



Food and Agriculture
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LEARNING BRIEF



Conflict and protracted crises

Somalia

Strengthening the resilience of rural communities through conflict-sensitive programming

Translating context analysis and conflict-sensitive recommendations into adjustment in project implementation in Lower Shabelle region



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Contents

Acknowledgments	iv
Executive summary	v
Context	1
About the project.	2
The learning agenda within the MEL approach	3
Methodological approach	4
1. Context analysis in fragile and conflict-affected contexts	4
2. Conflict sensitivity Programme Clinic	5
3. Implementation of Programme Clinic recommendations and adaptive management	6
4. Progress monitoring and outcome documentation	7
Addressing the learning questions	8
Results and impacts	11
Testimonies and stakeholders' feedback	13
Sustainability	14
Replicability and upscaling.	14
Key learning and recommendations for programming.	15
Bibliography.	18

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Executive summary

The Global Network against Food Crises (GNAFC) was launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 by the European Commission, together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP). Since 2018, the European Union (EU) has been supporting FAO through the EU-FAO Partnership Programme which is expected to have a catalytic effect on the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus approach through evidence-based, context-specific and innovative actions as well as strategic partnerships in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East.

Country-level monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) plans have been designed in order to track changes in resilience and food security indicators and share information across country interventions. Within this framework, country-specific learning agendas have been developed to understand the enabling and/or limiting factors behind these changes and the conditions for replication and scale-up of potential solutions to food crises. These learning agendas are an engaging tool to mobilize a variety of experiences and knowledge, building on relevant quantitative and qualitative data, analysis and information to support evidence-based learning and informed conclusions and recommendations throughout the programme and project cycle.

A learning brief documents how learning happened and what learning emerged from promising programme approaches promoting sustainable solutions to food crises, in order to support decision-making and resource allocation. More specifically, this learning brief provides an overview of the linkages between the conflict-sensitive programming approach undertaken by FAO in Somalia and the related adjustments to the GNAFC country project. The brief showcases key learning on the role of water governance in reducing local-level natural resource-based conflict in the Lower Shabelle region of Somalia.

Conflict-sensitive programming – informed by a context analysis – is a fundamental requirement so that projects and programmes are undertaken with a clear understanding of contextual dynamics, thereby lessening their potential to exacerbate tensions, disputes and conflicts while enhancing contributions to sustaining peace. The sustaining peace approach promotes interventions aimed at: building trust, relationships and interactions among communities and between communities and the state (social cohesion); supporting inclusive conflict management mechanisms; reducing inequalities and resulting grievances between groups; and reducing competition over natural resources.



Context



Geographical coverage **Lower Shabelle, Somalia**



Beneficiaries

► **4 693 registered farming households**

and an estimated **950 agro-pastoralist households** living along the irrigation canals

