciary System:**

The first part of the second day was given to Mohamed Hirsi, a judge in Nugal court. Hirsi took the platform and explained Law and Judiciary System to the participants, and defined a court as an entity in the government to which the administration of justice is delegated. Hirsi expressed that the percentage of people who have knowledge of the law system is very minimal and the need to address and educate people's rights and the regulations they need to follow is very crucial. The Judge revealed the barriers that stand in the way of Puntland Judiciary System. He said "Most of the cases come to us take long time to process. This is because difficulties in finding the summoned party". He also described the role of court in preserving and defending civilian's rights, and not rushing in giving verdicts since the accused person will lose his freedom and honor if charged guilty and put behind bars. The Judge pointed out the

importance of attending courts hearings. He stated “people will know the integrity of judges’ decision and the integrity of the Judiciary System when they attend hearings, observe the procedures, and listen to the judge’s ruling”.

After the speech participants raised few questions concerning the Law. Abshiro Adan, a neighborhood committee asked the Judge his ability to attend one of the neighborhoods meetings to explain the way cases presented to the court and the followed procedures. The Judge agreed to attend community meetings as long as he will explain the court work, and informed participant that they should seek lawyers when they want consultation about issues regarding the law.

## **J. Law and Human Rights**

Hassan Abdullahi Elmi, Professor at Puntland State University, started explaining Law and Human Rights to the participants by first giving the definition of human rights: Elmi defined human rights as the basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled, often held to include the right to life and liberty, freedom of thought and expression, and equality before the law. Elmi stated that human rights basic rights of each person regardless of nationality, color, origin, or race. The professor explained to the participants the basic rights each person is entitled to have, and that slavery is not the only factor that determines violation of the human rights. He illustrated, when someone doesn’t have a freedom of speech, a freedom of religion, a right to work, or a right to education then his/her human rights is violated. He also explained the good neighboring in relation to Human Rights. Professor Hassan concluded his speech by saying “if you respect each other’s right, and if you care for each other, certainly human rights will prevail.

In group work session, SFS asked the participants to brainstorm and list what they would like to do, change, or improve to be good neighbors. Participants discussed, debated, and presented their ideas. The following is the list:

- To help each neighbor.
- Often visiting neighbors to maintain a good relationship.
- Sharing the happy times, sad times, and grieving periods.
- Tolerate their problems especially the out of control problems (problems a neighbor cannot solve; i.e. wailing ill person, mentally ill individuals, and so forth).

## **K. Puntland Development and Research Center:**

Ali Farah from Puntland Development and Research Center (PDRC) presented the organization and the services they do for the community, and how they contributed to Puntland peace building process. Farah said, “ PDRC is a successor body of former War-torn Societies Project International (WSPI), which operated in Puntland during 1997–99. On October 30, 1999, the center was founded as a Local Non-Governmental Organization (LNGO), governed by a Board of Directors (BoD) of seven members. The Board, also called “Founders”, consists of five men and two ladies. The present director, Abdurahman Abdulle Osman (Shuke), then became the first executive director of organization.”

Farah described PDRC as a meeting place for peace promoters to discuss issues concerning peace in Puntland, a research center that works with various projects such as; *Demobilization and Integration of Militia and Armed Groups* funded under the auspices of the Somali Civil Protection Program - SCPP/UNPD and an interactive participatory research into the *Harmonization of Legal Codes* (Customary, Sharia, and Secular) in Puntland, as part of a broader civil protection program under the auspices of Diakonia-Swedish, an INGO, and UNDP.

Farah applauded the Neighborhood College Concept and inquired whether Somali Family Services and Puntland Development and Research Center can work together and extend these forums while expanding the number of participants.

### **Ministry of Information, Communication, Culture and Heritage :**

Suleiman Said Nor, Director General of the Ministry of Information, Communication, Culture and Heritage discussed the roles of the ministry and its responsibilities to the neighborhood representatives.

### **Roles of Ministry of Information, Communication, Culture and Heritage**

- Screen all information services, including radio, television and publications.
- Provide information and news to the public through a network of radio and television broadcasting stations, and through the publication and distribution of books and other material.
- Initiates and undertakes information campaigns in cooperation with other INGOs and LNGOs agencies, covering different fields such as health, eradication of illiteracy, and peace building.

Nor also informed the participants about the Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) awareness project the Ministry has undertaken. Mr. Nor expressed the lack of direct financial support the ministry receives from the INGOs which he denoted on the Ministry's affiliation with the Government in which most INGOs treats as a political entity that they don't want to get involved. Therefore, The Ministry receives indirect financial support from LNGOs to implement projects such as FGM, HIV/AIDS, among others, to implement while creating awareness and educating the community.

