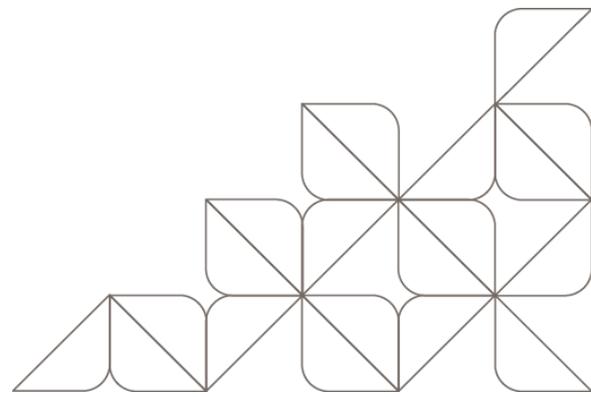
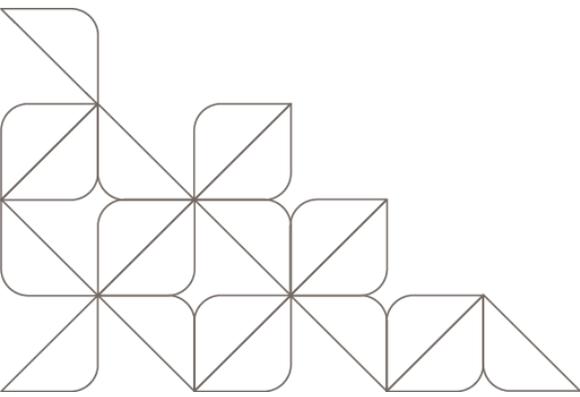




## **Contribution of Sports in Social Cohesion**

**CMM/SHIIR PROGRAM  
USAID SOMALIA  
June 2018**



# Contents

- Executive Summary ..... 1**
- Program Background ..... 2**
- Sports and Community Social Cohesion ..... 3**
  - Introduction..... 3
  - Methodology ..... 3
  - Study Locations ..... 3
  - Study Populations..... 3
  - Data Analysis ..... 4
- Study Findings ..... 4**
  - Sports Before SHIIR program ..... 4
  - Changes in Perceptions and Attitudes Among the Youth ..... 5
  - Changes in Inter-Clan Youth Interactions ..... 6
  - Changes in Levels of Trust Among Inter-Clan Youth ..... 7
  - Value Add of Sports in Addressing Local Grievances..... 8
  - Personal Changes Experienced by Youth ..... 9
- Conclusion ..... 10**
- Annex I ..... 11**
  - Story 1: Youth acts to prevent violent inter-clan conflicts ..... 11
  - Story 2: Mediation Beyond Program Districts..... 11
  - Story 3: Youth Mediators Established in Villages ..... 12
  - Story 4: Captain Mediates Teammates Grievances to Win ..... 13
  - Story 5: Reconciliation Through Sports Drills ..... 13
  - Story 6: Youth as Ambassadors of Anti-Illegal Immigration..... 13
  - Story 7: Positive Behavior Changes at The Workplace..... 14
  - Story 8: Home Bound and Almost Drugs Free ..... 14
  - Story 9: Perception Change Changes Lives ..... 15
  - Story 10: A Teacher’s Mindset Change Impacts a Community ..... 15
  - Story 11: Youth Debunking Clans’ Prejudices ..... 16
  - Story 12: Embracing Sports Drills to Manage Violence ..... 16
  - Story 13: Anger Management Through Sports ..... 17
  - Story 14: Overcoming Drugs Through Sports ..... 17

# Executive Summary

In August and September 2017, the SHIIR program engaged 480 male youth across the four districts of Jubaland State of Somalia in sporting activities aimed at enhancing social reconciliation. Five months later, an assessment was conducted to establish the contribution of the sports in fostering social cohesion, where 48 youth out of the 480 participants across the four districts were consulted through focus group interviews and one-on-one interviews. The key questions centered on changes in perceptions, nature of interactions, attitudes, behaviors and levels of trust among the inter-clan youth after participation in the sports.

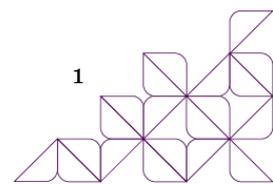
## Situation before the sports

- Before the sporting drills, it was established that the sports among youth were characterized by fights and violence among clans. The soccer pitch was often a venue to vent out and settle inter-clan scores for past conflict harms and hurts.
- The teams were village and clan based, with all players coming from one clan or sub-clan and excluding any one not from their clan or sub-clan
- There were no structures specifically for mediating conflicts among the soccer teams and any injury inflicted on the pitch was viewed as intentional harm especially when it involved inter-clan players. This was escalated to the clan elders for adjudication and was usually resolved in the same manner as inter-clan violence. During chaos and violent confrontations that characterized sports activities, once an attacker was identified, he was subjected to the elders 'court' for punishment.

## Situation after the sports

- Majority of the youth stated that their perceptions about other clans had changed after participating in the sports activities. However only 29% of the youth reported both changes in perceptions and behavior towards the other clans
- After the sports drills, the village soccer teams were disbanded and mixed clan teams constituted across all the districts. These teams included even the marginalized clans who previously had no teams of their own
- Structures for mediating conflicts were created within the teams and rules to govern the conduct of youth during sports were negotiated. The conflicts associated with the youth are now mediated by these structures without escalating the issues to the clan elders. Penalties for violence or stereotyping of other clan include suspension for the individual from several games, or even the whole team when they cannot produce the perpetrator of attacks.
- The marginalized clan youth are included in the teams and have equal rights as the youth from the major clans.
- The youth got an opportunity through the drills to understand the drivers of conflicts in their communities as they are not normally included in the dialogue processes that are a reserve of clan elders.
- Youth gained opportunities to question their perceptions and beliefs of the other communities through their interactions in sports, and found that these were not necessarily true. This has fostered friendships across clans and allowed youth to support each other, socially and financially
- A culture of collaboration has developed among inter-clan youth in and out of the pitch. The youth now hold joint meetings and interact through social media and have started appreciating each other for their different skills and capacities. The youth now invite inter-clan youth to attend social occasions compared to previously where they only invited members of their sub-clans or clans.
- Social support among the youth have developed where they now contribute money to support one another when in need.
- Team celebrations by the winners are toned down and are not meant to ridicule or humiliate the teams that lose, since they are now mixed teams
- The teams are now well organized, disciplined and united, and have started receiving sponsorship from private sector, especially on sports gear and are even being featured on local TV programs to discuss the sports activities.

Short stories of the 14 out of 48 youth who demonstrated behavior changes after participation in sports drills are included in the annex of the report.