► **Local contractors**

undertaking rehabilitation works

► **Youth** employed to clear

vegetation along the canals

► **Local communities**

residing along tertiary and primary irrigation canals

► **Government officials**

benefiting from training and capacity development



Resource partners

- European Union

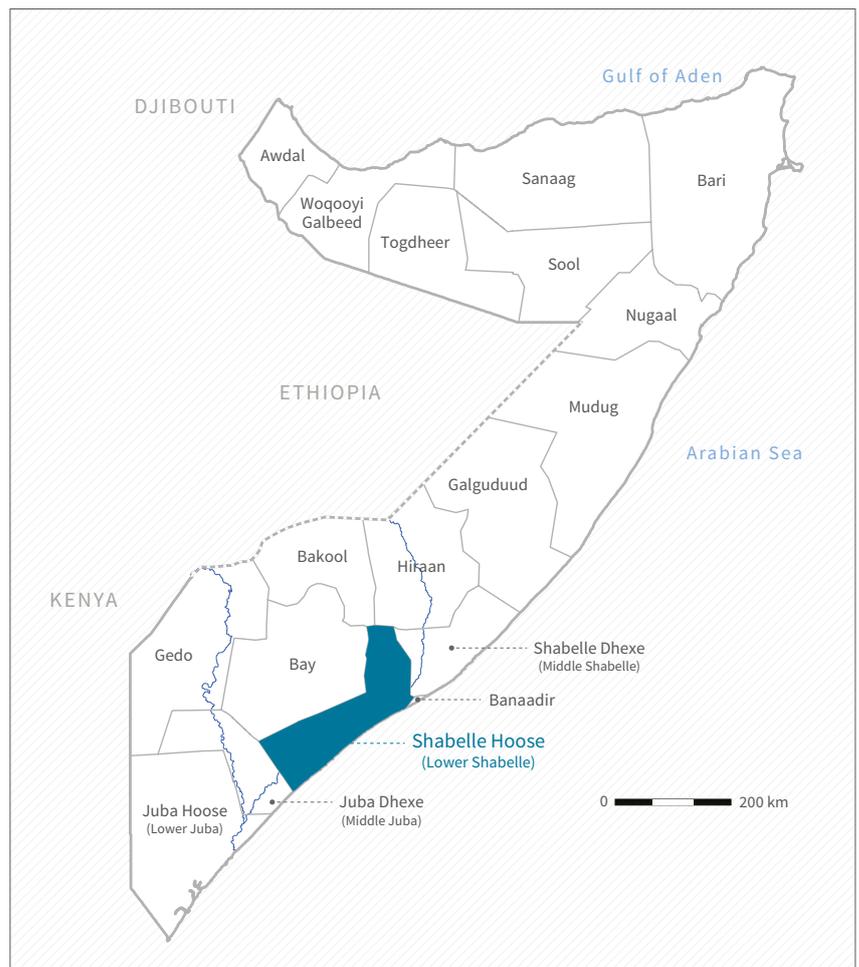
Technical partners

- International Organization for Peacebuilding (Interpeace)
- Ministry of Agriculture, Federal Government of Somalia
- Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MoAI), South West State
- Local non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

In 2016-2017, Somalia experienced a severe nationwide drought and an elevated risk of famine. Famine was averted as a result of a massive humanitarian response by the local and international communities. The drought ended in May 2018, but with that came unusually heavy rains that triggered a flood emergency in southern Somalia's breadbasket along the Shabelle and Juba Rivers. In the same period, Tropical Cyclone Sagar caused massive damage along the northern Somali coast.

At the time, local communities in the Lower Shabelle region depended on rain-fed agriculture. Since 1991 canals and ancillary structures (bridges and culverts) were non-functional, causing floods and reducing the agricultural potential of the area. Lower Shabelle is a patriarchal community, and there is limited participation of women and youth in the governance of irrigation canals through water committees. There were also no cooperatives and farmers' groups to assist farmers in developing production plans and create market linkages. Additionally, until 2019, Lower Shabelle was largely under the control of Al-Shabaab, an Islamist insurgent group with links to Al-Qaeda. Insecurity therefore restricted accessibility to the area.

Geographical coverage of the project



Source: United Nations. 2011. *Map of Somalia*. [online]. [Cited 30 November 2021]. <https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/somalia>



About the project

Since 2018, FAO has been implementing a three-year EU-funded project titled “Building resilience and promoting durable solutions in Lower Shabelle region” within the broader framework of the EU-FAO Partnership Programme. The GNAFC country investment project in Somalia has three main outcomes:

- 1.** restoration of irrigation access and efficiency through the rehabilitation of approximately 245 km of irrigation canals, and the establishment or strengthening of water management committees;
- 2.** strengthening of around 15 farmers’ groups (of up to 500 members) to jointly plan, aggregate and market their production; and
- 3.** capacity development of public institutions (federal and state ministries of agriculture and irrigation) that support water management and agricultural production to connect farmers and water management committees to government services.

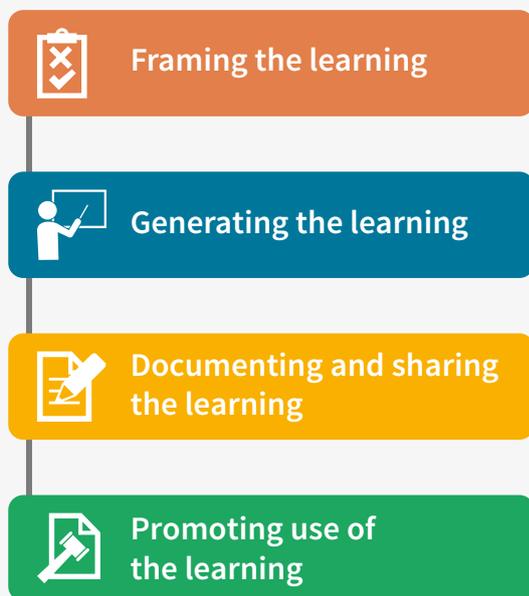
In addition to providing direct assistance to beneficiaries, the overall objective of these interventions is also to generate knowledge on a set of typologies of innovative response options, which will help build a body of evidence to support decision-making and resource allocation processes towards sustainable solutions to food crises.

