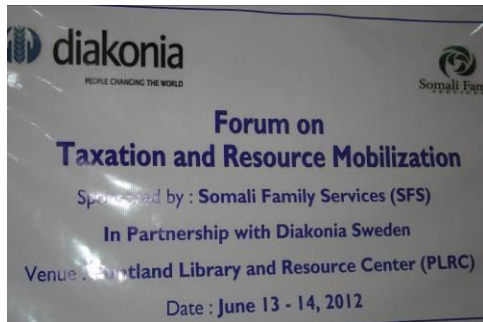




Grantee Name: Somali Family Services  
Program Name: Democratic Governance and Civic Education  
Program Contact's Name: Abdurashid Ali  
Program Contact's Phone: 25290-794761  
Project Contact's E-Mail: [abdurashid.ali@ussfs.org](mailto:abdurashid.ali@ussfs.org); [somalifamily@yahoo.com](mailto:somalifamily@yahoo.com)  
Report Due: 2012 Midterm Report

## Executive Summary

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This mid-term report summarizes the results of civic education, engagement and policy dialogue forums conducted for the joint Somali Family Services (SFS) and Diakonia project on democratic governance in Puntland. The project is funded by Diakonia and implemented by Somali Family Services. The project was designed to have six two-day forums in Garowe, Bosaso, Qardho and Galkacyo. The aim of the forums was to strengthen the linkage between civil society and government by creating a platform for dialogue and debate, which will enable

both parties to better serve the needs of Puntland's citizens. It also allowed future leaders to take control over their nation's public image by sharing their vision of Somalia. The purpose of this report is to present the current state of progress of programming in Puntland, Somalia by Somali Family Services. This report assesses achievements, challenges, and recommendations for improvement.

## Overall Assessment of Progress

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To increase the impact of constructive programming, promote innovation, and facilitate growth, SFS held six forums on democracy and governance issues facing Puntland. Workshops focused on improving police-community relations, facilitating dialogue with government officials over the provisions of social services, and promoting awareness of taxation policy in Puntland. The dialogues included village leaders, government officials and police officers, media officials, religious leaders, community members,



international presenters and Somali Family Services staff. The workshops helped cultivate civic understanding, dialogue and engagement with the most important issues facing Puntland's emerging political institutions.

## **Somali Family Services Back-ground**

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Founded in 2003, Somali Family Services (SFS) is a nonprofit charitable organization locally registered with the Ministry of Planning and Local Government in Garowe, Puntland. Also, SFS has tax exempt from federal income taxes under Section 501 ( C ) (3). SFS is also registered with the United States Agency for International Development as a private aid organization.

Somali Family Services (SFS) has operation offices in Garowe and a liaison office in Bosaso, Puntland, Somalia, and a regional coordinating office in Nairobi, Kenya. The organization has administrative headquarter in Minnesota. Somali Family Services' mission is to support all Somali families and people through creating access to resources and opportunities and promoting greater community awareness and advocacy for the Somali Diaspora. SFS is committed to enhancing positive community development towards a peaceful coexistence, global acceptance, and a world community that is both responsible and productive. The commitment of our board, strong leadership, solid consultants and staff have allowed SFS to progress to where it is today and its programming gets better and better as matures through its web of relationships and experiences.

## **Introduction**

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Somali Family Services (SFS) supports programming in the following areas:

- Democracy and Governance
- Youth Empowerment
- Literacy and Skills Training
- Micro-grants and Micro-finance
- Pastoral Education

SFS programs work in collaboration with Diakonia – Sweden, National Endowment for Democracy, UNDP, ILO, EDC, UNHCR, UNFPA, Books For Africa, Counterpart International, UNICEF, and the World Movement for Democracy.

*“[SFS ] over the years has worked to develop overlapping programs that strengthen one another conceptually through interlocking relationships. The vision and capacity of implementation shown by SFS makes it one of our effective partners,”* Eric Robinson, National Endowment for Democracy.

## **Core Values**

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SFS core values are the fundamental principles and standards to which we adhere. They reflect our rich and diverse organizational history, our culture and our identity. In achieving its Vision and Mission, SFS is guided by the following core values:

- **Integrity:** - unwavering commitment in promoting the dignity of Somali people based on the principles of human rights, social justice, democracy, capacity building and development, and sustainable livelihoods.
- **Innovation:** – encouraging the exploration of new ideas and developing workable approaches to benefit Somali communities.
- **Effectiveness & Responsiveness:** – using resources in a considered, appropriate and transparent manner for maximum and timely benefit.
- **Inclusiveness:** - embracing impartiality and diversity; standing in solidarity with partners, local and Diaspora Somali communities and acting to improve lives.
- **Engagement & empowerment:** - uniting with national and international communities to build an equitable and sustainable future.