# Program Background

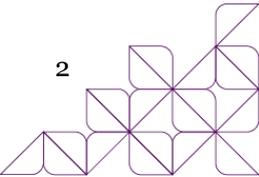
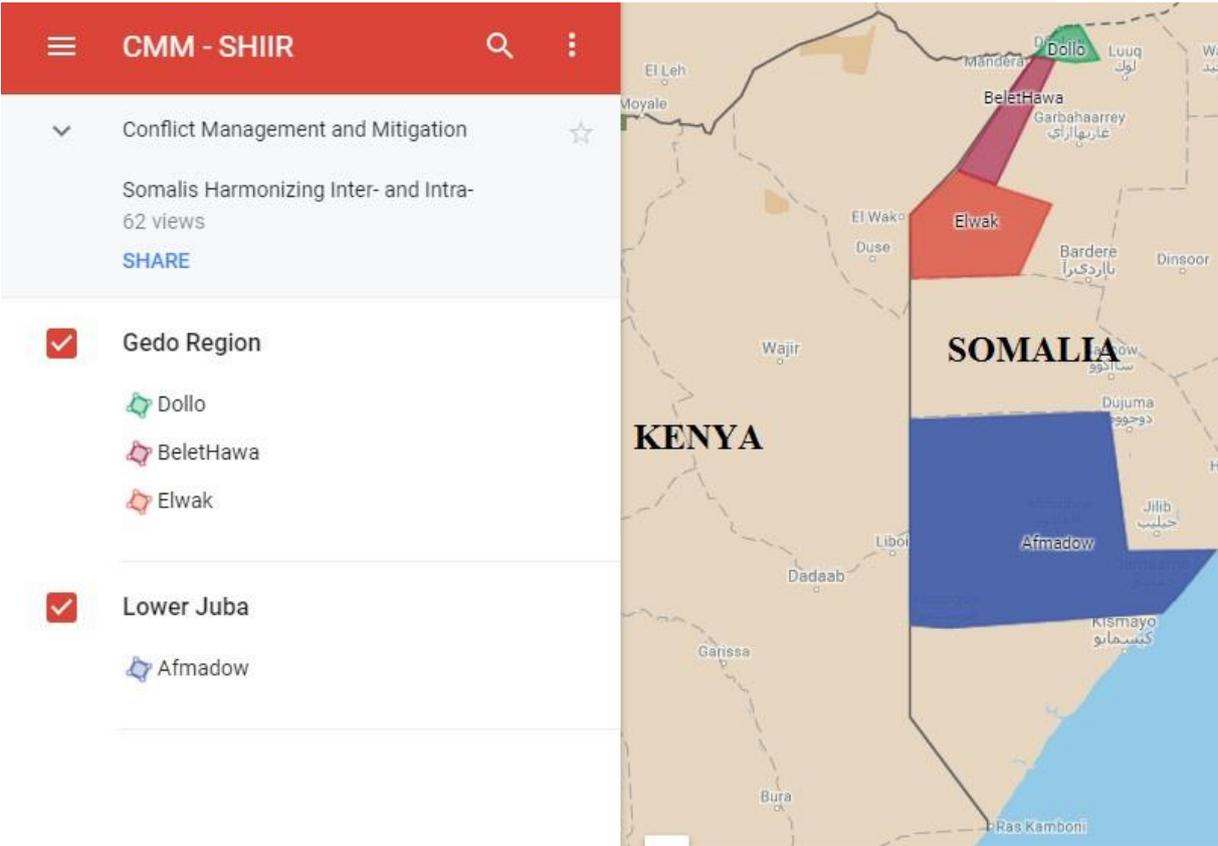
The Somalis Harmonizing Inter- and Intra-Communal Relationships (SHIIR) project is a 2-year Cooperative Agreement with USAID, implemented by Pact and its four local partners. The program began operations in October 2016, with a two-phased approach: (1) social reconciliation and (2) promoting civic awareness in year 1 and year 2 of the program respectively. SHIIR aims to enhance community social reconciliation and to promote civic education and awareness so that Somali communities are empowered to actively participate in state-building. Pact has been supporting this goal by pursuing three related objectives:

- **Result 1:** Increase in social cohesion in target communities
- **Result 2:** Increase in civic awareness of state building processes in target communities
- **Result 3:** Improved organizational and technical capacity

The program’s technical approach is grounded in a strengths-based approach and promoting local assets. Instead of focusing on the problems, SHIIR’s approach seeks to promote and expand the traditional reconciliation initiatives that communities naturally engaged in at intra-clan level, to inter-clan level. These initiatives being familiar with communities are embraced as they are culturally appropriate and bring a sense of nostalgia of the past peaceful coexistence among communities. The program thus worked with different community sector groups on their traditional reconciliation session. *Kulan* sessions for elders, *Abay Abay* sessions for women, *Burambur* sessions for female youth and soccer for male youth.

The project works in four districts: one in Lower Juba; and 3 in Gedo region of Jubaland State of Somalia (see map), specifically in the following areas:

- **Afmadow District:** Dhobley town, Qooqani, Tula Burawaqo
- **Dollo District:** Dollo town, Gedweyne, Qurdubay
- **BelethHawa District:** BelethHawa town, Arabo, Waradey
- **Elwak District:** Elwak town, Dibayu, Borubirdeso



# Sports and Community Social Cohesion

## Introduction

The project conducted an assessment using qualitative methods to gather outcome level data on contribution of sports to community social cohesion by measuring the changes in perceptions, attitudes and behaviors that the youth who participate in sporting activities in the program locations exhibit. The soccer sports targeted youth from conflict affected communities in Somalia across four districts. The innovative approach through sports drills allowed the youth to learn through action, the drivers of conflicts in their communities including clannism and marginalization; how violence spreads in communities; the importance of obeying rules and regulations; resource sharing and how to co-exist peacefully in their communities.

This methodology was adapted from the *Sports for Development: Violence Prevention Through Football* developed by the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ). GIZ has successfully used the approach with refugee communities in Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps in Kenya. This approach includes a series of sports drills with each drill designed as a sports activity that youth participate in and in the process, learn several lessons such as: fairness, resource sharing, inclusion, and conflict management that they then discuss during the debriefs. The activity ideally lasts 15 to 20 minutes and is followed by a debriefing session of 20 minutes. The debrief sessions discuss the activity concluded and how the activity relates to their own contexts, leading to self-reflection and gradual change of attitudes towards each other. A total of 480 youth participated in the sports for social reconciliation across the four districts in August and September 2017.

## Methodology

In each of the districts, data collection was done through Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with 12 youth drawn from the two soccer teams at the district headquarters. Participants were drawn from the two town teams ensuring that all the clans in the district, including the marginalized clans, are represented. The FGD being purely male youth dominated was considered a homogenous group which would allow all the participants to engage freely in the discussions. The facilitators however were vigilant during the discussions to prevent domination of discussions by youth from the majority clans. A team of Pact and sub-grantee staff facilitated the discussions with a total of 4 focus groups consulted across the four districts reaching a total of 48 participants. To gather additional information on the changes associated with the sports activities, the team consulted with each of the 48 youth to collect individualized stories.

## Study Locations

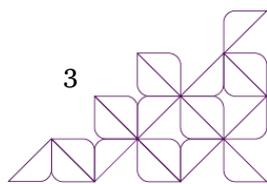
Data was collected from all the four target districts; 3 in Gedo (Dollow, BeletHawa, and Elwak) and 1 in Juba (Dhobley for Afmadow district).

## Study Populations

Focus groups were conducted with 12 youth in each of the districts (48 youth across the four districts) ensuring that all the clans were represented in each of the groups.

### Study Questions

1. *How have your perceptions of communities changed as a result of participating in the sports activities?*
2. *How has your participation in sports changed your interactions with other clans?*
3. *How have levels of trust changed as a result of participating in the sports activities?*
4. *How do sports increase value in addressing local grievances? For example, in trust building, teamwork, appreciating diversity etc.*
5. *What personal changes have you experienced as a result of participating in sports activities?*



## Data Analysis

Once data was collected through the FGDs and individual change stories, data analysis for each of the 48 participants was done to demonstrate change in both attitude and behavior. Only those participants that exhibit both changes in perceptions and manifestation of this through behavior changes would count. The total number of youth who demonstrate both attitude and behavior changes across the districts will then be represented as a percentage of the total participants in the FGDs.

## Study Findings

### Sports Before SHIR program

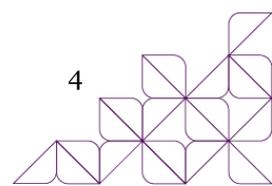
A few months before the program introduced the sports drills, there were sport tournaments across the districts of BeletHawa, Dollo and Luuq in Gedo with support from local leaders as a mechanism of building relationships among the youth across districts. Though these activities engaged the youth and kept them busy and occupied they demonstrated the low levels of trust among the youth within and across districts. For example, during a sports tournament held in BeletHawa, youth from Luuq were ridiculed and pelted with stones by fans as a show of displeasure but the local security intervened to save the situation. In Dollo, despite the heavy security in the district youth from Luuq and BeletHawa were quickly onboarded to their vehicles and transported to their home districts after the match to avoid eruption of violence. The local officials feared that such games could risk violence given the limited interactions and low levels of trust among the youth from neighboring districts given that they are from different clans and have had history of conflicts. The violence during sports further hurts inter-clan relationships as it is difficult to identify the individuals who inflicted the injuries, for compensation, and thus the families of the injured are forced to incur the cost of treatment. The violence during sports is a manifestation of the latent conflicts among clans and the prejudice they hold against each other, with the soccer pitch being a space to vent out and retaliate for perceived and actual hurts across clans. In the past this led to local authorities in some of the districts to close<sup>1</sup> district sports fields to curb violence among youth.

