PROGRESSIO

Participation and Effective Governance in Somaliland

Assessment Report

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Emilia Rossi
Hargeisa, Somaliland

PROGRESSIO

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

APD Academy for Peace and Development

CS Civil society

CSO Civil society organisation

DANIDA Danish International Development Agency

DFID Department for International Development

EC European Commission

INGO International Non Governmental Organisation

IRI International Republican Institute

JPLG Joint Programme on Local Governance

LNGO Local Non Governmental Organisation

MONPD Ministry of National Planning and Development

MOE Ministry of Education

MOH Ministry of Health

MOLSA Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

NAGAAD Nagaad Women's Network

NED National Endowment for Democracy

NGO Non Governmental Organisation

PEG Participation and Effective Governance

SONSAF Somaliland Non State Actors Forum

SORADI Somaliland Research and Development Institute

SONYO Somaliland National Youth Organisation

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund

UN WOMEN United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

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1. Introduction

1.1 Rationale for the assessment

Progressio's goal in the participation and effective governance area is to support poor and marginalised people, especially women, to have greater influence on decisions and policies which affect their lives. Progressio works with these vulnerable groups as they press for greater transparency, accountability and responsiveness from their governments and institutions in order to achieve their social, economic and political rights.

Progressio's work on Participation and Effective Governance in Somaliland has been squarely targeted to supporting civil society. Through its PEG activities Progressio works to increase the involvement of civil society in government processes (local and national), develop the capacity of CSOs, strengthen the community/constituency of CSOs and improve democratic participation mainly through electoral support.

The purpose of the present assessment is to ensure that Progessio's programming in the participation and effective governance thematic area in Somaliland is more evidence based.

The assessment therefore aims at describing current challenges as regards participation and inclusive, equitable decision-making and governance, thereby identifying priority action areas and needs.

1.2. Conceptual framework

The success of development and democratic governance depends on both a robust state and an active, capable and healthy civil society. Only a strong and capable civil society can play a collaborative rather than competitive role, be an interlocutor with governments and other partners and also play a watchdog role in the development process. Civic engagement is especially key to the work in strengthening responsive, responsible and more accountable governance institutions and practices (UNDP, 2010)

For the DFID, good governance is not just about government. It is also about political parties, parliament, the judiciary, the media and civil society. It is about how citizens, leaders and public institutions relate to each other in order to make change happen (ODI, 2013).

However, the 'good governance' agenda which dominated development thinking and practice on governance since the 1990s has come under intensive scrutiny, and today many practitioners, academic and policy makers recognise that it has its limits. Some have talked for example of "good enough governance" recognizing that institutions and, most importantly, the rules of the game underpinning them, adapt to different contexts rather than a fixed template for governance (ODI, 2014)

There is a need to look at different elements of governance processes and systems, from levels of openness or participation of citizens, to state capacity and effectiveness. Citizens' voice and government accountability are important dimensions of governance. Citizens' capacity to express and exercise their views effectively has the potential to influence government priorities and processes, including a stronger demand for responsiveness, transparency and accountability.

Governments that can be held accountable for their actions, for their part, are more likely to respond to the needs and demands articulated by their population. While donors' use and understanding of the terminology varies, the core principles underpinning citizens' voice and accountability, including participation, inclusion and transparency, have emerged as priority issues in international development.

It is worth recalling that there is not a unique agreed upon definition of civil society. Some include the media and the private sector, and some don't'. According to UNDP (2010): civil society is an arena of voluntary collective actions around shared interests, purposes and values distinct from families, state and profit seeking institutions. The term civil society includes the full range of formal and informal organizations that are outside the state and the market – including social movements, volunteering organizations, mass-based membership organizations, faith-based groups, NGOs, and community-based organizations, as well as communities and citizens acting individually and collectively. Whatever one includes in the category civil society it is clear that it is not simply NGOs.

It is also worth recalling the three roles civil society organisations can perform. In some setting it can be in charge of service delivery; it can be a vehicle for representing and negotiating citizens' interests vis-à-vis the state; and finally it can monitor state performance (welfare service delivery; advocacy; watchdog role)

1.3. Methodological approach

The main assessment questions are:

– What opportunities (channels and mechanisms) are available for Somaliland's people, especially marginalised and vulnerable people, to influence decision making at the local and national level? Which obstacles block real participation as well as demands for accountability?

– What are the priority areas of action to ensure that the needs and interests of people are reflected in decision-making processes (including policy-making, legislation, programme implementation and service delivery)?

A set of core issues and questions are of special importance when analysing the way decision-making works in a given context. In power analysis these issues are clustered in three different groups: structures and norms, actors and interest groups, and politics and contestation. Structures, actors and politics clearly interact to reproduce power analysis so a comprehensive study would cover all these areas (SIDA, 2013).

In this assessment, to map out opportunities and obstacles for inclusive and equitable decision making we will focus on two areas:

(a) Identify and describe the actors that have a role in the participation and effective governance arena in Somaliland;

(b) Understand the dynamics of politics and contestation in Somaliland.

Even though structures and norms are not directly examined in this assessment, it is expected that their role emerges in the analysis. The assessment methodology draws on core issues and questions

mapped out in SIDA's approach to power analysis (SIDA, 2013) adapting them to the context. The stakeholders mapping tool and the interview guide for key informants are available in the annexes.

2. Somaliland: context and governance

2.1. Context

Somaliland declared independence in 1991 shortly after the civil war ended. There were a series of inter-clan conferences, which culminated in the Borama Conference of 1993, where a largely clan-based but still fairly democratic system of government was constructed (MONPD, 2011).

The Government of Somaliland evolved into a multi-party democracy in 2002 after a number of extensions of the interim government's mandate. The district council elections were contested by six parties and only the three most successful parties became the national political parties. In 2003, Daher Rayale Kahin became the first Somaliland president to be elected in a free and fair election and in 2010 H.E Ahmed Mohamed Mohamoud Silanyo became the second Somaliland president to be elected in a free and fair election (MONPD, 2011).

Many in the academic and development circles consider that Somaliland was successful in forming a system of basic public administration, rebuilding its security structures and its public and private infrastructure. Moreover it absorbed hundreds of thousands of returnees and continues to do so.

Somaliland lays claim to the territory of the former British Somaliland, which covers an area of 137,600 square kilometers, with a northern littoral of 850 kilometers. According to recent World Bank estimates (WB, 2014) population in Somaliland is currently around 4 million and about 55% are thought to be nomadic. Most of the cities in Somaliland have witnessed substantial growth in population in recent years and the population of Hargeisa metropolitan area is currently estimated at over 900,000 inhabitants, (MONPD, 2011)

With low levels of foreign aid due to its unrecognised status, Somaliland cannot benefit much from bilateral agreements and bilateral aid that is made available for Somalia. It should be noted however that this might be slowly changing as the DFID and DANIDA have agreed to finance a Somaliland Development Fund which is managed under an arrangement that is quite similar to direct budget support.

Somaliland's GDP for 2012 is estimated by the WB to be about 1390.9 million US$ with livestock being the main economic sector followed by the wholesale and retail sector. The economy is very open but there also is a large trade deficit which is currently being financed by international aid and remittances. According to DAD estimates international aid for Somaliland in 2012 was about 150 million US$. Also there are low levels if investment, both public and private, which overall result in low levels of employment and high levels of inequality. According to the ILO (cited in: WB, 2014) the biggest problems in terms of employment are the low ratio of employment among the youth, the high underemployment and the high share of workers in vulnerable employment

WB and UN figures show that there have been some improvements in the health of Somalilanders in last decade even though he situation remains critical. The child and infant mortality rates have gone down, measles vaccination rates have improved and malnutrition rates have diminished. Maternal mortality rates have improved but proportionately much less than the other indicators (MONPD, 2010). Still Somaliland is facing many challenges, including the scarcity of financial, technical, and human resources, which makes the provision of an essential health service package that balances

preventive, curative, and rehabilitative health services not feasible yet, and a critical shortage of trained manpower among all the cadres of the health sector.

As regards education even though the situation has greatly improved in the last two decades Somaliland still faces many challenges including the low net enrolment ratio in primary education, high drop-out rate in primary education, the low literacy rates and the low ratio of girls to boys attending primary and secondary schools (MONPD, 2010).