## Problem Analysis

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The collapse of Siyad Barre administrations posed a formidable challenge for Somalia and its people. The result was a fragmented society, broken infrastructures and unsettled political system. Since the demise of Bare's administrations, the need to rebuild state administration, redraw political structure, and reinvent trust has become inevitable for the Somali people. Therefore, regional administrations have been established in order to ensure security, political structures, and economic development. Puntland is one of the regional administrations that was established after the collapse, and now twelve years later Puntland is still struggling

to gain the trust of its people. Furthermore, its policies, laws, and political space are often weakly defined and contested. However, it managed to obtain relative peace for most of its regions, but its legitimacy is often in grey. In order to gain the trust of Puntlanders and to remove the doubt clouds, it is important for both the government and its citizens to have an open dialogue where each can discuss their area of concern and both can have consensus which contribute positively to the progress and development of Somali nation.

The (Democratic Governance and Civic Education) project was designed to reduce the mistrust between civil society organizations and the government through improved communication. The objectives were to create a space for positive interaction between government and civil society to have dialogues and consultations on the pertinent issues affecting the region while broadening public participation in government, and to strengthen the mutual accountability of civil society and the government to each other and to the public.

Somali Family Services has implemented (Democratic Governance and Civic Education) project, which consisted of six forums each with two-day sessions. The objectives of these forums were to invite major civil society organizations in Puntland and Puntland government officials to open dialogues. This effort provides important opportunities for both parties to engage in discussion

that produces eminent results and leads to a path where civil society organizations can participate in local decision-making process.

The point of departure for the forums is consequently to identify and cover the themes purposed in the Democratic Governance and Civic Education. The themes were not limited but included good governance, clean environment, democracy, civic education, gender equality, equity, resource sharing, and human rights. Appropriate and relevant topics were identified under each of these themes.

SFS is in a unique position of having “boots on the ground” experience in Somalia—we know the local leaders, government heads, and international organizations who work in Puntland. We are able to work in the “no-go” zone of Somalia and accomplish much more than others think possible, and we are proud of this, and excited for the chance to rebuild Somalia.

### **Project Objectives**

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- Creating a space for interaction between government, media and civil society.
- Establishing good governance through initiatives at the local, regional, and national levels.
- Facilitating dialogue and information sharing between community and government officials and police forces over social service and security provision.
- Building community understanding and support for emerging tax code.
- Enhance and Establish Neighbourhood College to increase civic participation.

### **Project Outcomes**

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- Strengthened the mutual accountability of civil society and the government to the public.
- Strengthened positive interactions between civil society and government and police officials in order to remove suspicion and mutual mistrust.
- Promoted a new focus on strengthening and bridging bonds between government and civil society.
- Built community awareness and understanding of tax system and its relationship to social service provision.
- Improved and newly constructed societal relationships based on principles of peaceful coexistence, participatory and accountability.
- Educated citizens on essential framework of Puntland’s emerging government, and fostered respectful dialogue about community needs and government responsibilities.
- Educated government officials on the needs of community through the voices of a range of community leaders.

### **Summary of Impacts**

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- Established network of over 260 engaged community members with an understanding of emerging political structures and civil society’s role in promoting good governance and peace-building.

- Cultivated linkages between a variety of different strata in Puntland society – elders, media officials, government ministers, teachers and youth and women’s group leaders
- Integrated over 100 women into community dialogue on important political issues.
- Established renewed peaceful dialogue between community and police forces over mutual mistrust and outbreaks of violence.
- Challenged underlying basis for continuing public insecurity in Puntland by addressing mistrust between citizenry and public officials
- Increased civic respect and understanding for government revenue streams, including the need for tax payments and monitoring of budgets.

## **Summary of Forum Methods**

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Somali Family Service and Diakonia forums and workshops allow citizens and public officials to identify, discuss and resolve critical governance issues in Puntland. By providing a neutral, safe and respectful environment for government – civil society dialogue, the forums engage marginalized actors and promote peaceful issue resolution. In each forum, a Somali Family Services facilitator assisted the group as it engaged public officials, discussed major governance challenges, and strategized about appropriate community and

government responses. Somali Family Services encouraged workshops to develop concrete recommendations for action on the part of government and civil society, in order to promote active citizenship and provide participants a concrete set of action items to convey to their communities.