In ordinary soccer sports which often takes place in the districts, respondents reported that sporadic conflicts occur due to lack of conflict management structures within the sports systems. The foundation of how teams are structured do not offer opportunities for conflicts to be mitigated. The youth during the discussions pointed out that sports in the districts used to be drivers of divisions among youth, and that there were limited opportunities to address these conflicts. Soccer teams were formed along clan lines across the four districts, with each clan forming their own team. In some cases, these conflict among sport teams is an extension of the clan conflicts given the clan centric composition of the teams across the districts. Recognizing the nature of clan competitions and how it influences relationships, sport teams are often faced with sporadic violence during sports with youth mobilized to attack others incase their team lose.

During the sports drills in all districts it was observed that there are many village based sports pitches, often serving youth of homogenous clans or even sub-clans. These soccer fields have become battle grounds given that in competitive sports injuries, both intentional and non-intentional, are common. One of the sport coaches in Elwak remarks, **“Because teams have one clan composition and that conflicts exist within their communities, it finds its way in sports. If the team is defeated then that means the clan lost the battle of sports.”** This is further a challenge in areas with instability issues. In Elwak unlike other districts where local administrators are allegedly perceived to be representing their own clans, managing conflicts becomes even more challenging. No one goes to report to a district official outside their clan which lays an obvious bias in addressing divisions among clans and among groups.

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<sup>1</sup>In Dollo the sports field was closed before SHIR sports events began but was later re-opened after the youth addressed the issues through dialogue meetings



## Changes in Perceptions and Attitudes Among the Youth

Among the youth, the use of sports for social reconciliation led to change of perceptions and attitudes about the other, creation of new inter-clan relationships, and increased collaborations across inter-clan youth. The youth collaborated in addressing divisions within sports teams' through dialogues and setting and enforcing rules to dissuade violence. Despite the limited duration from the time the activities were conducted and when the assessment was carried out, it was established that most of the youth who participated in the sports sessions had perception changes about the other communities. These perception changes allowed them to engage in mixed clan teams, to abide by rules constituted by committees, to provide social support to youth outside their clans and to allow inclusion of marginalized clans in the teams. However only 14 out of the 48-youth interviewed (29%) demonstrated both perception and behavior changes, in which the perception changes they stated occurred are backed by subsequent actions. Some sample stories on the actions of the 14-youth annexed in the report. For example, some youth managed disputes among individuals in the team, others acted to prevent escalation of disputes, others became members of committees that contributes to security and management of conflicts. In one occasion one youth decided to work and live in other clan's territories.

The sports drills among the youth has changed the way the youth engage with conflicts in and out of the pitch. Commenting on the sports drills, Abdullahi Abdikadir remarked, "It's not about the traditional 90 minutes sports. It enabled us to learn about how people in conflicts areas are affected by the drivers of conflicts at local level." Currently there are emerging mechanisms of managing divisions within the youth by working with local nongovernmental actors and local administrations to

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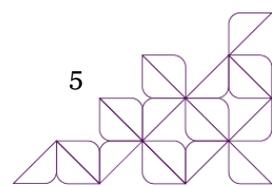
Abdullahi Abdikadir

establish structures that manage disputes and conflicts during sports. In Elwak and BeletHawa, the youth have established rules to manage disputes among teams or individuals within teams. In BeletHawa the youth have abolished stereotyping of clans within sports teams and anyone that breaks the rule is barred from the soccer field for 3 consecutive matches - two individuals have already fallen victim to this rule. In case of physical attacks and violence, the team whose member has perpetrated the offence is obligated to identify those responsible for arrest by the police, failure to which the whole team is abolished from participating in sports in the district.

In Elwak a sports official's committee has been formed to address conflicts among the teams as well as to reduce levels of violence by ensuring teams commit to defeat or win, and do not resort to physical fights. In case of attacks upon a defeat or a win, the team that is the culprit is barred from further matches. The committee further engages with team captains to embrace dialogue in settling their teams' disputes as well as to sustain good working relations among them. This close working relationships and sharing among the captains has in addition seen some teams improve their skills and chances of winning matches.

Another strategy that has worked in reducing violence in sports is the establishment of mix clan teams. In such teams one would not initiate violence for risk of injuring a member of his own clan, an act that is abhorred. Such an act is detested among the communities as stated by one team Captain from Elwak, Badal Dahir Warsame, who remarked, "*At all times clan loyalty is a very guarded aspect among the Somalis and attacking your own clan member is declaring rage against your own people.*" He further observed that one-clan teams are susceptible to attacks from their rival clan teams not only for defeats but also to settle scores over other inter-communal issues affecting the two clans, a phenomenon which was common before the sports drills. This trend of clan allegiance and how it cushions mixed clan teams is noted to be a beneficial means of mitigating conflicts and harms of the others. In the past when sports take place across teams, it was seen as an opportunity to harm or revenge the youth from the opposite clan.

In three out of the four project districts, BeletHawa; Dollo; Elwak, notable improvement in relationships among youths was observed during the interviews. In BeletHawa the teams now jointly access the sports ground while in Elwak the existing four teams of the main resident clans (2 Garre and 2 Marehan teams) were reconstituted to form six mix clan teams, that includes even the marginalized clans in the district. This has emboldened the view that success of a team is to be achieved through the diversity of talents from all the communities in a district. A loss in such a mixed team thus does not reflect the weakness of a particular clan as happened in the past where such a team would be belittled and antagonized, but is now a reflection of the skills, tactics and teamwork of individuals constituting the team. This has



delinked losses in matches to specific clan weaknesses and has thus allowed losing mixed clans easily acknowledge defeat. In BeletHawa and Dollo there are privately owned sports facilities where youth now interact through sports during holidays, after work and in the evenings which entrenches communal reconciliation.

In Dollo, perceptions and attitudes around social prejudice and discrimination towards minority clans have changed. Not only are the minorities included in sports teams but they also get opportunities to question and raise issues within local teams. In spite of this acceptance and inclusion among the youth, the minorities contend that this has not translated to equitable access of opportunities in the local administration. During the interviews, the youth stated that the design of the sports drills where they could play a game, then enter discussions about the drill and how it relates to their communities, initiated a chance to reflect on local conflicts of land and farmland in the district, that are quite common. The riverine communities, who are the minority and marginalized in Dollo claim to own the fertile land and farms, but most of these have been taken over by the major clans. Abdinassir Abdi, a youth from the marginalized clans commenting on this remarked, “You have not only helped us to interact through sports and express our feeling as team players, but also you gave us a responsibility to wear conflict lenses in discussing the drills to understand causes of conflicts in Dollo.” The youth in the sports drills could relate the scenarios in the drills with disputes in their communities. Since the youth do not normally have opportunities in their community to engage in communal dialogues, they do not understand the history of these conflicts and the approaches to their management and resolution, and the sports drills gave them the motivation to start these discussions.

“You have not only helped us to interact through sports and express our feeling as team players, but also you gave us a responsibility to wear conflict lenses in discussing the drills to understand causes of conflicts in Dollo”.

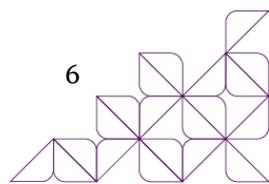
**Abdinassir Abdi a youth in Dollo**

In Elwak there is a change in which minorities are no longer lumped together with the bigger clans when sharing opportunities beyond the SHIIR program— now they are considered as an independent group who are equitably allotted spaces and opportunities for their developments. Sadik Muawiye, a youth from minority clan in the district had often played soccer with youth of his village – his clansmen, but was pleasantly surprised to be invited to play with youth from major clans. **“I was invited to sports when I was not from either of the main Garre or Marehan clan, instead as a minority.”** From the background in which Sadik and other minority youth from Elwak come from, it’s not easy to walk into another clans’ village and engage the youth in sports given the fragile relationships and emerging conflicts in which the clans profile each other over crime, violence, targeted killings, alignment with extremist groups and so on. In some of these districts some clans are isolated from local processes or initiatives which affects district level social cohesion and emboldens local conflict fault lines. This exclusion status is often manipulated by peace spoilers and extremists which stave off communal positive relationships.