It is common knowledge within the development community that gender inequality is an issue in Somaliland. Women's political participation is very low, as mentioned there is a gender gap in education, and maternal mortality rates are still high not to mention gender based violence cases, with rape rates soaring in the last few years. It is worth noting then, and it is quite significant, that the Somaliland National Development Plan does not contain a section on women's situation or gender relations. However it does have a section on youth which is usually considered the other main marginalised group in Somaliland, even though this seems to be changing. Even though there may be contrasting views on gender equality and development priorities in the Somali society, the national development plan should at least consider women's issues in its country analysis, even if a gender perspective is not adopted.

Finally it should be noted that in the whole Somali region, the social, economic and political dislocation caused by the war and the absence of secular state institutions has led to revival of religious practice and the adoption of new Islamic creeds. However, up to now, in post-war Somaliland the influence has been limited to social programmes such as in education and some changes in social and cultural practices (Bradbury, 2008 :20).

2.2. Governance in Somaliland

The structure of Somaliland's government, which was confirmed in the constitution, comprises three branches: an executive President, who appoints a cabinet of ministers, subject to parliamentary approval; a legislature with a bicameral Parliament consisting of an upper House of Elders (Guurti) and a lower House of Representatives; and a judiciary.

Somaliland's constitution leaves room for interpretation. Ambiguity remains over the roles of different branches of government and the division of responsibilities between the government and both Houses of Parliament (Bradbury, 2008). The constitution requires by-laws to clarify its articles and currently some of the gaps in the law are filled by customary practices.

In Somaliland the social institutions of elders and clan councils and time-honoured cultural practices of mediation, arbitration, consensus decision-making and the restoration of *xeer* between clans, far from being an anachronism, played a critical role in post-war governance and state building. (Bradbury, 2008).

Any adult male in Somalia can be considered an elder with a right to speak in local council; councils themselves are ad hoc gatherings to deal with specific issues (Bradbury, 2008). Elders are therefore representatives rather than executive leaders, and tend to act as peacemakers and arbiters (Bradbury, 2008).

Despite the introduction of formal democratic system in the country, **clan based politics and leaders continue to play a crucial role, especially at the local level (Aslam, 2014).** The role of elders in resolving disputes and maintaining peace in the community and the influence that traditional leaders have directly or indirectly on the electoral process are very significant. As Hansen and Bradbury (2007; cited in Aslam, 2014) put it: "Although the Somaliland [2002] elections were intended to mark a progress from clanbased politics to multi-party politics, the Somali lineage system continues to have a strong influence on the political system" (p: 467).

Below the different branches of government are briefly described.

The legislature

The Parliament is made up of two Houses, the Upper House of Elders (Guurti) and the House of Representatives, each one made up of 82 members. There currently is only one woman in the House of representatives and none in the Guurti.

The Guurti is a unique government institution in Africa. It comprises elders of Somali clans and it blends modern political institutions with traditional forms of political organisation. It is a moral authority and it is responsible for protecting the traditions of Somaliland and maintaining peace and security. It is supposed to review legislation initiated by the Government and Lower House (Bradbury, 2008).

The House of Representatives is the main legislative chamber and it has the authority to initiate, amend, reject and approve legislation submitted by the Council of Ministers. One of its main functions is to act as a check on the power of the Executive. The House of Representatives possesses an exclusive power in relation to financial issues, confirmation of presidential appointments (other than that of the chairman of the Supreme Court), and changes in the symbols of the nation. It holds a pre-eminent position in respect to changes to the constitution under Article 126 of the constitution (IRI, 2014). However, as will be explained below, it is currently quite weak.

The judiciary

Somaliland's legal system is based on the civil system and its structure and functions are defined in the Law on the Organisation of the Judiciary adopted by Parliament in 1993. The constitution stresses the independence of the judiciary however this independence is functionally constrained by the fact that it is the Ministry of Justice which administers the courts, salaries and budgets, and the President who has he constitutional authority to appoint judges to the Supreme Court and to dismiss them (IRI, 2014).

The executive

The President is the head of State and is supposed to be elected every five years, even though he usually stays in office longer. The President is the head of the Council of Ministers, whose membership, duties and functions are described in the constitution. There are currently 4 women in the cabinet, namely the Minister of Environment, the Minister of Education, the deputy Minister of Health and the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs.

The local government

The formation of popularly elected district councils in 2002 was an important step in the institutionalisation of the Somaliland state[1]. Importantly, under Law No. 23, responsibility for the provision of key services (such as health, education, water) is given to local authorities; however local governments have insufficient resources to provide basic services.

The legal and regulatory framework for local governance is currently inadequate; actual progress on developing and implementing a decentralization policy has been slow (UNJPLG, 2013).

On 28 November 2012, district and council elections were held; International observers declared the elections free and credible (if not totally fair) and recommendations include improving voter registration, voter education, and civic education (Kibble and Walls, 2013).

Government Revenue and Expenditure

Domestic revenues have grown significantly over the years. According to the SDP, customs duties accounting for nearly 50% of total revenue constitute the largest source of income for the Somaliland government. These are followed by sales taxes which contribute up to 16% of total revenues in 2011. Unlike most countries, income and corporation taxes account for less than 10% of the government's income. Over 93% of total tax revenues are collected by the central government. Municipalities account for the remaining 7%. Local taxes include taxes on real estate, license fees and various levies on contracts, property deeds, land sales etc.

Total budgetary expenditure, in nominal terms, was about 43 million US$ in 2009. Security generally dominates public expenditure accounting for 49.7% of the total in the 2011 budget projection available in the SDP. Social services and production sector were allocated 12.4% and 3.2% of the budget respectively[2].

According to World Bank estimates, tax revenue as a percentage of GDP in Somaliland (approximately 7% in 2012) is less than half the Sub-Saharan African average. The Somaliland authorities have taken some steps in strengthening budgeting and planning and enhancing revenue and the establishment of the Somaliland Development Fund (SDF) has also enabled Government to exercise greater control over external resources. However the lack of investment in social services, has taken a toll on human development (WB, 2014).

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1 The current structure of local government was formalised in 2002 with the adoption of the Regions and District Law which was then amended in 2007.

[2] These are quite small proportions of the budget if compared to security and governance. However the authors of the SDP note that the actual expenditure in these two categories is much higher than the budget entails, because most of the projects supported by international organisations and donors focus on education, health and water, which all come under the social services. They also support agriculture and the livestock sector, though to a lesser extent.

3. Stakeholders analysis

An analysis of stakeholders can help to clarify where some of the main actors and interest groups stand in relation to participation and effective governance. All the actors that affect or have a role in the participation and voice of vulnerable people in decision-making processes were included. Actors who are involved in improving the accountability, transparency and responsiveness of decision-makers, including decision-makers themselves, have also been considered.

Each stakeholder is described briefly and the influence and interest regarding participation and effective governance are also assessed. This section draws on the triangulation of data collected through informal interviews, a desk review and two focus group discussions.

Civil society and other Non-state Actors (media, business community)

A discussion on critical aspects of CS will be presented in the section 4. Here the intention is merely to give an overview of the organisations that move around the PEG arena in Somaliland.

A distinction was made between umbrella organisations/forums on one side and other CSOs and non-state actors on the other.

Umbrella organisations in Somaliland usually have a sectoral approach in the sense that each umbrella represents a different disadvantaged social group, like youth, women, people with disabilities etc. **SONSA**F is an exception as it strives to represent the voice of all non-state actors and was formed as a result of an EC initiative. As a forum it aims at strengthening non-state actors in Somaliland to engage in domestic and international policy dialogue and decision-making. This programme has been modestly effective in increasing CSO capacity, developing coalitions and CSO networks and a common voice, increasing representation of marginalised groups and the emergence of new voices, and increasing legitimacy for local organisations (Brown and Fisher, 2013).

NAAGAD is a network of women's organisations that represents the interests of its members and of women in general. It should be stressed however that many, including some of Nagaad's staff, agree that Nagaad particularly reflects the interests and needs of urban and organised women. Nagaad was founded in 1997 and has a long history of advocating for women's political participation. It also is a key referent for many INGOs and UN agencies working on gender issues in Somaliland.

SONYO,Somaliland National Youth Organisation, is a youth umbrella organisation. It represents the interests of youth and its members. It should be stressed that according to focus groups participants the role of young women isn't really taken into consideration at SONYO and the main concern of the organisation are male youth. SONYO has developed a gender policy that is supposed to address the current gender imbalance, where only one out of 18 board members is a woman. SONYO is very active in the development arena and has good relationships with international and governmental actors.

NAFIS, Network against FGM in Somaliland, is striving to achieve total eradication of FGM through advocacy and lobbying, coordination, information sharing and capacity building of stakeholders. They are mainly representing the interests of young girls who are victims of FGM and their member organisations.