At the end of Nor's presentation, the neighborhood representatives asked, "In case if the neighborhoods have an announcement to make about certain menaces, such as environmental hygiene and security, would the ministry support the neighborhoods and aid them to disseminate the intended message(s) though media outlets? Nor promised that any information, awareness, or messages that any neighborhood representatives want to deliver will be supported and any media cost of delivering that message will be covered by the Ministry.

Nor continued and encouraged the neighborhoods to utilize the Ministry and contribute ideas. Prior to the end of the third day's session, both the Neighborhoods representatives and Mr. Nor put down various ways the two parties can communicate the importance of preserving Somali culture and Heritage while improve the quality of information of Somali Media.



## **The overall key finding, Observations, Challenges, and Recommendations**

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### **The overall key findings:**

- All neighborhoods expressed the need to have their offices to be furnished (Desks, chairs, computers, and stationeries)
- Capacity building for the neighborhood committees were requested
  - Provide training or educational opportunities to the secretaries, treasures, securities, and all the staff of neighborhood committees.
  - Puntland State University will provide interns to build the capacity of neighborhoods.
  - Neighborhoods will prepare working environment for the interns to deliver trainings
- The importance of establishing and strengthening the network and coordination among neighborhoods were highlighted.
  - Neighborhood should have once a month meeting among themselves to update their progress, share their concerns, organize forums and debates and strategize ways to approach and resolve any pertinent issues.
- Collaboration and information sharing between neighborhoods were brought into attention.
  - Neighborhoods should take action to seek further assistants and know how and when to allocate the needed resources.
  - Involve and invite traditional leaders/elders to the neighborhoods for cultural knowledge exchange.
  - Liaison to hold a meeting to bring all the heads of the neighborhoods together
  - SFS will support the workings of the neighborhoods, in the case of meeting place, or anything that is pertaining to the progress of neighborhood collaboration.

### **Observations:**

Since it was a community driven event, SFS staff invited presenters to educate the neighborhood representatives about the work they do and how it is beneficial to the community. After each presentation there was Q&A session of about 20 minutes. Thus, high portion of the forums were spent on presentations, question and answers, and discussion among participants and interactions between participants and presenters. SFS staff would facilitate if further explanations were needed or individuals steered off topics.

Therefore, SFS had a great opportunity to do the following observations:

- Time Management:- Presenters and participants all arrived on time, returned from break on time, and communicated in timely manner.
- Topic Management: - Topics were maintained accordingly and each topic was covered successfully.
- Q&As:- Participants asked important and relevant questions; presenters gave appropriate answers and whenever not sure promised to find the information for them or referred them to another sources that would provide accurate and complete information.
- Interactions between participants and presenters; - The interactions were very positive and parties respected one another while speaking and when spoken to.

- Information capacity: - Participants expressed thirst for information; however, the allocated time didn't allow quenching their thirst.
- Participants Demography:- balanced gender, fewer youth individuals than older individuals.

### **Challenges:**

When it comes to challenge, Somali Family Services hasn't experience major challenges in facilitating these forums, but the following challenges are what the neighborhood representatives have expressed and the challenges they have.

- Managing Individuals:- The second forum, some of the participants took situation personally and for few minutes made the floor a bit uncomfortable for others.
- Age groups:- Not enough youth groups, thus the decision making of the neighborhood would be the sole responsibilities of non youth when about 70% of Puntland population are youth. Hence, more women attended plenary session.
- It sounded the current administration had a mixed feeling toward the neighborhood. One hand, the administration felt, the neighborhood is best way to engage the citizens while on the other hand the administration felt the neighborhood will pressure and demand more from the administration. Hence, government looked like confused how they are going to handle these neighborhoods. So far, the administration rented houses for the eight neighborhoods while paying salary for chair and vice chair of each neighborhood. This point in time is not clear whether the administration will institutional the neighborhood and use their decentralization process or leave the neighborhood as it is.
- **Challenges expressed by Neighborhoods:**
  - Lack of office equipment, furniture, and supplies
  - Lack of data management
  - Lack of offices and meeting areas for the representatives
  - Lack of basic needs for the people e.g. sanitation, health, education, etc
  - Tax money doesn't reach the people (The meeting the neighborhoods expressed to the local government, taxation without representation). Hence, that was when the debate heated because local government stated "Many of the Puntlanders do not pay taxation". And some of the forum attendees challenged the local government and one individual personalized the discussion. Much appreciation goes to local government representative who developed a thigh skin to tolerate and explain to the neighborhood their position. (It was very much town hall meetings).