Ibrahim Abdille, a program Officer with IDF notes that even though sports offer strategic opportunities to enhance the micro level youth relationships, there are some gaps. Given that at the macro level drivers of conflicts revolve around power and resource control as well as unresolved historical conflicts, the perception changes and relationships built among the youth are likely to be eroded over time if integrated programming with conflict resilience and livelihood focus as mechanisms of working against economic drivers of conflicts is not implemented.

## Changes in Inter-Clan Youth Interactions

Sports have allowed inter-clan youth to develop a culture of collaboration in and out of the pitch where they engage in soccer games and hold joint meetings. Due to the new rules established to govern sports aimed at reducing violence occasioned during sports and to introduce mixed clan teams, the level of discipline among the youth has improved, interactions have broadened and appreciation of others has risen. This has resulted in inhibition to attacks and violence given regular interactions and meetings. Muhidin Nur Ahmed commenting on the newly found relationships among the youth remarked, **“In the past, anger was responsible for disrupting games or attacking others but for now we see situations where we appreciate others for their win.”** This does not infer that all team members are comfortable with loss, but how they relate with those who win is now different and is geared towards learning. This is the value associated with sports drills in which anger is managed and tolerance enhanced.



Team celebrations have also changed. Previously when teams were clan based, celebrations by the winners would ridicule and humiliate the losing clan's team. Celebrations now are done to express the team's outcome of their hard work and preparations, and are not directed to humiliate any clan as the teams are mixed clan. In Elwak town, during the district tournaments there were joint celebrations of all teams in which the winning team invited members of the team that lost to recognize them for their hard work and efforts, and putting up a spirited fight to come second in the local tournaments. One of the members of the host team notes that recognizing others ensures that those who lost do not feel socially rebuked but realize that there are opportunities for them to get improve, get stronger and win. In BeletHawa the head of humanitarian affairs, a local administration official, engages in youth sports events and is reported to have invited local teams, both the ones who won and those who lost tournaments to his office to recognize them.

A culture of youth fiscal support to members of their teams in need has begun. Previously youth would only contribute to their clan members and never to members of the other clans. In BeletHawa, one of the youth sports players was seriously injured during a soccer game and needed to be hospitalized for orthopedic care. He was taken to Dollo to access AMISOM medical facilities for treatment but lacked funds for continued medical care. The soccer teams in the district held a meeting where they decided to fundraise for their colleague through social media. A total of \$3600 was raised towards his medical care and is now convalescing at his home and is expected to make a full recovery. In Dollo, there was an incidence in which the riverine communities, who are the marginalized communities in the district were robbed of their food items and goods that they trade at the local market. The youth from the major clans who are in the same teams with the affected families decided to support and work with the local security to protect these communities from further attacks and to apprehend the culprits. By the time of the assessment the youth reported that four perpetrators had been apprehended by local security.

The local governments have come to value sports for the youth after realizing that they are now peaceful and are keeping the youth engaged constructively. The local administration in Dollo has assured the minority clans of safe access to sports facilities and is encouraging the teams to use the local government sports grounds, rather than the local village pitches as these are likely to be homogenous clan groupings that are likely to entrench clannism.

## Changes in Levels of Trust Among Inter-Clan Youth

Following interactions among youth in sports, it has been observed that their negative perceptions of other clans have changed and their suspicions of being harmed by the other have reduced. The youth demonstrate cordial relationships across clans in and out of the pitch.

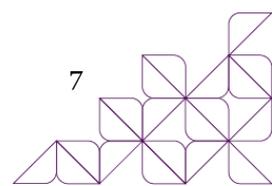
While there is both security and power influence among the administrators of this specific districts, the power structures are often reflected as part of the clan and contributes to gaps in cohesion. Clan elders also acknowledge that trust levels are subject to unresolved historical conflicts and current power dominance by major clans. For example, in BeletHawa the four major sub-clans of the Marehan commonly referred to as "Afarta deeganka"<sup>2</sup> control administrative power and economy of the district and mobilize clans as Guuri or Galti<sup>3</sup> to legitimize control by the major clans who claim to be indigenous descendants of the district.

Though there are no active conflicts in the districts, tensions exist among clans that hinder resource sharing and create mistrust. However, the youth who attended the sports drills have a view that their relationships kept on improving although social stereotypes in their communities that manifest in exclusion hinders broader communal openness and trust. One of the sports youth from the major clan, Abdullahi Abdi says, **"For most of us trust with one another is beyond the clan of origin. Even though tensions affect relationships we are mindful about how useful that relationship is and how it helps us in making positive steps in life."** In Elwak for example one Garre youth was invited by his Marehan youth to their village where he leased a piece of land where he now runs a small

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<sup>2</sup> These are the four main Marehan sub clans, Howrarsame; Alidheere; Faqayaqub; Reer Ahmed, in BeletHawa that dominate in population size, land ownership, local military and administrative power and control the local economy. Howrarsame are the largest in population size though they are economically weak. Alidheere control the local market economy together with the sub-clan of Reer Diini. Reer Hassan and Reer Diini are the other Marehan sub-clans in BeletHawa district but they do not have influence in the political and leadership decisions of the district.

<sup>3</sup> The term Guuri refers to communities which are indigenous to a particular area whereas Galti refers to those that have migrated to the location. In Somali culture, communities may have migrated several generations ago but are still referred to as Galti.



consumables shop. Having interacted with the Marehan community, his perception about them changed and was able to disprove the prejudicial narratives he had heard about this community. This increased his trust towards the Marehan and even enrolled his younger sibling to a Quranic school in the same village to broaden his experiences and eradicate social misconceptions about other clans.

The youth report that they now attend social ceremonies upon invitation by their soccer teammates from the other clans who reside in different villages. This is not common particularly if such clans are socially ostracized for being from the minority communities or if the clans have been in conflicts, and such inter-marriages are not allowed. The youth who participated in sports in BeletHawa and Dollo recently participated in joint voluntary communal activities in preparation of the rains by collecting garbage in town, planting trees, unblocking drainages and clearing town feeder roads.

The program districts lie along the international borders and are far removed from centers of power and therefore have limited access to resources and opportunities. Majority of youth from these locations therefore remain unemployed with limited livelihood opportunities. As a result, they engage in illegal migration (*Tahrib*) through unorthodox and dangerous migration routes to overseas countries in search of livelihood opportunities. In Dollo, the youth are engaging in discussions about the negative effects of *Tahrib* citing examples of members of their teams who left for Europe via Libya and Italy where they go through painful and life threatening transboundary experiences. Over the last three years six members of soccer teams have left Dollo for *Tahrib*. The youth now debate the social afflictions of such migrations and ways of securing alternative livelihoods in their localities. One of the six youth was intercepted along the way to *Tahrib* and was returned to his home. The youth from his soccer team discouraged him from migrating and worked with his parents to provide him with a source of income. His family and relatives contributed money and procured a *tuk-tuk* that he uses for local transport business in the town, and even married him off so that he remains grounded.

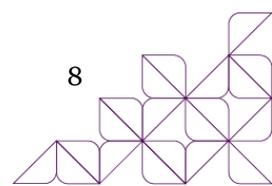
The youth soccer teams have received sponsorship from the private sector for the unity, trust and discipline demonstrated during the recent tournaments. Among the companies sponsoring the youth include Hormud Telecommunications, Somali Power company and Jubaland TV. In Elwak Hormud provided sports uniforms to the players while in Dollo, Somali Power Company provided the teams with soccer uniforms and procured trophies for the teams. Jubaland TV provided a talk show for Dollo youth to discuss their challenges and how sporting can be improved not only to connect conflict affected communities but also to nurture sports talents and sporting careers.

In Elwak, besides the teams reshuffling to have mixed clan teams as precursor to improving relationships and trust, the teams now amicably agree to share team leadership positions across the clans. All the six teams in Elwak have adopted a five-person leadership committee with the positions of Chairperson and Coach going to Marehan, Vice chairperson and Manager reserved for Gare and the Treasurer position for the Corner tribe(minorities).

