

Opportunities for Addressing Climate Change and Developing Youth Leaders in Peacebuilding in Somalia

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Background

Located in the Horn of Africa, a region that is highly sensitive to climate fluctuations, Somalia has seen 14 major drought events over the last 50 years, which adversely affected over six million people. While climate change does not directly or inherently cause violent conflict, its interaction with other social, political, and economic factors can exacerbate drivers of conflict and fragility and have destabilizing impacts on peace and security, which in turn pose a serious threat to the health and well-being of the Somali people. In collaboration with Elman Peace, a peacebuilding organization in Somalia, multidisciplinary assessments of community-based initiatives at the intersection of climate change, health, peace, and security were conducted.

Objective

Elman Peace's work has centered around high-level advocacy on climate change and its impact on peace and security. The objective of this collaboration is to translate this global policy advocacy into actionable community-based work in Somalia and develop initiatives at the intersection of climate change, human rights, and development.

Methods

Assessment of Elman Peace's programs and existing work

Building upon the strong foundation Elman Peace has already established in climate change and security, ATH assessed opportunities for expanded work at this intersection.

Peacebuilding Frameworks Analysis

ATH relied upon peacebuilding frameworks and approaches outlined by key leaders in the field to inform best practices that are climate resilient.

Literature Review

A literature review drawing on lessons learned from other countries that have addressed climate-related security risks in their programming on both climate change and peacebuilding was conducted.

Qualitative Methods: Key Informant Interviews

Primary interviews with pertinent regional and international organizations working in this space were conducted.

Recommendation formulation

Several recommendations were developed and analyzed through an iterative process in collaboration with Elman Peace.

Project Plan

Given that 65% of the population is comprised of young people aged 15-24 years, the target focus will be on the youth as changemakers.

Short term goal: Launch a vocational training program, geared at youth, centered around climate-resilient vocations and conflict mediation using skills-based apprentice style education, which is the norm for Somalis. New interventions will be modeled after existing programs at Elman Peace while drawing insights from neighboring countries. For example, NEF Mali operates a conflict mediator program which was regarded as reputable and fair in its resolution rulings. It works with local officials to reduce sources of conflict, particularly natural resources that are commonly fought over.



Long term goal: Create a module to increase awareness amongst youth on climate change and its impacts. Local community examples (droughts, floods, plagues) can be used to make the topic connected to the lives of the youth. Integrate the module into existing activities of Elman Peace such as its beach clean-up initiative to make it interactive.

Lastly, increase measurable awareness of climate change and its complex connections to peace and security using tailored digital communication strategies through channels already used by Elman Peace and where Somalian youth increasingly engage, especially with limited in person contact due to Covid-19.

Potential Barriers

- Clan leaders and elders make decisions preventing youth engagement in decision-making
- Compromised ability to bring appropriate visibility into expanded training program offerings
- Safety concerns of Elman Peace staff and participants
- Delays in recruitment due to community hesitancy
- Securing long-term funding for projects

Next Steps

As Elman Peace expands more formally into the intersection of climate action, security, and inclusive peacebuilding, conducting community-led surveys will be critical to ensure program sustainability.

- Survey topics can include:
 - Insight on existing climate adaptation strategies and agricultural practices
 - Existing resources and strengths
 - Gaps in resources
- Focus on one community at a time
- Conducted by staff, Elman Peace youth leaders, prominent community leaders
 - In person vs. online survey link via SMS, WhatsApp & IMO messaging

Summary

	Vocational Training & Conflict Mediation	Education & Awareness	Community-led Surveys
Pros	Satisfies people's immediate needs (training, jobs, food, money) Aligns the people's needs with the ultimate goal of peacebuilding	Knowledge will empower people to understand what is going on around them and act Youth can be stewards of climate change awareness	Identify: resources, gaps, existing knowledge Continue commitment to beneficiaries & community Can be edited & repeated in future years
Cons	Investment - cost, staff	Investment - cost, staff	Safety risks for in-person Investment - cost, staff, time, travel