## **Program Achievements**

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### **Forum 1 and 2: Strengthening Interactions Between Police and Citizens**

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Somali Family Services (SFS) conducted two workshops in January 2012 for communities in Bossaso and Galkacayo to strengthen relationships and build trust between citizens and law enforcement. In each workshop, over forty participants had the opportunity to air grievances, discuss potential opportunities for civil society action, and offer recommendations for reforms. Participants expressed hope that renewed dialogue between police and civil society, and increased engagement by community leaders would resolve tensions.



Participants agreed that their cities are safer when police and citizens maintain good working relationships. They also cited misunderstanding based on lack of trust as the main cause for the absence of a strong working relationship between police and citizens. Third, they discussed the role of community members in strengthening police capacity, including crime reporting and active support of criminal investigations.

In small groups, participants discussed and developed lists of their primary concerns in community-police relationships going forward. These included legacies of injustice, collapse of trust between security forces and civil society, and increased crime stemming from urban poverty. Both sides acknowledge that lack of cooperation magnifies these harms.

Finally, participants devised a set of concrete recommendations for dissemination in the community. This included increased community outreach by police officers and other security officials, the creation of unarmed community watch groups, and adequate training and funding from Puntland's standing police force.

The workshops were well received and participants expressed a strong desire to hold this kind of workshop more often. Participants from both the police force and the citizen group said that the workshops raised their level of mutual understanding. They suggested an increase of the number of participants from elders' groups for the future workshops.

SFS has pioneered the use of community dialogue and Neighborhood councils to bridge the gap between security forces and Puntland's citizens. SFS' programs in Galkayo, Bosaso and Garowe have facilitated dialogue and information sharing, hedging against mistrust and violence in all three cities. Government officials use the Puntland Library and Resource Centre, which SFS links to civil society and Puntland citizens. Just recently, the Governor of Nugal, the Mayor of Garowe and government ministers met with the local civil society at the centre to discuss ways to curb insecurity in Puntland. This would not have been possible without continuous assistance from Diakonia, Sweden which is one of Somali Family Services' leading funders.

### **Forum 3 and 4: Public Forum on Ministry Service Provision**

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Somali family Services also conducted two discussion forums for the community in Garowe in Puntland Library and Resource Center (PLRC) and at Panorama Hotel in Bosaso. Overall, 110 participants from the traditional elders, government ministries, youth associations, women associations, neighborhood committees, religious leaders, and the local authority attended the two forums, designed to increase communication, cooperation and mutual understanding between civil society and government officials.

This concept dubbed ‘the neighborhood college’ is a leadership and civic development program designed to help individuals learn more about government, democratic processes, rights and responsibilities and encourage them to participate in the process.

In this forum, SFS invited Civil Service Commission, Ministry for Good Governance and Garowe Municipality in Garowe and Vice Minister for Internal security in Bosaso to provide information on the services they provide to the public and allow the participants to discuss and reflect on the service they provide.

Among the Ministry Officials who spoke to the public:

- Jama Hersi Farah, Deputy Commissioner for Civil Services Commission presented the commission service to the participants. The deputy commissioner also talked about the accomplishments of the CSC so far, he pointed out at training DGs, regulating civil service laws, and conducting survey to quantify the number of the public workers.
- Puntland Minister for Good Governance, Mohamed Farah Isse (Gashaan) presented the institution work and the services they provide to the public. Gashaan also explained his institution’s role in establishing neighborhood committees. He revealed the government is launching a new radio that will reach all Puntland regions.
- Vice Minister for Internal security, Abdirizaq Haredh Ismail presented into depth about the services of his ministry and its expectations and outcomes. This generated into a discussion with participants interested in knowing more about the security of the region.
- Abdurashid Jama, director of planning, presented the local government work and the services they provide to the community. Abdurshid explained the mandate of the municipality; he said the local government ensures people in their areas get access to the basic services they need.

After each presentation, participants were given the opportunity to voice criticism and concerns about Ministry actions. Though community members expressed appreciation for the presentations and work of the presenters, they expressed concerns in three broad areas.

First, community members expressed concern about the lack of social service provision to neighborhoods most in need. They argued that Ministries should prioritize areas of Garowe lacking basic infrastructure, water access and sanitation. Second, community members discussed the lack of civil society representation in Ministries, and asked political officials to more thoroughly engage the citizenry before making important decisions about service provision and revenue collection. Finally, community members pointed out that bureaucracy in Ministries often outstrips available resources, diverting funds away from essential services.

Somali Family Service dedicates its time to identifying ways to build trust between key stakeholders, paying close attention on the degree of information sharing that exists, and observing the manners in which participants engage in communication, in an effort to

differentiate norm from deed. To avoid the misrepresentation that a normative can ignite, SFS invites guest speakers in each forum. The guest speakers are invited to add values to the topics in concern and to inform the participants the work they are either doing currently or working in the future.