The youth have embraced social media networking platforms to discuss topical issues, share information, appreciate each another on social achievements as well as update each other on employment opportunities from local and international organizations. The continuous interactions have improved their relationships and trust. For example, in Elwak one of the youth with information about a proposed project for rehabilitation of feeder roads in the town shared this information with his teammates through social media and the youth then approached the local administration for inclusion in the process. The project initiated by Danish Refugee Council required community contributions of 20% and the local administrator had only allocated contributions from the district administration, elders and women but had neglected to include the youth as a potential contributor. This intervention led to their inclusion for overall ownership of the project by the entire community.

## Value Add of Sports in Addressing Local Grievances

Sports activities have demonstrated how renewed relationships can help in minimizing stereotyping and diffusing tensions and hate among clans. The tense relations among clans are transmitted across generations and youth generally embrace these stereotypes and prejudiced attitudes towards others, and do not find moments of introspection to question these beliefs. The sports activities provided space not only to question their beliefs but also to understand the interplay between divisions in the community and communal interactions and collaboration. Engaging in sports designed for conflict affected communities provided opportunities for the youth to learn about drivers of conflicts in their community and how to engage constructively in addressing these conflict drivers, especially in conflicts involving and affecting the youth. At the wider community level there is an understanding of causes of conflicts



with existing capacities for peace in their communities – however peace structures in these districts do not address youth conflicts nor involve them in fostering wider district cohesion.

The youth have understood the crucial role of local authorities in providing security and the challenges they face in obtaining legitimate and accurate intelligence information. They now feel that they have a part to play in local peace and security through sharing of information with the administration, such as information on groups recruiting and inciting youth to violence and on Al-Shabaab movements in the district, with the aim of preventing and mitigating violence. For example, in BeletHawa the youth now participate in local policing where they have a network of youth chairpersons in every village. This close working relations with the administration has changed the perceptions of the local security towards the youth who they previously blamed on insecurity and crime, and arbitrarily arrested and detained.

The youth have learnt the value of mediation and its integration in local sports to address disputes and conflicts when they arise. This has motivated youth to participate in sports and network with other youth of different clans without the fear that there will be chaos and violence. The restructured teams have delineated the roles of the team captain from that of the coach unlike in previous teams when the captain doubled up as the coach, and his decisions were most times disobeyed. Now the youth are disciplined, they obey, respect and value the directions and instructions of the officials in and off the pitch.

The youth in addition have resolved to settle any conflicts among the youth themselves rather than taking their disputes to the clan elders for mediation. In both Dollo and BeletHawa districts, injuries from sporting activities have been resolved by the teammates rather than escalating these to the elders, who previously would have come in and mediated. In BeletHawa one player broke his leg, while in Dollo a player's hand was broken during the game. In both incidences, the teammates contributed funds for treatment of the injured players and the incidences were not escalated to clan levels.

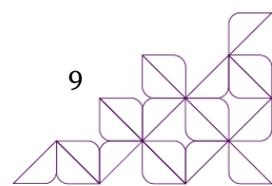
Just like most parts of Somalia, the four districts experience underlying grievances of exclusion among minorities. This is anchored at higher level power sharing formula of 4.5 in which the main four clans take equal shares and half of a share is allocated to the minorities. In the districts the marginalized communities feel disempowered for lack of opportunities to air their views, and when such opportunities are availed they shy away from expressing their concerns for perception that no action will be taken to address their grievances. In the rare occasion that decisions and actions emanating from their contributions are made, they fear that these will be impartial and skewed to the benefit of the major clans. The minorities who were engaged in sports felt comfortable to participate in conversations with the youth from major clans as they were treated equally during the drills and their continued interactions during sports forged close relationships where clan tags were shed off and the players related on equal footing as the youth. The players negotiate on issues as one team and each player's contribution is valued and considered, and the outcomes of the dialogues are accepted by all. The individuals from the minority clans have equal say as those from the majority clans in these teams, and any resources that the team acquires are shared equally.

## Personal Changes Experienced by Youth

In addition to the perception and behavior changes discussed in the preceding sections, the youth who have participated in the soccer drills have experienced other changes beyond social reconciliation. Some of these unintended changes have positively influenced their ways of life and social well-being within their families, among the youth and the wider local community.

**Increase in self-confidence:** having participated in the soccer drills and follow-on discussions, the youth got opportunities to interact with persons from other clans who they would not normally interact with. Their self-confidence to engage in discussions and make contributions were increased as they were encouraged not to identify themselves through their clans but just as youth. In addition, their views were respected, valued and acknowledged by all the youth. This was more so for individuals from the marginalized and minority clans as they have low self-esteem following years of socialization as persons who are inferior and of lower cadre to the others. This increase in self-confidence is evident in their capacity to make decisions in team committees and in their respective teams.

**Anger management:** having been brought up in conflict settings where the rule of law is not respected, revenge is common place and justice is in most occasions not upheld, the youth from these locations have grown up accustomed hate, anger, violence and revenge. Any small provocation most times leads to confrontations, fights and revenge attacks by the aggrieved party. Through the sports drills, the youth learnt to engage with the rules of the sports drills and had to be guided by them. Any foul committed



during the games are judged and penalized by the referee and the players are supposed to respect and obey the ruling of the referee. This has taught the youth to restrain themselves when a foul is committed and wait for the determination and ruling of the referee. Out of the pitch, the youth now have similarly taken the same stance, and are not easily provoked to anger and violence. They manage their anger when wronged and instead of reacting, escalate these to the sports team committees or clan leaders as appropriate for action. *“Previously before participating in the sports drills, the players were not able to control their anger and could easily abuse or attack other players for simple slipups. Now team members dialogue over issues and get solutions for the disputes within the pitch.”* Remarked Abdullahi Afka a youth from BeletHawa.

**Reduced abuse of drugs:** Most youth in these districts engage in chewing of Khat and some have even ventured into hard drugs. The chewing of Khat is usually done in the evening hours. The soccer teams also schedule matches around this time as the temperatures are lower than during the day and therefore cooler. The youth attracted to sports therefore have to forgo the Khat in lieu of participating in soccer games. Most of the youth who chew the Khat do so in hiding, without their parents’ knowledge and most vowed to abandon the practice gradually and participate in the sports activities provided the team committees did not expose them to their parents. Sports pre-occupies them and reduces the idle time they have for engaging in the practice. Several youths are reported to have now fully recovered from Khat addiction. Four youth, 2 from Dollo; one from BeletHawa; one from Dhobley, who were into drug abuse have been enticed to participate in sports and have now abandoned the vice.

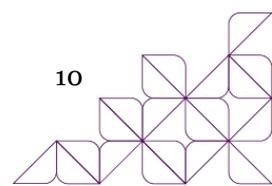
**Reduction in youth emigration to Europe (*Tahrib*):** through the soccer sessions the players have discouraged many of their colleagues to stop the risky emigration to Europe to secure livelihood opportunities. They discuss the status of their colleagues both who failed and those who succeeded in the risky endeavors. Some of those who managed to reach Europe have kept in touch with their teams at home and have shared real life experiences of hardships, that is contrary to their previous expectations and promises of glee and splendor. They also give stories of others who were hijacked on the way and their families back home asked for hefty ransom to free their kin. Two of the FGD respondents who are in the sports team had unsuccessfully attempted the *Tahrib* and now give real life-experiences to their teammates about the dangers involved and thus discourage and dissuade potential victims.

**Respect for diverse opinions:** increased interactions by youth from all the clans in the respective districts have led to reduction of stereotyping and prejudicing other clans. This has allowed the youth to value diversity and to respect the opinions of others not just those in their clans. Having been raised under a close-knit clan society, each clan has come to value their clan and despise the other communities, holding their clan traditions, actions and decisions superior to others. Interactions in the soccer pitch gave the youth opportunities to understand the other’s traditions and way of doing things and learn importance of diversity in team work, as a mix of skills are required, and different views and opinions contribute in strengthening the team. This has been witnessed in Elwak where the Garre and Marehan youth who have perceived each other as enemies following several inter-clan disputes dissolved their respective teams and formed inter-clan mixed teams.

## Conclusion

From the discussions and observations during the assessment, sports drills have been found to have positive changes among the youth in their beliefs and attitudes towards other clans and in particular those that they have previously been in conflict with. The youth demonstrated increased trust with other youth through increased social interactions and support of fellow teammates in and off the pitch. The changes in attitudes about the others though are not attributable to the sports sessions alone, as these youths had previously gone through trauma awareness sessions where they learnt the process of breaking out of the cycle of conflict, empathy for others and the value of forgiveness to foster reconciliation, and some have additionally been engaged in other peace programs in the past.