The learning agenda within the MEL approach

A dedicated MEL plan has been designed in order to create a body of evidence to support decision-making and resource allocation processes informed by an HDP nexus approach. This approach ensures that the learning gathered from context analysis as well as monitoring and evaluation activities (e.g. baseline studies), is recognized and applied on a project while it is being implemented. The Somalia MEL plan was developed through a consultative process in order to track changes in resilience and food security indicators during implementation and at the end of the interventions.

Complementary to the MEL plan, a learning agenda was developed in order to ensure that any learning gathered from MEL processes, as well as from other sources and activities, would support the production of knowledge and would be documented, applied in the lifetime of the project and taken up in future projects. **The Somalia country-investment learning agenda has been defined around three learning questions, two of them aiming to understand the role of water governance in reducing local-level natural resource-based conflict.** Its overall objective is to encourage collaborative learning and to enable knowledge gained on effective mechanisms to reduce water-related conflicts to be implemented in other similar contexts or projects. Preliminary answers to these learning questions are presented later in the document.

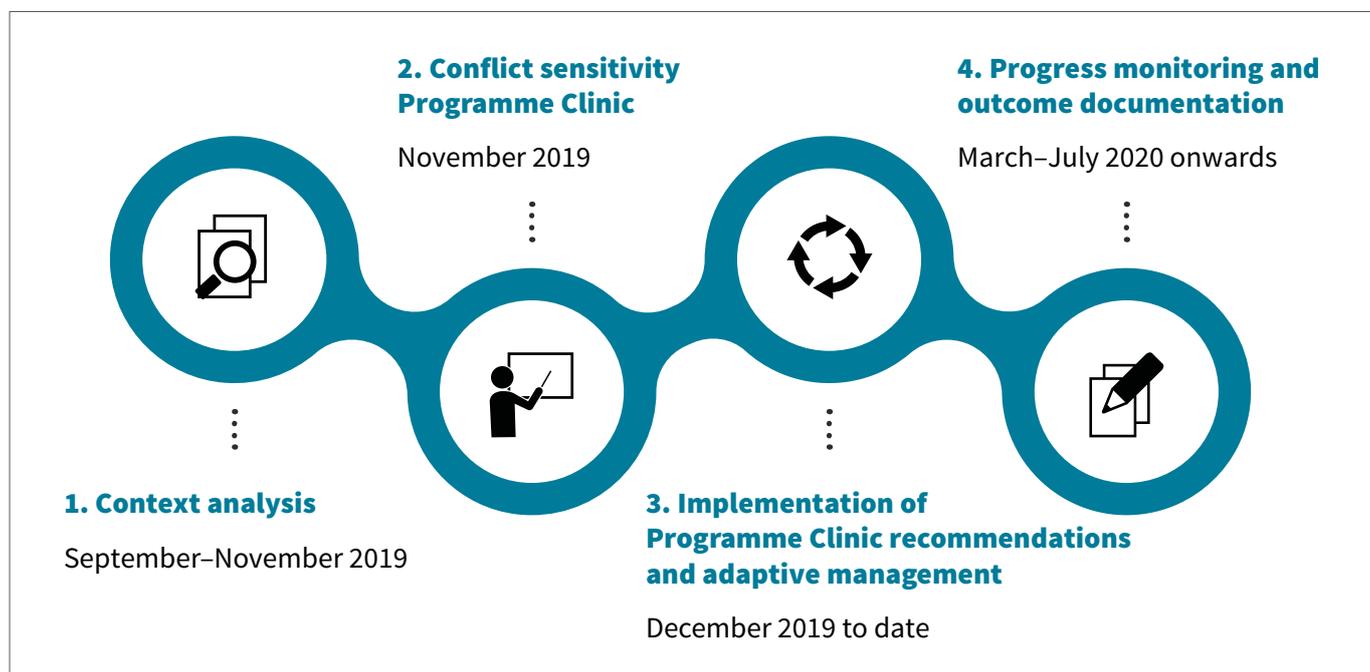
Overview of the learning generation process