SNDF, Somaliland National disability forum, is a forum promoting the rights of people with disabilities.

DAN, Disability Action Network, is a non-profit organization created to support the needs of people with disabilities in Somaliland. This support is in terms of human rights education and mobility aid for social and economic inclusion.

SOLPAF is the Somaliland Pastoral Forum. Its goal is to advocate and lobby for pastoral and agro-pastoral rights and livelihood security at different levels by harnessing their potential to voluntarily participate meaningfully in development activities aimed at improving the quality of life of the community.

SAHAN is the Somaliland HIV/ADIS network.

The participants of the focus group interview considered that all of these networks, forums and umbrella organisations show a similar level of interest and influence in participation and inclusive, equitable governance, that's to say a high level of interest and medium level of influence, except for SAHAN and SOLPAF that are perceived as being less powerful.

A number of **local NGOs** and **associations** were also identified, including organisations like WORDA, WIJA, GAVO and BVO, to name a few. These local NGOs all show similar levels of interest and influence according to the focus group participants, that's to say high levels of interest in participation and effective governance and low levels of power.

The relevance of the **Academy for Peace and Development** and **SORADI** was also stresses. The APD was established in 1999 as a research institute in collaboration with the War-torn Societies Project (WSP) International (Interpeace). The Academy has been instrumental in facilitating dialogue on issues of human rights, democracy and good governance. APD's participatory methods encourage consensus building among key actors with respect to strategic political, social and economic issues, leading to practical, policy-oriented recommendations and guidelines. It is perceived as a highly influent organisation. SORADI is also a research institute focusing on matters of peace building, governance and development.

The **Chamber of Commerce** is another relevant non-state actor, formed mainly by big and medium businesses. Big businesses that belong to the chamber have economic power that can translate in political power. In other words, big businesses have the influence it takes to support or block measures that are relevant to inclusive and equitable governance. Small businesses have a much lower level of influence.

The media

In June 2014 two senior members of the Haatuf Media Group were handed down prison sentences considered by many disproportionate and not abiding to due legal process. The Chair of Haatuf, Yusuf Abdi Gaboobe, was sentenced for three years, while Editor-in-Chief, Ahmed Ali Egeh, was sentenced to four years. They were then released in July before President Silanyo travelled to the UK. The court also revoked Haatuf's licence as a media operator, thus effectively closing two

significant Somaliland newspapers (the Somali-language Haatuf newspaper, and English-language Somaliland Times).

There is an evident problem with media freedom in Somaliland and there have been limited initiatives to support the MEDIA. NED gave out some grants and there have been some other small improvements through other programmes. Sonsaf held some consultations on the media issue in 2014 and came up with a position paper.

International Actors (INGOs, UN agencies and/or programmes, Donors, etc)

A number of international actors should also be mentioned.

The majority of INGOs are active in the participation and governance arena as most of them work directly or indirectly to support the empowerment of marginalised and poor people. Focus group participants mentioned a number of INGOs including **OXFAM**, **CARE International**, **Save the Children**, **Action Aid**, **NED**, **IRI** and **Interpeace**. Some of these actors are more focused on participation, governance and peace building than others.

It is worth noting that **Progressio** has been active in Somaliland since 1995. It has worked alongside nascent local NGOs which have played a crucial role in providing services to marginalised communities. This makes Progressio one of the first INGOs supporting participation and governance initiatives in the country.

Interpeace started supporting peace-building processes in 1998 collaborating with the Academy for Peace and Development; it is an international non-governmental peace building organization that started as a United Nations initiative. The **NED** a non-profit organization funded by the US congress, began supporting Somaliland's civil society through small direct grants in the late 1990s and has continued doing so.

The **IRI** has worked extensively on governance issues supporting civil society, the Parliament and Political parties. Its initiatives with the Parliament have focused on transparency and accountability, issue based caucuses (health and environment) for consultations and capacity building. The IRI is also the only organization up to date that has supported political parties.

Oxfam, **Care** and the **DRC** also have thematic work on governance under different projects. In particular Care, the DRC and IRC form a consortium that operates both in Somaliland and Puntland, working to strengthen the capacities and planning efforts of some district development committees in coordination with UN's JPLG (see below a description of JLPG). Oxfam's work with rural communities also aims at promoting participation in the elections.
All these organisations are perceived as strongly supporting more equitable, transparent and participatory decision-making processes (high interest) and having medium levels of influence.

International governmental actors like UN agencies and donors were also considered. **UNICEF**, **UNDP**, **UN WOMEN**, **UNFPA**, **UNODC** and **IOM** were mentioned as the most relevant UN actors in the PEG arena in Somaliland. They are all seen as having high levels of interest for more inclusive and transparent decision-making processes and medium levels of influence, except for **UNDP** that is perceived as being the most powerful UN programme working in Somaliland. UNDP's work is

especially relevant to governance and it has a good relationship with the government with whom it implements important programmes in the areas of access to justice and local governance to name two.

It is worth going into some detail about the JPLG as it is the joint effort of several UN agencies with UNDP in the lead. In 2008, five constituent bodies of the UN[3] initiated the Somalia-wide UN Joint Program on Local Governance and Decentralized Service Delivery program. It aims to support good governance (transparency, accountability and participation) and effective management in regional and district councils, increase public investment in basic services, and strengthen civic awareness and participation in local decision-making and development.

The information that was provided by the JPLG staff makes it clear that there has been and will be a strong presence of this programme at the local/district level. The second phase of the JPLG started in 2013 and it will last till 2017. The staff explained they are working on the policy and regulatory framework of local administration by supporting the Ministry of Interior and the districts (issues include law 23, the decentralisation law, land, finance, civil servants law etc); secondly they are working on the capacity development of local governments and lastly they are dealing with service delivery. JPLG coordinates its efforts with other actors operating in the districts and their resource pack for civic education is being used by other local and international organisations.

In Somaliland the JPLG provides assistance to almost all grade A and grade B districts[4] (Berbera, Borama, Burao, Gabiley, Hargeisa, Odweine and Sheikh). This means rebuilding public confidence in the legitimacy of state institutions partly by restoring and expanding the decentralised provisions of physical infrastructure and delivery of public services, particularly in health, education, water, sanitation and economic infrastructure. The program is also working on local public expenditure management.

The Access to Justice Programme is strengthening the capacities of courts and prosecutors, and at the same time it is building the capacity of new legal professionals and providing support to local organisations involved in legal aid, including legal aid for GBV cases.

Three important donors were also identified: the **EC**, **DANIDA** and the **DFID-UKAID**. As previously mentioned, the DFID and DANIDA are supporting Somaliland's Development Fund which is managed under an arrangement that is quite similar to so-called direct budget support. The EC makes funds available through the European Development Fund and other allocations like the "European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)", the "Non State Actors and Local Authorities in Development Thematic Programme". The EC has a field office in Hargeisa; its support to Somaliland is based on a strategy that addresses Somalia's needs as a whole.

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[3] UNDP, UNCDF, ILO, UNICEF, UN Habitat

[4] Somaliland's districts are assigned a grade, that's to say a rank that is based on their levels of production, economy, total population, land area etc

Donors are generally perceived as supporting on one side the interests of poor people and Somaliland citizens and on the other side the interests of their own country/area. Development in Somaliland is said to be donor driven and the role of donors and international actors in the PEG arena will be analysed in greater depth in the next section.

It should also be noted that in 2011, USAID commenced its Somalia wide "Transition Initiatives for Stabilization" programme, implemented by Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM),

Traditional and Religious Leaders

Traditional and religious leaders are sometimes included in civil society. However the concept of civil society originates in western thought and societies as part of liberal democratic systems whereas traditional leaders come from a different political system altogether (the lineage system). In this assessment traditional leaders and religious leaders will not be considered civil society.

At the community level **traditional leaders** represent the interests of their clans as they are responsible for solving disputes and contribute actively to peace building. They are selected by clans and speak on behalf of people in their own region. Traditional leaders are the people the community trusts the most even compared to the government. Their effectiveness in solving disputes is seen as being fairly high. Focus group participants explained that traditional leaders are not particularly supportive of women's participation in decision making due to traditional customs. However they show a bit more support for the issue of minorities. When asked to evaluate their interest in equitable decision-making FG participants explain that since "they are the voice of the community" their interest is high. Others however don't agree and think that even thought they have the power to make a difference they are not willing to work at it. They are quite influential with the government so at the national level their power is MEDIUM-HIGH. At the local level their power is high.