### **Recommendations:**

The participants they requested for more space and time for the event, in order to have longer discussions and presentation for the attending members. They also emphasized in having smaller

rotating groups to better understand each neighborhood and more knowledge transfer among themselves.

## **Summary and Reflections**

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Overall, the three forums provided an insight of the progress the neighborhoods are making and the further support they need in order to continue with their progress and build strong neighborhoods that has voice in political arena. The presentations were intended to enhance the knowledge capacity of the neighborhood representatives so that they take what they learn back to the community and to that end, the participants expressed gratitude and requested forums such as these to be organized and more awareness to be created.

Abdurashid Ali, SFS executive director , Werda Osman, SFS Consultant and Knowledge Transfer Specialist, and Yasmin Ali, Chief Consultant and Knowledge Transfer Specialist, who facilitated the forums acknowledged the communication gap between the neighborhood representatives and the lack of networking amongst them. Therefore, SFS organized a forum to introduce the importance of networking and later asked the neighborhoods to have monthly meetings for all neighborhoods so they can update their progress while sharing their success and concerns.

Yasmin Ali gave an overview of the two previous forums while summarizing the last forum. Ms. Ali emphasized the importance of participants to implement the skills they learned in their neighborhoods. Ms. Ali concluded “Somali Family Services’ primary aim for these forums is to provide knowledgeable presenters and local government servants to a selected group of representatives from the neighborhoods of Garowe and give them the opportunity and the space to interact with one another and with the invited guest speakers, and to gain the knowledge or obtain needed information that is specific to area of concern and fits into the overall progress of the Garowe communities and contributes to the development of the nation.”

To further highlight the purpose of these forums and how they can have an affective impact, Ms. Ali said, “SFS has previously encouraged your colleagues and coordinators to convey the messages they received from these forums to the rest of the neighborhoods and communities, and SFS is still encouraging you today, to do what was ask of the previous groups. SFS believes and strives, as Somali proverb says “one finger can’t wash an entire face” SFS strives to be part of a change and we can achieve the full spectrum when we work together. So please, we have done our part and we kindly ask you to do yours to move our nation forward to greater progress.”

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## **Somali Family Services' activities beyond Endowment 2009-2010 grant**

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### **Puntland Library and Resource Center:**

The Puntland Library and Resource Center is the first public library and resource center located in the area and offers the community Internet café with printing and photocopying options, a conference hall, and Coffee Shop. The Library's purpose is to provide an innovative solution to reform and to strengthen the effectiveness of civil society organizations (CSO) throughout Puntland by providing the use of a facility and resources for capacity building and knowledge and technology transfer. The Library is envisioned to improve the collaboration of civil society organizations and the Puntland public sector (government) in order to promote good governance and at the same time provide a top-level and secure location for workshops and other meetings.

The Library and its programs focus on civil society capacity building, establishing itself as an information repository for Somalia- and Puntland-related documents and as a safe, quality space for students and community members to read and conduct research. The Library's key area of focus is to encourage dialogue and an understanding of roles between the civil society sector and the agencies of the Puntland government (ideally bringing the two parties together). Somali Family Services continue managing and improving the resource center.

### **UPR Report:**



Somali Family Services (SFS) hosted and invited 12 NGOs based in Garowe, Puntland to partake meeting that took place at Puntland Library Resource Center ("PLRC") which was facilitated by Fiona Adolu, a Human Rights Officer. The meeting's main goal was to have the civil societies within Puntland region of Somalia to produce report(s) that reflect on the achievement, best practices, challenges and constraints of human rights in the region. Adolu expressed the importance of having Somalia to return from its hiatus on submitting reports since

1994. SFS took the initiative to lead UPR project and assured that it has the commitment to collaborate and support other NGOs to produce joint or an individual report. By October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010, SFS completely and successfully submitted the UPR report to Geneva, Switzerland.

### **UNDP: Civil Society Forums:**

Somali Family Services launched State-Society Building project funded by UNDP. There were three forums each consisting three day sessions in Garowe, Puntland. The purpose was to jointly educate civil society, government, community elders, and youth leaders on the importance of government and good governance, the havoc of Clan loyalty, the significant of affirmative action, and the benefits of charity act. The forums aimed to close the communication gap between civil society, government, and

community in order to achieve government, civil society, and community engaging one another to explain their roles in peace and state building and the means to accomplish.