The learning generated and documented in this brief is the result of a collaborative process between the Conflict-Sensitive Programming Specialist based in FAO's Resilience Team for Eastern Africa, the Conflict and Peace Unit (CPU) at FAO headquarters, as well as the FAO teams working on Knowledge for Resilience (KORE) and Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL). The role of the Conflict-Sensitive Programming Specialist has been instrumental in promoting a conflict-sensitive approach and acting as a bridge between the FAO teams in Somalia and at headquarters. The KORE team facilitated the learning process and had a brokering role in identifying and documenting the linkages between the conflict-sensitive programming approach and the learning agenda revision and implementation. The testimonies presented in this brief were gathered through a questionnaire designed by the Conflict-Sensitive Programming Specialist in collaboration with the KORE and CPU teams, and administered by Savana Consultancy Firm Limited, a third-party monitoring company.

Methodological approach

The conflict-sensitive approach applied by the GNAFC country investment project in Somalia is composed of four main methodological elements:



1

Context analysis in fragile and conflict-affected contexts

A structured **context analysis** can contribute to the prioritisation of interventions and identification of potential programmatic entry points while also informing project design, implementation and the monitoring and evaluation framework. **FAO usually uses the term “context analysis” in place of conflict analysis, as it is considered a more inclusive label for structured analysis informing interventions in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.** A comprehensive contextual understanding is integral to conflict-sensitive interventions: the analysis provides a contextual baseline to measure change, institutionalise a contextual understanding and identify programmatic entry points to contribute to sustaining peace, while supporting outreach to external stakeholders.

During the inception phase of the project, FAO Somalia commissioned a context analysis to be undertaken by Interpeace, based in Somalia, to better understand the local context where the intervention was being implemented. The overall objective of the context analysis was to provide a grounded and locally informed analysis of peace and conflict drivers, as well as stakeholders, with a particular focus on resources (land, water and infrastructure) in the Lower Shabelle region.

Interpeace ensured a participatory approach by involving and bringing together different stakeholders, such as state and federal government representatives, NGOs and FAO personnel throughout the process.

The context analysis identified the main key conflict drivers and peace entry points:

Key conflict drivers in the Lower Shabelle region:

- 1. Land use, access and management:** there are limited mechanisms to ensure equitable access and management of key resources, such as water points, pasture and land, due to the lack of ownership titles and the absence of formal redress mechanisms.
- 2. Intercommunity relations and social distance:** clan conflicts over resource sharing created mistrust between communities.
- 3. Insecurity:** this was mainly due to the presence of Al Shabaab in the region. The capacities of local governance and security authorities in providing services to displaced communities has been stretched and limited.

Peace engines identified in the Lower Shabelle region:

- 1. Community mechanisms for resource sharing, security and justice provision:** traditional and religious leaders are respected members of the communities and are still regarded as having a strong stabilizing influence on the communities. Several clan conflicts have been successfully mediated through the elders.
- 2. The cooperation between and among federal and regional governments:** The Federal Government of Somalia played a significant positive role in the formation of the South West administration. In addition, there has been dialogue and consensus that resulted in the integration of the local militia into the current security structures. This has boosted the security, especially in Marka.

2

Conflict sensitivity Programme Clinic

The **Programme Clinic** is a structured participatory analysis designed to identify and integrate “conflict-sensitive” strategies into the design and implementation of FAO interventions, to minimize the risk of negative impact as well as maximize any positive contributions to local peace. An important element for a successful Programme Clinic is to ensure that participants involved have a solid technical understanding of the project as well as good contextual knowledge. It is divided into 5 steps:

1. programme and context overview;
2. understanding conflict and peace dynamics;
3. understanding stakeholders;
4. understanding potential peace and conflict impacts;
5. conflict-sensitive recommendations and associated indicators.

FAO uses its Programme Clinic approach in order to promote the integration of conflict sensitivity and sustaining peace actions in projects and programmes. The Programme Clinic workshop was delivered by the FAO Conflict-Sensitive Programming Specialist with the aim to generate conflict-sensitive recommendations to inform adaptive programming. The exercise gathered several participants including FAO project personnel, representatives from the Federal Government of Somalia, representatives from the Federal States of Somalia and Interpeace Somalia staff. Recommendations for conflict-sensitive programming were aligned to the project’s results framework, and associated indicators (at output level) were proposed and discussed with FAO Somalia MEAL team for integration in the project results framework.