Given that only 29% of the youth demonstrated both attitudes and behavior changes, the sports drills can only be said to be marginally effective in changing the youths’ behaviors, in the short-term. However, the youth are now organized into mixed clan teams that will continue with the sports sessions and this continued contact and interactions during sports is likely to increase the number of youth that will demonstrate behavior changes. The sports team are likely to be sustainable following the high interest



that the youth have in soccer sports and the support they are currently receiving from both the private sector and their local administration for engaging in sports devoid of violence.

## Annex I

### Story 1: Youth acts to prevent violent inter-clan conflicts

Abdullahi Abdikadir aged 30 years and Feysal Abdi aged 22 years are youth from competing clans in BeletHawa town. These are among 120 youth from BeletHawa district who participated in SHIIR sports activities to foster social cohesion. The two-youth met for the first time during the sports drills organized by the program in the district and a friendship developed, that have lasted to date.

During one of the sports drills designed to demonstrate marginalization and exclusion in their communities the two-youth were through chance chosen as ‘outsiders’ in which their teammates did not pass the ball to them, following a prior instruction by the coach, that they themselves were not privy to. Frustrated for running in the pitch without receiving ball passes, the two forged an alliance in which they jointly pursued the ball, caught it and stopped the game and demanded for answers for their exclusion.

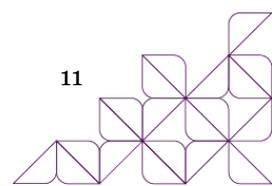
A month after the sports activities ended, Feysal’s cousin borrowed money from two relatives of Abdullahi to start a business. He was loaned \$1500 which he was expected to repay in 3 months. The time for repayment lapsed very quickly even before the borrower had set up the business he wanted to establish and deadline for repayment lapsed. The lenders’ attempts to recover their money through calling the borrower were unsuccessful as the phone calls went unanswered and the borrower could not be traced at his home. There were rumors that the borrower intended to flee the town with the cash which prompted the two lenders to act. They called his relatives and threatened to kill the borrower if he did not repay his debt. Unknow to the community at the time was that the two lenders had hired two local militias at a cost of \$1000 and had promised to advance them \$200 to find and shoot dead the borrower, with the balance of \$800 payable upon verification of the killing.

When Feysal heard of the threats to his cousin, he reached out to his friend Abdullahi and discussed the risks the attack would have in the town given that there would be retaliatory attacks by members of Feysal’s clan if the borrower was killed. Feysal and Abdullahi realizing the urgency of the issue mobilized three clan elders from their clans to address the issue and prevent imminent violence. Engagement of the elders was important as the lenders could not heed the youth’s summons to a meeting especially given that they were angry and frustrated with the borrower and were even willing to lose more money just to see him punished. The elders summoned the two lenders to a dialogue session and as they were engaged in the sessions, Feysal and Abdullahi called the borrower and requested that they meet at a given location in town. As Feysal was a close relative, the borrower accepted to meet and candidly explained what had happened. He narrated the many challenges he faced that led to delays in starting the business and expiry of the grace period given to repay. He stated that he was afraid to face his lenders as he had used part of the money; \$200, in new business research trips and logistics, though he still had the balance of \$1300 intact.

Feysal and Abdullahi requested him to surrenders the \$1300 which they then took to the elders who were still in dialogue with the lenders. They narrated their meeting with the borrower and the reasons that he had evaded facing them and repaying the debt. The money recovered was given back to the lenders and both the elders and the two-youth promised to mobilize their clans to contribute and handover the balance of \$200 in two weeks. This was done and all parties were called to attend a reconciliation meeting in which the lenders received an apology from the borrower and clan elders. The quick intervention of these youth thwarted loss of a life and eventual inter-clan tensions and conflict over the issue.

### Story 2: Mediation Beyond Program Districts

Abdirahman Hussein Abdi is a 23 years old soccer player in BeletHawa district who together with other 120 youth in the district participated in the program sports drills on social cohesion. The learnings from the sports drills led to mix clan teams and created structures to manage conflicts and violence in soccer



pitches. This has substantially reduced chaos and violence during the sports activities in the district. But the situation is different across their neighboring district of Garbaharey.

In a village called Shabel in Garbaharey where Abdirahman's clansmen live, there were two soccer teams who persistently fought over access to the only soccer pitch. Abdirahman recalls three of his friends from this village having suffered physical injuries from the fights in the pitch that had resulted in the closure of the soccer pitch for a couple of days. After participating in soccer drills in BeletHawa, Abdirahman took his learnings to Garbaharey on his latest trip to his friends' village. He held separate meetings with the team captains to share his learnings and experiences from the sport drills and to encourage them to have discussions that would resolve the hostilities between their teams and rid them of violence in the pitch.

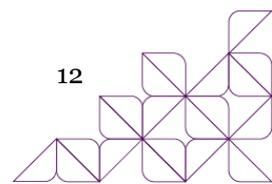
A few days later both team captains agreed to meet and held a dialogue session mediated by Abdirahman. They analyzed the causes of the teams' disputes and managed to reach an amicable solution. They understood that competition to use the soccer pitch was behind the violence as each team wanted to claim ownership of the pitch and bar the other team from using the pitch. They reached a resolution that each team would use the pitch for 3 days in a week but heavily contested on which team to take the remaining day of the week, each giving their reasons as to why their team deserved the extra day. Further mediation resolved that the 7<sup>th</sup> day would be utilized by both teams in pitch clean-up and then play matches with mix teams from both teams. This has worked well so far and has led to a reduction of hostilities between the two teams as they continue interacting during the matches.

### Story 3: Youth Mediators Established in Villages

Two teams in BeletHawa had no pitch on which to practice and play soccer and one team approached the second and decided to request for permission to use an idle land in their village from the land owner. They were granted access to the land, but first they had to carry out bush clearing of the land as it was overgrown by vegetation, before the land could be used for soccer. The two teams jointly cleared the land and commenced playing on the land. This went on for several months before they realized that the pitch was too small to accommodate both teams. At this point the team that had the original idea to request for the land demanded that they should be the sole user of the pitch, but the other team contested saying they hold equal stakes as they cleared the land jointly and had equal rights of access. The animosity between the teams increased to a point that one team would come at night to destroy goal posts and jeopardize the matches scheduled for the following day.

Two youth, Adullahi Hussein aged 25 years and Abdikadir Yussuf aged 22 years, from this village had attended the SHIIR program sports drills and were keenly following the proceedings of the two teams and realized that the situation was getting tense and likely to result to violence. Abdullahi and Abdikadir approached the captains of the two teams requesting time to meet and discuss the issues and challenges they were facing but their requests were not honored by both captains. Realizing that the hatred and animosity between the two teams was escalating Abdullahi and Abdikadir decided to escalate the issue to the district security head. Having learnt how violence spreads in communities through sports drills, the two youth were able to convince the security head of the likely consequences of the rivalry of the two teams which could range from destruction of the sports facilities to physical injuries or even death. The two captains were summoned to the police station where the issue was briefly heard and the issue was then tasked to Abdullahi and Abdikadir for mediation. The youth were to update the security head of the deliberations reached and actions taken and the captains were cautioned against cooperating with the two youth.

Using learnings from the sports drills, the two youths successfully managed to talk to the captains, and later their whole teams on the need to co-exist peacefully and come to some sharing agreement of the pitch. The two-youth mediated and resolved that each of the two teams would use the pitch for 2 days in a week and even included a third team, a junior team of under 15 years who previously had no compound to play in, and this team too would also use the pitch for 2 days in a week. The two-youth said the arrangement is now working and they intend to use their learnings from sports drills to ensure that the team captains commit to non-violent means of addressing grievances.