Religious leaders resemble the traditional elders in that they are also involved in conflict resolution; however they solve disputes that have to do with religious matters and base their decisions on the Sharia law. Religious leaders have spiritual power in the community and are involved in decision making just as far as religion allows them to. Though generally they are not very involved in politics, some religious leaders can be and they may use the weekly religious ceremonies to talk and preach about public needs. Their interest for inclusive governance is medium-high and they are very influential with deeply religious people so their power can be estimated to be medium-high.

Community elders can also form **ad hoc committees** to solve certain issues at the community level. These committees are part of the security chain in conflict resolution. They may include traditional leaders, religious leaders, other village elders, poets and other prominent opinion-makers.

Governmental actors

Participants of the focus groups considered that the members of the **House of Representatives** tend to represent their own personal interest instead of their constituents'. Their interest in equitable decision making is low but some interest is shown for male youth civic engagement while women are not supported at all. The influence of the House of Representatives is considered to be very high.

Since 2004 the Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa, with funding from the European Union, has sporadically supported the Parliament.

As a peace building and conflict resolution authority, the members of the **House of Elders**, represent clans and clan relations. The *Guurti* members However can also go after their own personal interest. Their interest in inclusive and equitable decision making is considered to be low while their power is high.

Village committees, the main political institution at the village level, are non-elected bodies made up of 7 male members and two to three voiceless women. Their interest for more inclusive decision making is low, especially as regards women. Considering the arena they move in is local their influence is high; at the village level they are very influential.

Local councils' interest in increasing people's influence on decisions and policies which affect them is very low. According to focus group participants, local councils may be able to mobilize people and represent their own constituency. However the experience shows that in most cases they are corrupt, they do not listen to the needs of the community and they make plans based on their own interest. Their influence in regard to participation and effective governance is medium-high even though it is used for their own interest.

The most relevant ministries of the executive were considered one by one. They are all considered to have medium to high levels of power and low to medium levels of interest in inclusive decision-making processes. The following ministries were mentioned: **Ministry of Justice**, **Ministry of Interior**, **Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs**, **Ministry of National Development and Planning**, **Ministry of Youth, Sport and Tourism**, **Ministry of Information, Ministry of Finance** and **Ministry of Education**.

The Ministry of Interior is the main governmental actor for security issues. According to its mandate it is also in charge of the decentralisation programme[5] (one of the ways to make governance more inclusive and equitable, at least in theory) and working with local councils and traditional leaders.

The focus of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is on women issues and partly on youth so it is the main counterpart of international actors supporting gender equality programmes like UN Women and other international INGOs. It also coordinates the gender cluster. It is said to have conflicting mandates (overlapping) with other ministries.

The Ministry of National Planning and Development took the lead in the preparation of the 2012-2016 National Development Plan. Workshop participants noted that even when adequate policies are developed the Ministry lags back in implementation.

The main activity of the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Tourism is the organisation of interregional sport events. Recently however the Somaliland youth fund was created which is expected to supports youth organisations like Sonyo. Some FG participants noted that the ministry only targets male youth, female youth is not considered.

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[5] It is the main national partner of the UN JPLG

According to civil society members the Ministry of Information "is busy spreading the government propaganda" and therefore reflects only the government agenda. The ministry is perceived as being quite powerful, especially thanks to the radio in rural areas.

The Ministry of Finance is perceived as being an important and relatively powerful agent within government even though most social programmes are funded by donors. This ministry is also seen as lacking capacity and effectiveness, mismanaging public funds and economic variables. Moreover the total budget is not public and transparency is low.

Civil society members reckon that the Ministry of Education has been working to improve education for all children, including poor children and girls. The Free Primary Education programme made the drop-out rate go down, however the participants note that the EC pushed for this programme so it is reflecting donor pressure rather than genuine interest on part of the ministry. There has been a lot of capacity building going on within the ministry but more is needed.
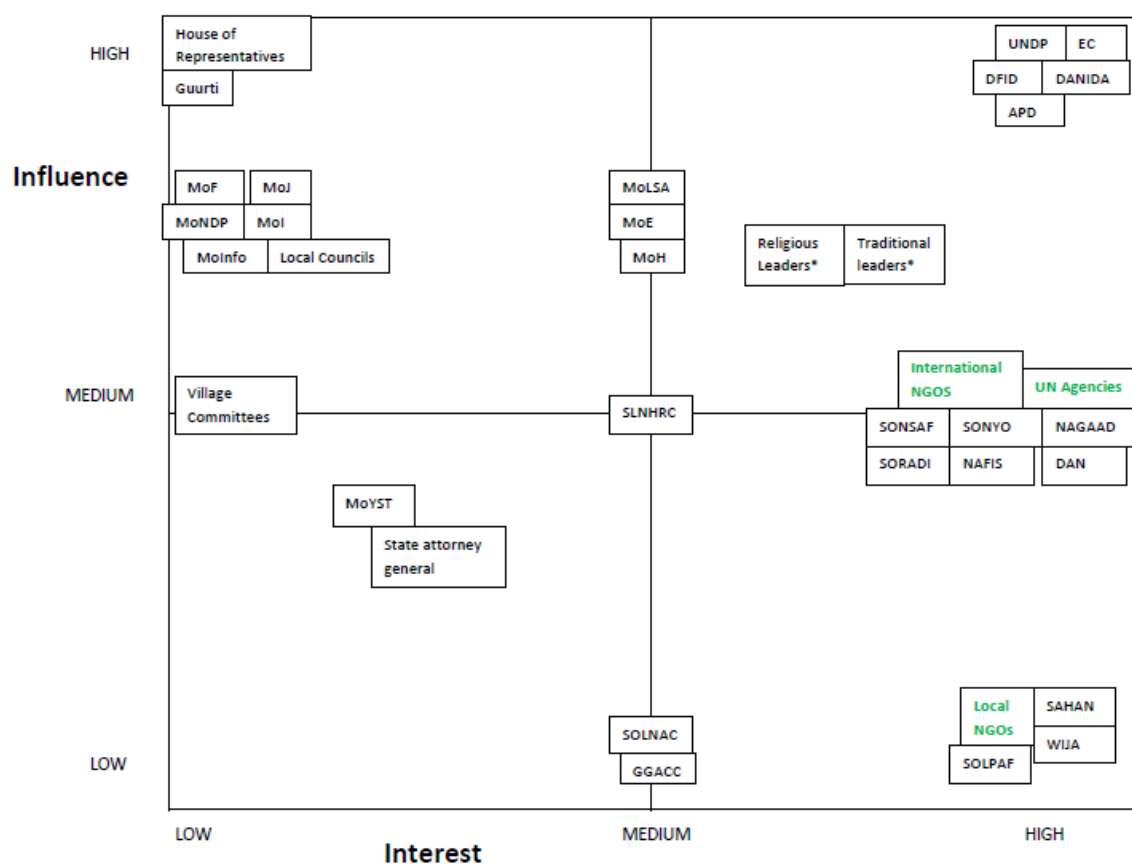
Some more actors from the public sector were identified, including the **National Electoral Commission**, the **Somaliland National Human Rights Commission**[6], the **Good Governance and Anti Corruption Commission**, the **Civil Service Commission** (includes the Civil Service Institute) and **SOLNAC**, the national commission for HIV related issues. They are shown in the map.

It should be noted that focus groups participants did not mention the President and given that the Presidency is Somaliland's most powerful institution one imagines this is the result of some collective oblivion process. Silanyo has been in power since 2010.

Stakeholder map

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[6] The SLNHRC is not exactly a public institution, however it has been included here as in its strategic plan it calls itself an " independent HR state institution'.

A stakeholder influence/interest matrix. The vertical axis is labelled "Influence" (HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW) and the horizontal axis is labelled "Interest" (LOW, MEDIUM, HIGH).

HIGH Influence:
- LOW Interest: House of Representatives, Guurti
- HIGH Interest: UNDP, EC, DFID, DANIDA, APD

(between HIGH and MEDIUM Influence):
- LOW Interest: MoF, MoJ, MoNDP, MoI, MoInfo, Local Councils
- MEDIUM Interest: MoLSA, MoE, MoH
- (mid-high Interest): Religious Leaders*, Traditional leaders*

MEDIUM Influence:
- LOW Interest: Village Committees
- MEDIUM Interest: SLNHRC
- HIGH Interest: International NGOS, UN Agencies, SONSAF, SONYO, NAGAAD, SORADI, NAFIS, DAN

(between MEDIUM and LOW Influence):
- LOW Interest: MoYST, State attorney general

LOW Influence:
- MEDIUM Interest: SOLNAC, GGACC
- HIGH Interest: Local NGOs, SAHAN, WIJA, SOLPAF

The map, unlike the stakeholder description given above, is based merely on the results of the focus groups discussions. It shows how different actors form clusters according to their levels of influence and interest in relation to participation and effective governance.