## **Forum 5 and 6: Taxation and Resource Mobilization Workshop**

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The fifth and sixth forums were on taxation and resource mobilization at the Puntland Library and Resource Center in Garowe Puntland and Panorama Hotel in Bosaso. The forums, which targeted 100 participants from Government officials, traditional elders, local institutions, women associations, youth, business community and religious groups, aimed to help participants understand and appreciate the importance of taxation and how it affects socio-economic development of Puntland, and to equip them with knowledge of tax and resource mobilization for further advocacy.

The forums utilized participatory action research training, including group discussions, dramatic enactments and role playing, and brainstorming sessions. The participants concentrated collectively on each issue, then discussed and analyzed it from different perspectives, and finally reached a consensus to make appropriate recommendations.

The forum began by asking participants to define taxation and explain its operation in Puntland. Participants were then introduced to the various forms of taxation, and the role of taxation in enabling the provision of social services to constituents. The facilitator highlighted the importance of the community to take full responsibility for local development activity.

Community members were invited to ask questions and offer criticism of Puntland's revenue generation policies. Many participants argued that the most fundamental issues stemmed from inappropriate execution of existing laws, and expressed concern about the lack of transparency, strategic management, and lack of rule of law underlying tax policy.

Participants also heard from Diakonia facilitator Mahmoud Ali, Somali Family Services Director Abdurashid Ali, and Somali Family Service's advisors Dylan Groves and Morten Seja on comparisons between Puntland and international tax collection systems. Participants concluded that tax payment ultimately represented an important aspect of improved governance and social service provision.

Finally, civil society members offered concrete recommendations for future action and dissemination to the broader community. These recommendations focused on fidelity to legal proscriptions for tax collection and revenue use, the need for public awareness-raising and



information sharing about government revenue streams, and a more direct link between taxes and services in the health, education, and sanitation sectors.

## **Summary and Commentary on Achievements**

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- There were a total of 260 participants in the forums including government officials, Diakonia, Sweden officials, religious leaders, women associations, youth leaders, neighborhood committee chairs, businesses owners, and media outlets.
- 40 - 50% of participants were female and nearly 1/3 were youth
- Opened first substantive dialogue on governance issues between civil society leaders and government and police officials.
- Mass media coverage including BBC.
- Social media: SFS has YouTube, Face Book and Twitter to reach many audiences online. Over 500 people are member of SFS/PLRC face book.
- Initiative attended and welcomes by government ministries, security officials, international NGOs and international students.
- Engaged civil society and public on critical issues of Puntland governance, including security, tax collection and service provision.
- Educated over 100 Puntland citizens on issues facing their government and developed civil society strategies for fostering more responsive government
- Identified the most effective ways in which NGOs can articulate their positions with the government in order to influence policy and address the need for improved services.
- Developed concrete recommendations at each workshop for dissemination to broader community
- Promoted and enhanced the collective efforts of NGOs, civil society, the international community, the private sector and the government to strengthen systems that work towards achieving democracy and rule of law.

## **Main Constraints**

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- *Mutual mistrust* — Community members were reticent to believe the statements of government and security officials, undermining effective dialogue.
- *Cultural barriers*—In Somali culture, one does not talk about oneself. Government officials fail to inform the public of the services they deliver, the benefit of those services and to answer questions from the community
- *Criticism of the government*—the government rarely tolerates criticism of itself, seeming more defensive and dictatorial. It still does business as a military regime. It does not understand that the citizens are currently in a very difficult situation, and that citizens' patience and trust is very limited.
- *Security Concerns*—SFS tries to walk the fine line between security and openness to the community. The community is turned off by the presence of too many guards and guns, but the international aspect of SFS and the PLRC requires adequate protection in Somalia.

- *Financial Concerns*—SFS has many projects waiting for willing donors. SFS has the capacity to enact and successfully complete these projects, but is frustrated by a lack of willingness on many donors' parts to go into Somalia, or to trust Somali NGOs.

### **Commentary on Constraints**

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The delicate balance between security and openness to the community is one of the top difficulties facing SFS. In order to increase its use to international organizations such as the UN, SFS has had to raise the barrier walls, install a boom and blast barriers, and employ more security. This causes constraints on the openness of the PLRC.

### **Progress on Outputs**

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Activities	Completed	Ongoing	Planned
Galkayo – Police and Community Forum	√		
Bosaso – Police and Community Forum	√		
Garowe and Bosaso – Taxation and Revenue Workshop	√ √		
Garowe and Bosaso – Government Ministry and Civil Society Dialogue	√ √		