3

Implementation of Programme Clinic recommendations and adaptive management

As a result of the context analysis and Programme Clinic recommendations, FAO's project staff made adjustments to their strategies and activities in two main areas of work: the procurement process and water governance.

Programme Clinic recommendations:

- Ensure clear and fair procurement processes.
- Sensitize contractors on the peace impact of providing short-term employment to community members including youth.

Below is a summary of the main Programme Clinic recommendations that triggered adjustment of the **procurement process**:

Actions taken:

- Interpretation of procurement process to include local contractors in order to promote local ownership of the project.
- Water canals were broken down into different lots in order to allow more contractors to bid and win more than one lot.
- Commercial contracts with the successful contractors mentioned the need to provide employment to willing unemployed youth. This was done to promote employment amongst youth who were at risk of recruitment into clan militia and Al-Shabaab forces (as indicated by the context analysis).

Another set of adaptive management activities undertaken as a result of the context analysis and Programme Clinic recommendations focused on **water governance** and include the following:

Programme Clinic recommendations:

- Support engagement between government and water management committees.
- Establish clear animal crossing points so as to prevent conflicts arising from destruction of crops by animals.
- Establish water points for animals.

Actions taken:

- A training for representatives from the federal and state-level governments in conflict-sensitive governance of water resources.
- Letters of Agreement with ministries and technical partners stipulated that 30 percent of participants in decision-making forums should be women.
- The construction of water points through commercial contracting (machineries) was incorporated into the project.
- The demarcation of clear animal crossing points was taken into consideration during the design, mapping and drawing of the tendered canals.

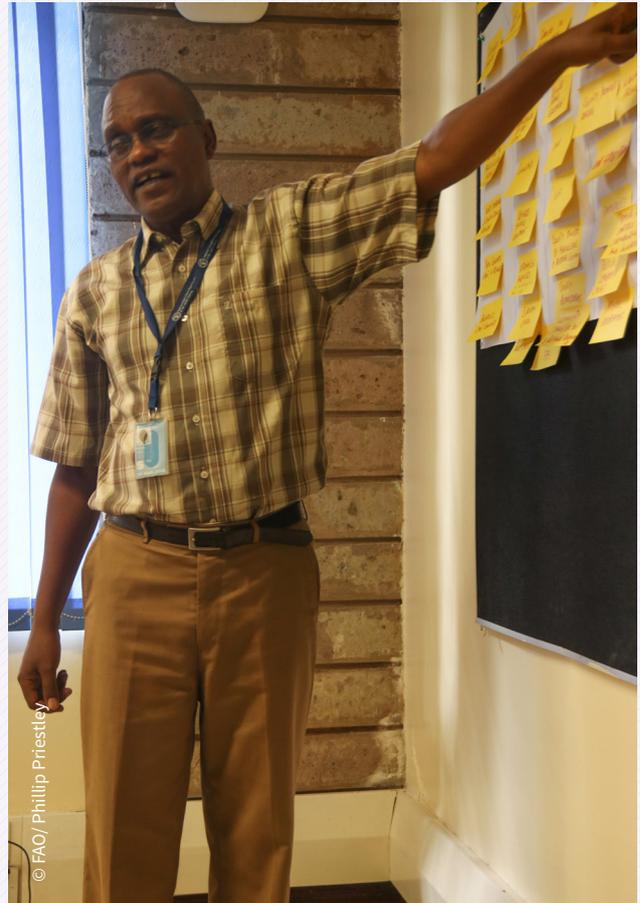
4

Progress monitoring and outcome documentation

A conflict-sensitive MEL framework was developed as a result of the Programme Clinic recommendations. This conflict-sensitive MEL framework complements the main Programme's MEL framework, and it is used as a tool by the project team to monitor progress against the conflict-sensitive and sustaining peace indicators while implementing the project activities.

More than two years after the initial context analysis conducted by Interpeace, a third-party monitoring company, Savana Consultancy and Research Services Limited, led a context analysis follow-up study in March–April 2021. This study sought to assess changes in peace impacts and local conflict dynamics resulting directly from the project intervention in the target communities. It focused on key natural resources (land, water and pasture) as the most significant drivers of conflict. Savana Consultancy and Research Services Limited used the Interpeace context analysis report as the baseline to compare findings.

The follow-up study provided strong qualitative evidence gathered through the use of a questionnaire developed by the Conflict-Sensitive Programming Specialist, KORE and CPU teams. Questions related to the conflict-sensitive recommendations and indicators were included in the questionnaire administered to assess the peace and conflict impacts of the project. At the time of preparation of this learning brief, additional data on the project impact was expected to be completed before the project closure in December 2021.