Big **donors** and **UNDP** are seen as being the stakeholders who are most interested and powerful when it comes to supporting inclusive and equitable decision-making processes. **APD** is also considered a key supporter in this area. **Parliament** and the **Executive** (National and Local) are perceived as being influent and powerful (quite obviously as they are the government) but not at all interested in improving civic engagement and participation of poor and marginalised people. Some ministries like **MoLSA**, **MoE** and **MoH** are perceived as being a bit more sensitive and active in this respect.

INGOs, most **UN** agencies and **Local CSOs umbrella organisations** form a cluster of their own. These actors are perceived as being very interested in improving governance processes and having some power to make changes. Most **Local CSOs** are perceived as relatively weak although committed.

Interestingly **religious and traditional leaders** are seen as being more supportive of change that will favour participation and civic engagement than the government is. Their position is therefore perceived as being closer to civil society and international actors than it is to the government. It is worth recalling that the focus group participants stressed that both religious and traditional leaders are not particularly supportive of women's role in society even though they are generally in favour of making decision-making processes more inclusive, equitable and transparent[7]. It also should be noted that according to many in the academic and development communities traditional leaders are seen as being very closely connected with the government, acting on its behalf in the rural areas and communities. This issue will be analysed in more depth in the following section.

It is also worth noting that the Government's interest in participation is considered to be absolutely opposite to civil society's and international actors'. This is quite interesting if one considers that most civil society members point at the role of donors in driving development strategies both for the government and CSOs. The National Development Plan however does mention civic participation as one of its guiding principles which shows the disconnection that exists between policy documents and reality.

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[7] It should be noted that one of the participants dominated the discussion on these two stakeholders so the observation might be biased.

4. The dynamics of politics and contestation in Somaliland

4.1. Voice

Voice refers to the channels or ways that people use to express and articulate their concerns. So of course that includes elections in democratic systems but it also includes advocacy and lobbying, traditional ways of articulating concerns, demonstrations and participation in policy-making processes.

According to many, the most effective way to express grievances in Somaliland is the **clan system**; ultimately they see it as the main channel to put pressure on the government. Some claim that there is no other systematic way for people to express their voice, especially in the rural areas.

This is true in the sense that many do revert to the clan system to express their needs and concerns. As a matter of fact, **demonstrations** are restricted, even though they are mentioned in the constitution as one of the civil rights, and institutionalised **participatory policy making processes** are nonexistent.

Several **peaceful elections** however have taken place in the last two decades and they are a point of pride and a great achievement for Somalilanders. They have been monitored both by domestic and international observers and have generally been considered free if not totally fair[8]. Voter registration and participation are still not very inclusive, especially for the nomadic and the eastern regions population and many stress that the clan system continues having a great influence on the electoral process.

Moreover it should be noted that democratic law and order mechanisms like courts, the police and the prisons system do work and people do recur to them to solve grievances.

It should also be noted that even though communities are not generally aware that they should have a role in decision-making Somalis have a strong tradition of debating. It is customary for **Somali[9] men** to discuss political, economic and social issues in tea shops or elsewhere. **Women** usually come together in markets, their main public space, and they may discuss economic issues. Some young key informants also mention **social media** and **social networks** as channels for young people to express their grievances. So in reality concerns are being expressed in several arenas but these debates rarely produce concrete action; the problem then lies in articulating people's grievances and making sure they shape policy.

Of course the problem also lies in addressing the **power imbalances** that allow some to influence policy while others are barely heard. Many point out that big businesses are able to have a say in policy making as they can use money to put pressure on the government. On the contrary many

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[8] One of the factors affecting the fairness of elections is multiple voting

[9] When the word Somali is used here and elsewhere in the report it should be understood as ethnic Somali.

vulnerable social groups are voiceless. Women, if one excludes the educated urban elite, are mainly voiceless. People in rural areas, minorities and youth are also perceived as being voiceless by most, though male youth has been speaking out lately and, interestingly, some youth leaders feel that male youth are no longer a marginalised group. Young women however still have very little power politically speaking and most adhere to traditional gender roles expecting men to be responsible for them; due to the conservative turn of the last decade young women's social participation is even more limited that adult women's.

It is worth noting that some like to think about Somaliland as an egalitarian society but as one CS member pointed out, "it's a men democracy", as women who constitute more than half of the population have very little power in the clan system. Likewise the other vulnerable groups that were mentioned have limited power politically and socially and they certainly wouldn't perceive Somaliland's society as egalitarian. These power imbalances are generally related to socio-cultural structures and norms -like in the case of women and minorities- but they can also be the result of economic disparities (e.g., urban poor).

A distinction should also be made between people in urban and rural areas. In **urban areas** in fact people tend to be more aware of their rights than in rural areas. In the face of grievances they will consult their clan groups or associations but they may also approach governmental institutions or raise their concerns through the media. However informants note that even in the urban areas people don't have the tendency to get organised and take responsibility as a community; "in other countries when prices increase, price of bread, price of oil… people demonstrate! But here... there is inflation but nobody gets organised"..

In practice people in **rural areas** tend to revert to the clan system to express their grievances. Due to lack of information they have a hard time making claims in any other way as they don't really know who is responsible for specific services. Moreover the government may just not be present in some areas. At the village level people can refer to *Aqils*[10] but some note that Aqils are not really able to put pressure on the government as they are selected and paid by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. **Sultans** are also the recipients of concerns of people living in the rural areas; sultans are usually found in urban areas but their constituency is in the villages. **Village committees** and **village development committees** exist but they are relatively ineffective. There are divergent views on **district councils** but many feel there are quite ineffective.

Civil society and organised groups try to raise concerns of the population and there are some active community based organisations and advocacy groups. Civil society will be analysed in depth in the following section.

Political parties are still developing and are not particularly active in-between elections but they also work as channels to express concerns.

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[10] Aqils were established during the British colonisation

4.2. Civil society

There are several definitions of civil society (see pag.5) and it can include the media, NGOs, CBOs, professional associations and faith-based groups among others. It is often stressed that civil society is not a synonym for NGOs but in some contexts, including Somaliland, LNGOs do form the bulk of this sector. As explained above some consider traditional leaders to be part of civil society but since in Somaliland they are the representatives of a social and political system that precedes and is distinct from the ideas of civil society and representative democracy, it seems fair to think of traditional leaders as different social actors altogether.

In Somaliland civil society had an important role in rebuilding the country after the war as it substituted the government in the delivery of many services. The period from 1996 until 2002 or so saw the emergence of a number of groups speaking on behalf of a range of disadvantaged groups. In the early 2000s CSOs started consolidating and some umbrella organisations came up. Currently civil society is going through a new phase that started in 2010 and according to many its power is decreasing.

Internal capacity of the CS sector

Organisations in Somaliland tend to be theme focused, that's to say they tend to represent specific vulnerable social groups like youth, women or disabled people. Informants agree that **civil society is pretty fragmented** and the capacity to organise collective action at the national level is quite low. Organisations are capable of coming together when they are involved in the implementation of a project but **collective action and lobbying are** otherwise **quite challenging**. CSOs may support advocacy initiatives of other CSOs but there is no real solidarity and sense of collectivity. Some cite the *Haatuf case* as an example of the lack of cohesion within CS: when the Hatuff journalists were jailed there were some debates and Sonsaf came out with a position paper but CS did not really take collective stance on the issue or challenge the government with concrete actions.

As regards the internal capacity of CSOs a distinction should be made between umbrella organisations and individual organisations. Umbrella organisations are meant to act at the national level taking the lead in inter-institutional relations, information sharing and national advocacy initiatives; individual CSOs are supposed to work at the grassroots level, reaching out to the community.

Strengthening the links with member organisations is a challenge that applies to most networks but a CS member clarified that:

> "Sonyo and Nagaad are really strong and they work hard, even though there are some loopholes... but some other networks are only names, they are not really holding meetings. Even though capacity is missing, Nagaad, Sonyo or Nafis function as umbrellas… they work with their member organisations and can provide small projects at the community level, which are minimum but they are strengthening the link between the member and the umbrella."