There were a total of 120 participants in the forums including government officials, UNDP officials, religious leaders, women associations, youth leaders, neighborhood committee chairs, businesses owners, and media outlets. Among them were speaker of the house, Abdirashid Hirsi, Mayor of Garowe, Abdiasis Nur Ilmi, State Minister



of Good Governance, Mohamed Gashan, UNDP Head of Sub Office Garowe, Nick Beresford, UNDP Good Governance Office, Philip Cooper, Director General of PDRC, Abdirahman Shuuke, Director General of Puntland Good Governance Bureau, Said Farah Yare, and Director of FAWESOME, Zahra Nur.

### **Book Distributions:**

October 6th,, 2010. Somali Family Services received more than 30,000 books at its center, Puntland Library and Resource Center. Since SFS partnered with Books for Africa, Counterpart International and UNICEF, It has received needed books that could possibly help the organization to achieve its mission to increase literacy and skill building. SFS is very keen and welcomes all visitors who come to Puntland Library and Resource Center to use and borrow books.

A total of 3,024 citizens accessed the Library over the course of 6 months--956 women and 2,168 men— while efforts are underway to encourage more women to utilize the library and resources available in the Center. “It is important and most successful method of increasing literacy is to measure two things; individuals have the means to read, and the access to appropriate reading materials” Said Abdurashid Ali, the Executive Director of SFS.

### **2010 Institutional Audit:**

Somali Family Services conducts a thorough institutional audit of its operations each year. We are proud to state 2010 institutional audit was clean. Hence, SFS needs to improve its asset management system.

### **Website Face Lifted:**

In quest to continually improving SFS’ communications with board of directors, stakeholders, funders, and supporters, great work and energy was put into restructuring, redesigning, and rebuilding of the

website while updating it with any new changes, new information, and any announcements as they come. To visit the website, please paste the address on your browser or Click [here www.ussfs.org](http://www.ussfs.org)

### **Knowledge Transfer:**

Somali Family Services brought three Diasporas on board in an effort to create a working system for the staff of Somali Family Service and Puntland Library and Resource Center. The aim is to increase the knowledge capacity of the staff while training them on how to effectively and efficiently deliver the services they are hired to deliver, while enhancing the quality of the narrative reports of the workshops held since their arrival. SFS puts these training under “knowledge transfer” umbrella. Following are the list of the trainings that have taken place: (The Significance of a team work, Importance of training, Work Ethics, Hygiene and Communication)

### **Hamline MBA Field Project:**

Hamline University has chosen Somali Family Services to be the subject of School of Business Field Project. Six MBA students completed their six month research to develop a 3-year plan to supplement Somali Family Services’ International Program Strategic Plan dated January 2009 and to primarily focus on increasing the Non-Profit’s marketing and development capabilities. The Plan will secondarily support enhancements to the Organization’s institutional management support structure including technology (website & communication), financial (accounting receivables and reporting) and human resource management systems.

### **SFS Executive Director’s Mission to Washington, DC:**

In the efforts to strengthen communication with funders, Diaspora, and cultivate new strategic partners, SFS’ executive director make field mission in Washington, DC where he met with NED, NDI, Freedom House, USAID, Georgetown University, Counterpart and other partners. All the meetings were geared toward the best practice to enhance and promote rule of law and civic education. SFS is pleased to learn from these meetings NDI and Freedom House will have activities soon in Puntland and Somaliland.

### **Do No Harm — How Aid Can Support Peace - or War:**

Somali Family Services staffs are skilled with DO NO HARM tools in order to execute and deliver development and humanitarian initiatives with care. When international assistance is given in the context of a violent conflict, it becomes a part of that context and thus also of the conflict. When given in conflict settings, aid can reinforce, exacerbate, and prolong the conflict; it can also help to reduce tensions and strengthen people's capacities to disengage from fighting and find peaceful options for solving problems.

How can humanitarian or development assistance be given in conflict situations in ways that, rather than feeding into and exacerbating the conflict, help local people to disengage and establish alternative systems for dealing with the problems that underlie the conflict?

Aid agencies have a new and profound opportunity to shape their relief and development work so it accomplishes its intended goals of alleviating human suffering and supporting the pursuit of sustainable economic and social systems and at the same time promotes durable and just peace.

**Somali Olympics in Garowe:**

Co-sponsored Somali Olympics and provided office for Olympic Committees during entire planning and playing sessions. Somali Family Services provided a venue for dinner event organized for the teams played in Somali Olympics in Garowe. In addition to that, SFS allocated parking spots for the football fans and ensured the security of their cars the entirety of the games.