Conflict-sensitive and sustaining peace indicators

These are the conflict-sensitive and sustaining peace indicators resulting from the Programme Clinic recommendations that informed the conflict-sensitive and sustaining peace MEL framework:

- number of consultative meetings held in project sites;
- number of water resource sharing agreements signed;
- number of agro-pastoralists who benefit from farming opportunities;
- number of women who participate in project-related discussions and decision-making;
- number of sensitization meetings (for contractors) in which potential peace impacts of their work are discussed;
- number of men, women, youth and elders involved in community-level activities;
- number of technical trainings for water management committees on conflict prevention and conflict resolution; and
- number of dialogues held between farmers over access to water for irrigation.

Addressing the learning questions

The role of governance in reducing conflict over water resources

Two of the learning questions of the GNAFC country investment project in Somalia aim at understanding the role of water governance in reducing conflict, as follows:

1. Does community governance of irrigation result in a reduction in conflict over water resources?
2. Does the higher-level governance result in reduced conflict over water resources between communities?

These learning questions were taken into account throughout the various steps of the conflict-sensitive approach, from the context analysis to the follow-up study done by Savana Consultancy Firm which provided important answers to the conflict-related learning questions.

Does community governance of irrigation result in a reduction in conflict over water resources?

Rehabilitating agricultural infrastructure, such as irrigation canals can have a positive role and effect in reducing the potential for conflicts over water. Some of the community-level structures play a role in water governance as follows:

- There are various existing informal structures that form part of the community governance structures related to resource management. More specifically, the village committees manage irrigation water systems within the primary canals. Traditional elders play a key role in administering the traditional justice guided by the customary laws (*Xeer*). Therefore, when conflicts occur, the elders have a key role in mediation and dispute resolution.
- The existence of informal community governance plays a positive role in conflict management and prevention by reducing the likelihood of conflict escalation.
- Governance-related mechanisms play an important role in facilitating the engagement between different actors in order to prevent further tensions and disputes.

Community-level governance structures in Lower Shabelle region include water resources and irrigation canal management committees, as well as Water Users' Association Committees. The members include a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and the canal members, both male (ten) and female (five). These community-level governance structures are responsible for ensuring equal sharing of water resources and managing conflicts before they escalate into clan-level tension. All the clans in the area have members in the committees to ensure that the community is well represented.



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Focus group discussion (FGD) participants in the context analysis follow-up study noted that these **community-level governance structures, which were trained by the MoAI on conflict-sensitive water governance, have contributed to a reduction in conflict over water resources.**

Key informant interviews revealed an estimated 90 percent reduction in conflict over water over the lifetime of this project. Based on the findings, committees therefore play a critical role in resolving conflict through the traditional system of *Xeer*, which is respected by the local communities.

During project implementation two types of community-level meetings were held:

- emergency meetings held when there were conflicts due to water scarcity; and
- monthly meetings held to discuss canal usage prioritizations for the following month. Any conflict that had occurred at village level was also discussed, so that members could propose strategies for its resolution.

Irrigation canal committees are able to perform regular monitoring of water sharing directly within the community. This ensures that any tension or conflict is reported at an early stage and can therefore be de-escalated before it becomes serious.

Does the higher-level governance result in reduced conflict of water resources between communities?

The higher-level governance refers to higher levels of authority in the region, namely the state and federal level structures. These structures have the capacity to provide security to project sites, thereby enabling the smooth implementation of programmes and acting as a deterrent to conflict. Additionally, they can support community-level governance with capacity building and trainings on management of water-related conflicts. Nevertheless, this can only be achieved when the higher-level structures have the technical knowledge or capacity to provide trainings to the community and address disputes over water resources.

The MoAI at federal and state levels had a key role in providing security to project sites, especially in areas newly liberated from Al-Shabaab. Some of the roles of the higher-level governance structures included:

- **Strengthening water management committees' cooperation through capacity development, by enhancing knowledge and skills in the management of water-related conflicts.** For this reason, FAO trained ministry officials on water management, public asset management and water resource conflict management. Information was shared by MoAI with the water irrigation committees and the beneficiaries, and therefore directly benefited the farmers in the community.
- **Promoting conflict-sensitive water governance** and raising awareness on the links between water and conflict.
- **Formulating, establishing, and implementing water policies,** helping draft water sharing agreements and pass legislation.