Individual CSOs on the other side are sometimes the result of the initiative of a single person or, at best, very few people and lack a sense of **ownership** by members and staff. Moreover it is not uncommon for the activities of CSOs and networks to overlap and for them to compete for funding.

According to one of the key-informants links with members, be it organisations or individuals, are weak because organisations tend to focus on the implementation of projects and somehow disregard their internal issues, including their membership, networking activities and independence. Of course this can also be due to the fact that the organisation needs to survive and implementation and fundraising seem to be priorities when compared to internal capacity and institutional strengthening.

Some also stress that the **roles and responsibilities of umbrellas and individual organisations are not clearly defined and differentiated in their mandates**. Moreover since resources are limited many point out that donors prefer to fund umbrellas organisations rather individual CSOs.

Another CS member explained that since umbrellas are still developing and strengthening it is hard for them to focus on member organisations. When these networks grow and interests diversify, maintaining well-functioning networks can be challenging. This however points at some confusion over the understanding of the idea behind umbrella organisations. Do umbrella organisations think of themselves as something separate from the members? What mechanisms are in place to guarantee the link with members? Communication channels, general assemblies, meetings, regional focal persons? Do they work?

The people who are most critical of CS will say that CSOs are not an indigenous effort and they are not based on genuine social movements. They ask: "Who's the constituency of CSOs? Who are they accountable to? Are they robust? Are they effective?" These critics maintain that CSOs can't advocate for a responsive government if they aren't responsive to society. The question is: do their activities contribute to the priorities of the society, to behavioural change, to policy change?

Others recognise that CS faces a number of challenges but they also stress it has made real progress since it started up in the early 90s. It is therefore quite understandable that CSOs don't reflect genuine social movements yet but they seem to be on the right path to do so: "I have the confidence that they will overcome these challenges" were the words of a senior CS member.

Civil society and the government

Interestingly, some CS members see CS as the only independent and strong voice for the public in Somaliland, and they maintain it is able to take a stand on some issues because it is supported by the international community. However this seems to be more a public discourse that the reality and as a matter of fact, many observe that civil society's voice is getting weaker. Some, even from within CS, explain that since 2010 civil society's power has been declining as a result of the new government recruiting key civil society members for positions in different ministries. Basically, some say, the current government has been co-opting civil society; its independence has been visibly eroded and the human rights violations the Government commits are not being addressed.

So according to many the relationship of CS with the current government is close but ineffective and some organisations tend not to engage in controversial issues to avoid the risk of being shut down or harassed. Somehow confirming the co-opting narrative, one of the youth umbrella representatives expressed it has an outstanding relationship with the government, which has provided a new building for them and will participate in the youth development fund.

The **advocacy efforts** of CS are therefore generally viewed as being **neutralised by the Government agenda**. Some mention as an example the dismantlement of a human rights network a few years ago and stress that no other similar network has come up thereafter. Others refer to the quota process highlighting that "Nagaad has advocated for the quota for a long time and even though the government and Nagaad are now close there has been no change, the advocacy process has produced no results."

Some CS members note that CSOs might be worried that if they criticise too much the government the international recognition process of Somaliland will be affected; others however stress that to build the reputation of Somaliland as a healthy and democratic society and thereby support the international recognition demands, there has to be a strong CS that carries out a watchdog role. One informant also notes that the open door policy that the current government has established with civil society has ultimately weakened it. Many feel that when the Government is facing emergencies or some type of social issue it coordinates with the international community but not with CS, which points at the existence of some competition between the government and civil society.

Civil society and the international aid community

The relationship of civil society with donors and international actors is perceived as being quite good.

Some CS members maintain that CSOs aren't influenced by the agenda of the international aid community and that strategic plans are based on a bottom-up approach that considers local needs. Once again this seems to be more public discourse than the reality of facts and, according to most, CSOs in Somaliland are very much driven by donors. It is worth recalling that in Somaliland CSOs were formed right after the war as a response to the international community's need for interlocutors so, from the very start, they were basically a product of the international community. Moreover donors' agendas affect to some degree the agendas of all international development stakeholders, including local CSOs, INGOs and even UN agencies. Local CSOs of course are totally dependent on international aid flows as they are their only source of income so they are weaker somehow: "civil society doesn't have the opportunity to have its own priorities." INGOs at least have better chances of diversifying their sources of income.

It is therefore hard to believe that CSOs strategic plans are built from the bottom-up as some say. Moreover given the challenges of weak links with membership, one wonders how realistic it is to think that participatory methods are used to develop organisational strategies and plans. **Even if**

some degree of ownership exists it seems fair to say that international donors exert considerable influence on Somaliland's civil society:

The issue of donors' requirements for funding should also be considered. While it is not the objective of this assessment to delve into those requirements it is worth saying that they were mentioned by key-informants as a factor that affects the CSOs landscape. On one side smaller LNGOs feel that funds are always made available to the same big organisations with a relevant track record, which, as they see it, is given too much weight as a criterion. On the other side the accountability of some of the local organisations that are being funded is called into question and so is the effectiveness of donors' monitoring systems.

Some reckon that donors don't analyse thoroughly CSOs' when they give out funds. **Ownership, accountability and responsiveness of CSOs should be given serious consideration in monitoring and evaluation processes**. The way funding is assigned and CSOs are monitored should be improved and donors should also be accountable to civil society on the way it spends its funds.

Civil society's relationship with the public

As regards civil society's relationship with the public, common people perceive civil society as a self-serving sector where one can get a good job. It is not perceived as being the voice of the public nor as representing or working for the population. The fact that INGOs and LCSOs operate on a project-based approach may have an impact on this as organisations go in to work with a group of people and when the project ends cooperation finishes too which surely is difficult to understand for the public..

The perception of people in the rural areas is that LNGOs (and INGOs too) approach them to prepare a number of needs assessments that don't bring about any tangible change; "it's only cars..." This is aggravated by the fact that a proper monitoring system of NGOs on part of the government is not in place[11]. However as one CS member explained, reactions of people to CSOs also depend on what type of activity is being carried out. Delivery of services is always welcome as CSOs are usually able to deliver services relatively effectively, while the issue of rights is not understood and sometimes it is right out opposed. Some community members are willing to discuss human rights issues because they are aware that right violations are happening but others see human rights as a western idea and therefore refuse them.

Civil Society's roles

As regards the different roles that civil society can perform, the **watchdog role** is currently not being assumed by Somaliland's civil society. **Service delivery** has been CS's predominant role for many years as in the post-war period it substituted the still weak government, becoming quite effective in service delivery**. Advocacy** hasn't produced many real achievements if one excludes the passing of Law 20 on participation of youth in local elections, even though some would maintain that it was more the result of a favourable conjuncture than an impact of youth's campaign. In any case advocacy has been Somaliland's civil society focus in the last decade as is discussed below.

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[11] The NGO Act somehow regulated the sector but many point at the need for further regulation.

Advocacy

Some of the debates that develop within civil society are transformed into advocacy groups and initiatives but views on different advocacy issues, even within civil society, are somewhat contradictory.

The debate on women's quota, for example, is quite controversial. Some critics explain that having women in the parliament is not a priority for society, changing the condition of females is or having a government that is responsive to females and gender issues may be priorities. One of the long-time supporters of the quota for women explained that in fact they defined political representation for women as a priority for advocacy but they were not able to mobilise people on this issue. She also explains that it may true that communities' priorities are not always reflected in civil society's advocacy priorities but this doesn't necessarily make them less valid. Another quota activist explained that they have not been successful in building a women's movement that supports the issues they pursue.

As regards the eradication of FGM, quite surprisingly, a younger CS member explained it is not a priority for society. This informant says:"It's an existing reality, but people are saying it's not a problem for them, because they have basic needs that CS does not talk about." According to this CS member advocacy initiatives might be relevant for a small group and they might be project based.

Even though it may be true that some advocacy initiatives should be recalibrated it should be noted that initiatives that tend to affect gender power relations even minimally always encounter a great deal of resistance. It is widely acknowledged that women's issues cannot be addressed by increasing their politcal participation alone but women's quotas as temporary measures are usually part of a wider effort to improve women's conditions. Also pointing at some issues as non-indigenous while other equally non-indigenous initiatives are widely supported is somewhat ambiguous.

In sum, reflection on advocacy priorities and strategy is needed.

4.3. The Government: responsiveness and accountability

Thinking now about public agencies, including the government and parliament, the ways they engage with citizens and respond to initiatives and demands of people will be analysed. Their accountability and transparency will also be considered.

The **responsiveness** of the different branches of government to citizens is perceived as being extremely low. Many talk about a big disconnection between the government and society.