## Story 4: Captain Mediates Teammates Grievances to Win

Abdullahi Qalbi Amir a 20-year-old youth is the captain of one of the soccer teams in BeletHawa district. His team was characterized by internal wrangles and disputes among its members that led to its poor performance in spite of having skilled players. The team had lost several local and inter-districts matches over a couple of months. Fortunately, Amir attended the program soccer drills where he learnt values of team work, discipline and mediation of conflicts. He notes that he was particularly inspired by the drills that focused on teamwork which led him to reflect about his team. He observed that internal rifts among players was undermining the team's performance as key player were in competition for recognition. Further analysis of his team revealed that some players felt unappreciated as they did not get opportunities to participate in tournaments.

Having been inspired by the concepts of the sports drills, Amir felt to reach to his team members and reconcile them to rebuild the team. He initiated weekly meetings to review issues affecting the team, to recognize individual skills, to appreciate the hard work of the whole team and to encourage the team. In the meetings every player is given a chance to express himself and to state the issues of concern to him and to the team. During the assessment, Amir reported that since initiating the weekly meetings relationships among teammates had improved and internal competition among them reduced and that the team had won two friendly matches in the district. He now plans to initiate monthly team contributions by the members of the team to procure the necessary sporting gear and to ensure that everyone in the team feels that they own their team. Amir informed the assessment team that the team had already received \$300 from two of its members who immigrated to Europe for procurement of sports uniforms, and that they had promised continued support to their team.

## Story 5: Reconciliation Through Sports Drills

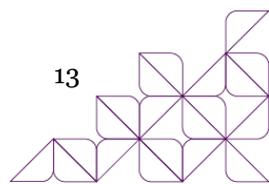
Abdinassir Abdi Adan aged 23 years heads Hormuud team as its Captain and Mohamed Ibrahim Abdille aged 22 years is the Deputy Captain for Somalia team in Dollo district. The two were bitter enemies before both came to the sports drills sessions under the program. The rivalry was occasioned by an annual tournament organized by Jubaland State Government in August 2017 in Dollo town, where the two engaged in physical fights after the two teams played against each other. After Hormuud player scored, the fans of Somalia team pelted stones at him realizing that they were about to lose the game to a minority clan team. Hormuud is formed by the members of the minority clan while Somalia team is formed by the majority clan. The other team members and the referee resolved the issue and the game resumed. No other goals were scored in the game translating to a win for the minority team.

That evening Abdinassir was called by the Captain of Somalia team with threats of attacks and the call ended with verbal abuse, with each claiming that they were ready for confrontations and attacks. Mohamed says anytime he saw his competitor, Abdinassir, in any social facilities in the town such as local hotels, coffee joints and markets he would immediately leave claiming that he could not stand him and regretting that the setting was not ideal to harm him due to presence of many eyewitnesses, including the police. The two lived their lives looking over their shoulders for possible attacks and their team members could not mediate as there was perception of minority versus majority clan tussles in their relationship.

Fortunately, both were selected to participate in the program sports drills where they met face to face since the earlier confrontation. In the sports drills both were selected as Captain and Deputy by their colleagues as they understood their previous history of animosity. They reconciled, renewing their friendship and brought their two teams together to build peace and reconcile. The two now work together and share their skilled players when playing against teams outside their district.

## Story 6: Youth as Ambassadors of Anti-Illegal Immigration

Hassan Omar aged 24 years had dreams of migrating to Europe to get better livelihood opportunities. His dreams were inspired by his former classmate who successfully made it to Sweden using the illegal migration routes commonly referred to as *Tahrib*. Prior to joining the sports drills under SHIIR program, he together with six other youth from Dollo Ethiopia embarked on the journey and after several



days of road travel in Ethiopia were intercepted by police and Hassan was taken to Addis Ababa for investigations and later repatriated to Dollo Somalia. In Dollo the police held him for two days as they investigated if he had any links with Al Shabab before clearing him and handing him over to his family.

When he joined the sports drills some months later, he shared his story with his teammates and expressed his intentions to try the *Tahrib* one more time, by road to Libya then by water to Europe. The teammates realizing the dangers that these journeys entailed informed by stories from other people who had previously immigrated successfully or unsuccessfully, decided to inform his parents of their son's intentions. They encouraged the parents to provide Hassan with some livelihood support to prevent him from further pursuing immigration. Realizing the dangers that their son was in and the agonizing times that they had gone through when their son was incarcerated in Addis Ababa and in Dollo, they complied and bought him a Tuk-Tuk for use in local transport to earn a living. Additionally, the parents married him off to ensure that he has responsibilities and becomes grounded in his home.

"I was encouraged by friends and we traveled with the hope that we will make it to Europe where we can get opportunities for decent livings. We were seven of us and none realized that dream but am the only who came back as the rest decided to travel to Nairobi and still want to try going out. I regret the move and don't want to remember the risks we were exposed to during trip." Hassan Omar

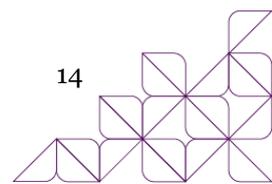
## Story 7: Positive Behavior Changes at The Workplace

Yahye Ali a 19-year-old youth from Dollo changed his attitudes towards his co-workers after participating in sports drills. After completing his secondary schooling in Dollo Ethiopia, Yahye returned home and was employed in his relative's cement store to monitor the stocks, supervise porters and receive customers' requests. He was arrogant and disrespectful to the porters and would engage in physical fights with them for trivialities. Sometimes he would withhold the porters pay for no apparent reason. The news of his arrogance reached the local authorities who threatened to revoke the trading license of the store, and this affected Yahye's relationship with his employer. The employer although a relative had had enough and was about to terminate Yahye's employment, then came the invitation to participate in the program's sports activities.

He attributes his changes to two specific sports drills – 'tag a player' and 'there's hope'. The first drill demonstrates how violence spreads from one individual to the other in communities, and this made him to reflect and engage in soul-searching about his choices, decisions and actions. He recalled how he mistreated the porters and would antagonize them to compete for the limited loading and offloading opportunities creating a stampede that would cause injuries to them. Participating in the second drill further allowed him to realize that all was not lost and he could still change his behavior and be more tolerant and humane while engaging with others. He apologized to his employer for the reputational cost that he had caused his business and in addition requested his clan's elders to intercede for him with the employer where the elders additionally apologized to the employer on Yahye's behalf. He then called the porters to discuss the reasons they were uncomfortable with him and to understand their accusations in which he learnt it was all to do with his disrespect for them. He promised to make amends and even organized a duty roster for the porters where five reports to work on each day of the week, and each porter knows their day of work. Yahye's change in attitudes and behaviors has seen marked improvement in his relationships both the with porters and with his employer.

## Story 8: Home Bound and Almost Drugs Free

Hassan Shariff Adan is a 33-year-old youth from the minority community in Elwak Somalia who in the past participated in local youth processes including sports events. However, he became addicted to chewing Khat and withdrew from all the youth activities and even started neglecting his family obligations and would arrive home very late in the night. This behavior angered his wife and led to conflicts in the family. His socialization changed. He reports that he had intentions of joining Al Shabaab as he felt everyone in the community was against him at the time, incessantly telling him to change his behaviors. His relatives intervened and convinced him of how the habit was harming all his relationships both at home and in the community. Following this, Hassan reduced the use of the drugs and started attending prayers in the mosque and was on the road to recovery, albeit in small steps.



It was at this point that he was selected to participate in the program's sports drills which he claimed was an impetus to his full recovery. He stated that the sessions provided him space to reflect on his life and realized that he was in denial that his life was still on course, in spite of the rebuke from his family and wife, whom he had neglected. The facilitators in the sessions encouraged him to change – to arrive home early and assist in household chores so that he re-builds harmony and peace with his family. He reported that after the sessions he reclaimed his life and even got a job with a parcel services transport company, which has engaged him and reduced the idle hours of chewing Khat. This has further led to acceptance with his family as he can fend for them and reports that his relationship with his wife has improved, not to mention improvement in health and sleep patterns. His socialization with others have improved not only at work and at home but also in the community and now frequently attends mosque for prayers.

## Story 9: Perception Change Changes Lives

At only 28 years Abdullahi Mohamed Diini has had two divorces and is full of anger, bitterness and hatred for other clans. He is from the Marehan clan and says he was brought up learning that their clan was superior to all others in Elwak district. He learnt early in life to hate the Garre community whom he was told were bad people and indeed enemies. He was advised from an early age that he should not have relations with the Garre although he admits that they have never hurt him as an individual. This pride and clan superiority that he harbors affected his relationships with others and his shop business suffered as many people avoided him for his anger.