Neither local governments nor the national government engage in consultation processes.

Locally government officials are not really responsive nor are they accountable to their constituents and as a matter of fact in the last local elections in 2012 only 2% of those in power were re-elected.

However in a fragile state with very long mandates for local councillors the fact that one can be voted out isn't a very strong disincentive.

At the **national level**, there can be consultations from time to time but they are more of a formality - "it's just a show"- than a tool for participation and on key policies the government doesn't consult anybody.

Forums used be organised to discuss social and political issues but they no longer are as the government seems to be quite sensitive to criticism. Currently the opposition is felt to be relatively weak and ineffective unlike with the previous government[12]. There still is widespread corruption and nepotism but it is hard to get this message out. The government is considered very good at spreading its achievements and doing propaganda through the different media it controls.

Some explain that at the national level the government has learned to manipulate society and thanks to the president's advisers it is in touch with public feelings on different issues. The cabinet currently has 42 members, and then there are presidential advisers that are no less than 10. These advisers are very important as they collect information on different issues to then confer with the president. They basically form a whole new cabinet and they can be even more important than Ministers themselves.

The **parliament**, which is currently controlled by the ruling party, feels that its power is very limited and that it can do little in the face of the executive. Parliamentarians have extremely weak relationships with their constituents and don't' really see themselves as the law-makers. One of their functions is to analyse and approve the budget but they don't seem to be very effective in that matter either.

According to most informants the biggest challenge for parliamentarians is improving the representation of their constituents. CS members call for improved dialogue between parliament and civil society.

There is not much **transparency** in terms of public spending and definition of budget allocations, and it is quite hard for the public to get access to the detailed budget. Even within the government there is no real debate about the budget and only numbers are discussed, there is no overarching objective, no vision.

One of the CS members that were interviewed was part of an independent **budget** analysis group that carried out an analysis of the 2013 budget. According to this informant as a group they were able to access the budget through their contacts and they considered its quality and transparency very poor. He pointed at great imbalances and gruesome mistakes in the headings and voices of the budget; he especially stressed that the national TV budget was absolutely disproportionate when compared to that of some very important Ministries.

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[12] The party currently ruling, the Kulmye, was previously at the opposition.

It should also be noted that society doesn't really expect transparency from the government and as explained above there is no strong movement demanding it. People know there is corruption but they just think they can't stop it so in a way they condone it.

A **good governance and anti-corruption commission** was established in 2010 but it hasn't been effective in following its mandate to promote and enforce good governance. Similarly the attorney general's activities did not have a relevant impact.

It is not uncommon for **violations of human rights** to end up being solved through the clan system.

According to some informants women's rights are not really taken seriously: "They don't think that women's political participation is a right. They don't see women's rights to education or health or economic rights as being particularly important or affecting women more than other groups." This is an interesting statement as many would say that data contradicts it (for example data on the female versus male literacy rate) and it would be hard not to agree that women in Somaliland are more affected than other social groups by poverty, low access to health and education, and violence.

It should be noted that the **government is also responsible of many human rights violations**. The case of the *Hatuuf* newspapers and journalists has already been mentioned. Moreover some informants mentioned a little discussed problem with the counter-terrorism unit (RRU) which is apparently being used by the Government to frighten political opponents and discourage opposition and criticism.

The judiciary is stills perceived as quite weak since, as explained above, many tend to refer to the traditional system to solve disputes. However the way courts and prosecutors operate has greatly improved over the last decade and, despite a number of loopholes, the prison system and police function. A key informant in the access to justice area explained that the number of cases that go through formal courts has increased steadily over the past decade and even though eh recognised the judiciary is perceived as lacking independence and freedom, there has been a remarkable change.

Ultimately many of the key-informants agree that the clan system dilutes the strength of the civil society and the democratic process. For some the clan system is obstructing democracy. In practice this means that the clan system and the formal governmental system are intertwined. In effect politicians also use the clan system and the carelessness towards their constituents can be explained by this strong connection: representatives take constituents for granted, as their relationship with them is based on the clan structure. The point then is that the clan system and the representative democracy system affect each other and it is not that easy to assess which one is prevailing.

4.4. Challenges and action areas

Effective institutional channels are needed for people to voice their concerns and to create opportunities for broader participation. All the key informants, even the most critical, agreed that **CS can become an effective channel if it builds on its expertise and strengthens a number of areas.**

According to many, people's beliefs, attitudes and motivation constitute a real challenge both for Somali society in general and civil society in particular.

As regards Somaliland's society, many point out that building awareness on people's rights and on the need to voice and articulate concerns is essential. They call for behavioural changes to be achieved through serious community education programmes and other forms of civic education, especially for disadvantaged groups. People don't understand their own rights and to complicate things customary rights (clan rights), the national legal framework and internationally recognised human rights don't' always agree. Basic levels of awareness and civic education are prerequisites of active citizenship, successful community mobilisations and advocacy initiatives. Many also point at the need for trust building in the Somaliland social system as a whole.

The general view is that awareness-raising campaigns, capacity building and other civic education activities can affect beliefs and motivation of Somalilanders, however many feel it is an enormous challenge as they recognise that years of capacity building have proved mildly effective. **CSOs** then have to work on number of areas if they are to be sustainable, responsive, accountable and effective. The main challenges and relevant recommendations for CSOs are summarised in the table below. It draws on face to face interviews and on discussions that came up during the validation workshop. It is also based on direct observation and analysis of the adviser.

Table 1. PEG in Somaliland: challenges and recommended actions

Challenges	Recommendation/Area of Action
Voice channels	
Concerns are being expressed/voiced in several arenas but debates rarely produce concrete actions. People show low trust in the government; they don't get organised and don't participate in social mobilisations: **articulating grievances is the real challenge.**	Support the articulation of concerns and the organisation of groups/CSOs Reflection on techniques to mobilise communities locally: consider incentive structure (not only financial)
Power imbalances that allow some to influence policy while others are barely heard is also a challenge: big businesses vs vulnerable groups: women, rural population, minorities, youth	Socio-cultural and economic structures that keep certain groups out of power need to be considered explicitly and addressed. Moreover, for vulnerable and marginalised people to be able to speak up they need to access their economic, social and cultural rights: for example the right to work, right to healthcare, right to education, etc..

	Addressing power imbalances in society should be one of CS's main priorities.
Civil society	
Membership, Constituency and Networks	
Umbrella organisations have weak links with member organisations, constituency and communities.	Institutional strengthening/Organisational development is a pre-requisite if linkages with members are to be strengthened Umbrella organisations should reflect and review their structure and functions (esp. member orgs that are no longer active) Reflect on divisions of roles and responsibilities between network and CSOs Ways to support the strengthening of links with members include information sharing and web networking.
The relationship with the communities CSOs claim to represent and whose needs they claim to address is weak. The public perceive CS as a self-serving sector. The fact that INGOs and LCSOs operate based on a project approach -they come in and then leave communities when the project ends- may have an impact on the way they are viewed by society.	Strengthen the relationships of LCSOs with communities: sustainability is the key! Reflect on what impact the project approach has on the perception of CS
Low levels of ownership and responsiveness of CSOs	Ongoing reflection and learning processes within CS and institutional strengthening are necessary Consider incentive structure!
Civil society is pretty fragmented and the capacity to organise collective action at the national level is quite low:	Linkages among CSOs are a prerequisite for strong coalition building and effective advocacy initiatives and lobbying. There should be better integration and coordination of CSOs. Existing networking and coordination entities (SONSAF,NGO consultative committee, clusters, etc) should be assessed and if feasible strengthened. Organisations are capable of coming together when they are involved in the implementation of a project so a good starting point would be the presentation of a proposal in this area .

PROGRESSIO

External relations: Government, Donors and CSO	
Advocacy initiatives are neutralized by the Government: incapacity of CS to challenge Government on key issues. Relationship with government is ambiguous: competition for funds rather than cooperation; key CS members have been recruited by the Government.	Establish or strengthen communication channels with Government on key advocacy issues. Build links with the government
Even though a degree of ownership exists donors agenda has a big influence on Somaliland's CS	Relationship with donors: analysis and reflection Somaliland's CS should take a collective stance and discuss agendas and priorities with donors *as a sector*
Programmes	
Projects are not very effective especially in raising awareness and changing behaviours, attitudes and beliefs.	Improve design of projects by: • Basing projects on evidence: use research and data to feed into projects • Target the right audiences and beneficiaries • Use trained staff and social workers • Develop innovative techniques for mobilising communities and awareness-raising.
Research and policy analysis skills are almost nonexistent in local CS	Develop research and policy analysis skills in CS
Fundraising and proposal writing skills very weak and sustainability of CSOs is a big challenge	Strengthen fundraising and proposal writing skills of CS members
Advocacy: confusion on priorities and strategies	*See parallel assessment on Progessio's PEG programme for recommendations on advocacy strategies and methods*
Advocacy **advocacy** initiatives are not systematic and often not effective	Advocacy for policy change has to be strengthened and just like other types of programmes it should be based on evidence. Build capacity of CS to learn techniques to mobilise communities and build target audiences.
Government: responsiveness and accountability	
Responsiveness should be improved at the local and national level: consultations with CS, forums, etc	Institutionalised consultations

Media is controlled by the government and free expression is an issue	Pursue media freedom
Low representation of parliamentarians, poor relationship with constituents	Strengthen parliament and the integrity, motivation and leadership of MPs
Low transparency of the public financial system	Reignite budget analysis group or support the creation of a new arena for budget analysis
Improve effectiveness of good governance and anti-corruption	Assess the commission's situation in terms of independence, political will and capacities; evaluate whether it is feasible to support its institutional strengthening.
In all sectors there is lack of information, including basic social data and more elaborated research.	There is an urgent need to develop research in Somaliland. As many noted policy must be based on research, likewise programmes developed by LNGOs and international actors alike should be based on evidence and address the real needs of beneficiaries. Research is therefore an area that should be developed and adequate channels should be in place for this research to be considered by policy-makers. The collection and analysis of basic data should also be developed.

4.5. Recommendations for programming and coordination

It is not necessarily feasible to address all of the areas of action specified in table 1. Ideally, once Progressio has determined which challenges it is better equipped to face, based on its experience and new country strategy, it should hold some sessions with selected partner organisations focussed on the development of strategies for selected objectives. This participatory strategy development process would then feed into Progressio's new PEG programme.

Progressio should also keep in mind that as an INGO it should coordinate or at least be aware of the activities of other INGOs and UN agencies. Just to make an example, at the local level CARE and the DRC are working in coordination with the JPLG on participatory planning processes and civic education in some targeted districts. To increase aid effectiveness, Progressio should make sure that its activities don't overlap with those of other INGOs and LNGOS. The management staff should hold some coordination meetings with some of these actors in the view of the Adviser. Where coordination mechanisms exist Progressio should try to participate.

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ANNEXES

Annex I. Stakeholders analysis tool[13]

Step 1. Develop a long list of stakeholders. Brainstorm all the actors/stakeholders or interest groups associated with reaching the goal detailed above.

All relevant actors that affect or have a role in the participation and voice of vulnerable and marginalised people, especially women, in decision-making processes should be included. Actors who are involved in improving the accountability, transparency and responsiveness of decision-makers, including decision-makers themselves, should also be considered.

Step 2. Describe and categorise stakeholders

The listed actors can be then described and categorised stakeholder. The analysis should be based on evidence about their current behaviours and therefore it is important to consider their discourse, attitudes, the procedures they follow, and the content of their formal and informal policy expressions.

At least the following questions should be asked for each stakeholder.

➢ Whose needs and interests are these stakeholders representing? Are they representing the needs of marginalised and vulnerable people, especially women, as priority issues?

➢ Interest measures to what degree actors are likely to be affected by the identified goal. Are they committing time and money to this issue? Do they want marginalised and vulnerable people, especially women to have greater (or less) influence in decision-making? Are they going to events on the subject? Are they publicly speaking about this? How would you value their level of interest/effect on them of the proposed change?

➢ Power measures the influence they have over the issue, and to what degree they can help achieve, or block, the desired change. Who do they have power over? D

Step 3. Map stakeholder along two axis according to power/influence and interest. A grid may be used and clusters of stakeholders with similar levels of interest and levels of influence can be identified.

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[13] Based on: World Bank, 2007. *Tools for Institutional, Political, and Social Analysis of Policy Reform. A Sourcebook for Development Practitioners*. The World Bank: Washington, D.C.

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Annex 2. Guide for face-to-face interviews with key informants

Questions	Probes
1. **Voice** refers to the channels or ways that people use to express and articulate their concerns. So of course that includes elections in democratic systems but it also includes demonstrations, protests, advocacy and lobbying, traditional ways of articulating concerns, participation in policy-making processes etc etc.. Thinking about Somaliland's society in general, how do people usually express and articulate their concerns, needs and interests?	- How is it different for men and women? youth? Minorities? urban rural? - Community/village level? Interaction of traditional leaders and customary law with popularly elected leaders, their staff and formal law? - Access to independent information?
2. How would you describe **Civil society** in Somaliland in terms of its capacity and representation of its membership and its relationship with other national and international actors?	Diversity and fragmentation? What's their relationship with their own members? and with donors and INGOs? With government? Do they take on more of a service delivery role, advocacy role or watchdog role? How do they perform? To what extent are civil society actors, institutional forms and power structures within civil society influenced by donor, government or other agendas? Project driven approach? How are they perceived by poor and marginalised people? How is it different for CS representing: Women -Youth - Minorities?
3. How may **effective institutional channels** be established (or improved) for people to voice their concerns and to create opportunities for broader participation?	- What are the entry-points for supporting empowerment and organising capacity of civil society and people in general? - Women? Youth? Minorities? Urban/Rural?
Responsiveness 4. Thinking now about public agencies, including the government and parliament, how do they engage with citizens and how do they respond to initiatives and demands of people?	Are there any spaces for people to bring their concerns collectively or as individuals? What opportunities exist for people to influence policies and the fulfilment of human rights? If these opportunities exist who is making them available, and in what kinds of ways? are they effective? if there aren't any, why not?

	What obstacles exist in terms of attitudes towards women, youth, minorities and other marginalised groups on part of officials? Women?Youth?Minorities?Urban/Rural?
Accountability 5. Still thinking about the government and public agencies, could you comment on their accountability and opportunities to improve it?	Accountability should be understood as openness and transparency (for example on public spending), the ability to hold to account abuse of power and rights violations, the capacity to deliver services etc.
6. **Priority areas of action** to ensure that the needs and interests of people (especially marginalised groups like women, youth, minorities or the mentally disabled) are reflected in decision-making processes (including policy-making, legislation, programme implementation and service delivery)?	

Annex 3. People involved in the assessment[14]

Name	Job title	Type of interview
Kinzi Kowden	Executive Director - WORDA	Preliminary informal interview Focus Group discussion Key Informant interview Final Validation workshop
Haroon Yusuf	Programme Manager NAGAAD	Preliminary informal interview Focus Group discussion Key Informant interview Final Validation workshop
Mohamed Mohamud	Executive Director - SONSAF	Key Informant interview Final Validation workshop
Mohamed Hassan	Director general -Ministry of Education	Key Informant interview
Dr Adan Abokor	Research Associate -The Rift Valley Institute (former Progressio CR)	Key Informant interview Final Validation workshop
Adnan Assan	Programme Manager - SONYO	Key Informant interview Final Validation workshop
Khadar Osman Fadal	SORADI	Key Informant interview
Abdihakhim	Director - Access to Justice Programme - UNDP	Key Informant interview
Abdirahman Aideed	Program Director - OXFAM Novib	Preliminary informal interview Key Informant interview
Mira Mariano	Program Coordinator in the Governance and Peace Consortium - CARE International	Preliminary informal interview
Hodan Elmi	Governance advisor -CARE International	Preliminary informal interview
Ahmed Hersi	Executive director - GAVO	Preliminary informal interview
Noura Abdhilahi	Gender Specialist - GAVO	Preliminary informal interview Focus Group discussion Final Validation workshop

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[14] Some of the people were involved throughout the assessment participating in groups discussions/ workshops and also in face- to face interviews

Sahal Abdullahi	UN JPLG Somaliland	Preliminary informal interview
Ifrah Nasir	Associate researcher -APD	Preliminary informal interview
Yasmin Godlad	Political participation officer -NAGAAD	Preliminary informal interview
Khadar Ahmed	M&E Manager - Action Aid	Preliminary informal interview
Khadan Ismail	Admin/Finance - SWLA	Focus Group discussion
Ayan Mohamed Askar	SLNHRC	Final Validation Workshop
Hodan Mohamed Ali	Commissioner in charge of Monitoring and Investigation - SLNHRC	Focus Group discussion
Fadumo Shaib	Chair of BoD - WORDA	Focus Group discussion