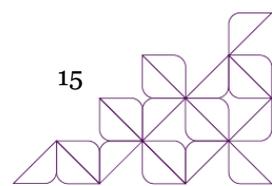
Two youth who attended trauma healing sessions under the program, Adan Abdirahman (Garre) and Daus Adan Hassan (corner tribe), approached him and wanted to include him in the subsequent program activities having learnt that he bore some of the symptoms of trauma that they were taught. They introduced him to the trauma awareness sessions and its benefits and he agreed to participate in the other sessions where he learned more of the dangers of unhealed trauma. In these sessions he heard many stories of youth from his own clan and the other clans who spoke of how their socialization bred hate, prejudice and resentment of the other clans. Abdullahi continued introspection of how his behaviors had harmed others including his family and now understood that the views he held for other clans were wrong, as they also shared similar stories of resentment of the other clans from their own socialization.

It was after participating in the sports drills that he finally realized that his own clan was wrong for breeding the misconceptions and planting seeds of hate in him and the other youth. That they were not superior to other clans in any way, only that they were conditioned to believe so. Similarly, he observed that other clans had also socialized their youth to believe that they were superior and the other clans were bad and not to be trusted. Through the sessions he learnt that the youth had potential to effect change as the older generation were deeply ingrained in their prejudices of each other and were the ones responsible for propagating hate and disunity among clans. He regrets divorcing his two wives and promised to rebuild new relationships with them, even though they cannot come together as a family as they have since remarried. Even though business is still slow at his shop, he has realized that he can now engage well with customers from all clans and has high hopes that his business will thrive. Abdullahi says he is now approachable and can relate and discuss with all and vows to continue participating in the mix clan team soccer sports for socialization across clans and to foster work-life balance.

## Story 10: A Teacher's Mindset Change Impacts a Community

Abdirashid Abdi is a 28-year-old school teacher from the Marehan community in Elwak Somalia and has witnessed firsthand the rivalry between the Garre and Marehan pupils in his school. His major handicap is that he can't speak the Garre language and is perceived to be proud for seeking translation when speaking to parents of Garre pupils or even to the young pupils from the Garre community who have not learnt the Somali language.

When he joined the sports drills, he could recognize how his interactions with the other clans especially the Garre may be construed as propagation of Marehan supremacy as he had not taken any initiative to



learn their language. During the drills he found more time to visit the pitch and interact with youth from all the clans and even started learning the Garre dialect. He now has basic proficiency in the language and Garre parents now relate well with him and even teach him more vocabulary when they visit him. He believes that learning the language has given the Garre community confidence to engage him in discussions not only of their children's performance but also about communal issues in their location. He believes that conflict sensitive engagement in a school setting is a must for teachers so that they interact fairly with all communities, without some feeling ostracized or undervalued, and this will set examples for the young pupils and socialize them to value diversity.

## Story 11: Youth Debunking Clans' Prejudices

Adan Ahmed Abdirahman aged 27 years and Abdullahi Diini aged 28 years hail from Garre and Marehan clans respectively in Elwak district. Each clan lives in separate villages due to the mistrust and animosity that they hold against each other. Adan lives in Octoover village and Abdullahi in Howlwadag village. Visiting each other's village is not encouraged for fear of attacks to revenge past conflicts. Though the two were familiar with each other, they had not interacted before the sports drills sessions, being from the two main conflicting clans in the district.

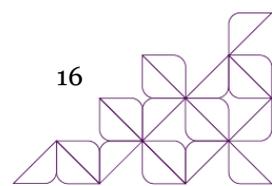
The two-youth participated in the sports drills together and would mull over the sessions to relate to their current conflict settings of their two clans. The interactions brought the two together and discredited the negative perceptions they firmly held against each other's clans. Abdullahi invited Adan to attend mosque in his village, but Adan's clansmen discouraged him and only agreed to visit when Abdullahi accompanied him. Once in Howlwadag village, he realized that his fears were misplaced and no-one bothered him and was surprised to learn that the village was similar to his Octoover village. Adan expressed interest in the village market after visiting Abdullahi's shop and Abdullahi agreed to lease land for him to open a shop. The shop is now up and running and Adan reports that he is not discriminated against by customers and has observed that all he was told by his clan about the Marehan was untrue. His shop operates up to 9pm at night! Realizing the prejudices and generalizations that they hold among their clans, Adan enrolled his younger brother at a local Quranic school in Howlwadag so as to change his negative perceptions of the Marehan community at an early age.

## Story 12: Embracing Sports Drills to Manage Violence

Two years ago, in Dhobley a young soccer player's home was raided by a rival team and the player attacked and suffered severe injuries that lasted a couple of years. Following the incident, the sports ground in the town was closed by the local administration and no one was allowed access the compound. This led to the establishment of village based sports pitches, where each village started their soccer team in their village, giving rise to the clan-based teams. These clan teams brought with them the conflict issues of their clans leading to rifts and hatred across the teams. Abdirahim Hassan aged 30years was the chairperson of youth in Dhobley at the time and would represent the youth issues in district meetings. His pleas to re-open the sports grounds were unsuccessful as he was blamed for not preventing violence during sports.

Five months to commencement of sports drills in the district, Abdirahim requested Jubaland Ministry of Youth and Sports consent to re-open the soccer field, and this time his request was granted with the caveat that the sports will not be riddled with chaos and violence. In addition, the ministry supported one sports event in the location that allowed reconciliation among teams and convening of regular meetings with the four main teams in Dhobley. The initiation of sports drills in the district was therefore a very welcome initiative to the chairperson as it was meant as a peacebuilding initiative aimed at reconciling communities, and would add to his initiatives.

Although Hassan did not participate as a player in the sports drills, rather opting to give chances to the other youth, he was present as a spectator in all the drills. Though he confirms that he did not understand some of the exercises, he would get the values and messages that were being conveyed during the debrief sessions, and would refer to the copy of the drills that the partner organization had availed to him to internalize the processes. He would appreciate the responses of the youth and their ideas of how to manage conflicts in the pitch and beyond. The experiences and ideas from the drills he says, strengthened his ability and resolve to manage conflicts in the teams, with some tangible changes in



place now. Though he acknowledges that they are still some challenges facing sports, violence has reduced and is no longer glorified, but rather it is perceived as shameful to initiate violence in sports.

## Story 13: Anger Management Through Sports

Aideed Sahardiid aged 24 years old has grown-up in Dhobley surrounded by conflicts where most of his siblings and relatives are clan militias and has embraced a violent nature in his daily endeavors. He is easily irritable, intolerant to criticisms and constantly beats his wife. He works menial jobs or attends forums and community meetings where he gets allowances to support his young family.

During the sports drills, Aideed understood that he had anger management issues and through the drills understood patience and tolerance. He said that when he is angry he has learnt to keep quiet, avoid confrontations, go for a walk and then come back home when the anger has subsided. He added that the sports pitch is a place to vent, get relief and forget arguments that usually leads to confrontations and violence with his wife. He reports that his family now has seen peace since he started the sports which he terms as therapeutic.

## Story 14: Overcoming Drugs Through Sports

Abdi Ali aged 21 years is a very talented soccer player and lives in Bosnia village in Dhobley. Most of his teammates admire his skills in the pitch. However, Abdi fell into the trap of drugs in recent years, saying they were readily available in the village. In his quest to acquire drugs and Khat he entered into debts especially with women who sell Khat in the market and became a target of attacks, ridicule and humiliation. Before the SHIIR sports drills, he was arrested by the police for failure to pay a debt of \$100 for Khat. The team captain agreed to bail him out of the debt provided he would rejoin the team, which he gladly agreed to in order to save face.

Upon joining the team, the captain would on days that he was not playing soccer, intentionally keep him busy in the evenings where he would take Abdi to tea and coffee joints, to limit the time that was available for him to acquire and use drugs. Recently Abdi played in a local tournament in Dhobley and helped his team win prompting other teams to solicit him to join their teams. He prudently declined their invitations as he had recognized the value of his captain in keeping him out of drugs.