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Results and impacts

The main project contribution to peace was through the rehabilitation of the canals and trainings of water management committees. The main results of the conflict-sensitive process undertaken are:

- **Increased availability of water and reduced conflicts over key resources.** Conflict over land was mainly driven by shortage of water and poor pasture after a drought. The rehabilitation of irrigation canals meant water was available to cultivate lands previously left fallow. Conflict over access to land was more prevalent in areas near the riverbank as silting of the irrigation canals reduced water flow to fields. Some farmers were discouraged to cultivate these areas and thus resorted to taking over land near rivers, where there was better water supply. The rehabilitation of the canals largely solved clan tensions as more land became irrigated and available for cultivation. Additionally, the adoption of processes by water committees to ensure equitable access to water by farmers contributed to a reduction in conflicts over use of water for irrigation.

The development of water catchment areas at the endpoint of the canals contributed to a reduction in conflicts between farmers and pastoralists over access to and use of water. The construction of water points through commercial contracting (machineries) was incorporated into the project, and work is progressing with local authorities to agree on livestock routes and crossing points. This has three main benefits:

1. They provide a water point at the end of the canal, which marks the point between riverine agriculture and agro-pastoralists. Therefore, the animals have water in the area on which they are grazing, and this can reduce the potential for conflict over water resources between farmers and agro-pastoralists.

2. During high rains the water catchments act as flood relief, thus reducing the potential for flood risk. Canals channel excess water into the surrounding land beyond the irrigation area, and if there is too much water in the catchment, it overflows.
3. The agro-pastoralist area that receives excess water becomes a source of pasture during the dry season, because water sinks into the ground and becomes a source during crisis.

- **Involvement of youths and improvement of their skills in construction work during canal rehabilitation.** According to MoAI officials, youths who have benefitted from the rehabilitation works are appreciative of the opportunities that the project has accorded them. As water access increased, there was an increase in food production, and many youths were employed in casual labour in the agricultural sector. In Dieni village, many radicalised youths who had joined Al-Shabaab for monetary reasons, returned to their villages once the rehabilitation of the canals began. The FGD respondents were reluctant in disclosing the number of youths who have returned, as they feared they may be reported to security forces. One farmer disclosed that approximately 27 youths have returned, although most of them are not employed in the rehabilitation schemes. It was mandatory for the membership of the committees to include a minimum of 30 percent of youths, so they remained active participants of the water management process.

- **Improved inter-community relations and security.** Water management committees and the council of elders received training on customary conflict resolution mechanisms. This improved relations between clans living in the area as disputes were referred to these committees expecting a fair outcome. The committees do not keep records of these disputes but reported that there has been improvement in resolving them. The *Biyomaal* and *Habargidir* clans previously in conflict took part in community meetings aimed at conflict resolution and there are currently no cases of fighting between them. Improved trading activities were also experienced between clans that now trust each other to buy goods on credit.

- **Increased involvement of local actors.**
 1. Local contractors that were registered in the United Nations Global Marketplace and had immediate access to the area were invited to the tender. This meant that there were no delays in implementation of field activities, or the delays were very minimal.
 2. The local government provided full support to the initiative. It should be noted that representatives from the state-level government participated in both the context analysis and Programme Clinic processes.
 3. Local employment from the rehabilitation works has been an indirect result of the promotion of local contractors being included in the process. As local contractors executed the works, they were more likely to employ people from villages in the project area.

The project contributed to improved community relations in the region, as community members participated in trainings and acquired skills related to conflict resolution and management, as well as trade and market.



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During fieldwork, some challenges were encountered with achieving an adequate representation of women in the consultation meetings. Nevertheless, the perspectives of both men and women were taken into consideration in the context analysis report. In addition, the conflict assessment follow-up study stated that the participation of women in peacebuilding activities has not significantly improved as they have limited opportunities to take part in conflict resolution meetings. One FGD participant in Dhurow village affirmed that 'women belong to the kitchen'. Cultural norms around gender are a barrier to women's involvement in peacebuilding activities, as they are not allowed to participate in decision-making processes. Women are present in the village meetings, although more as spectators rather than active participants, as a result of gender cultural norms and men's disregard to women's role in decision-making. While important efforts are being made in regards to conflict resolution and contribution to peace through this project, they are benefitting men and women in the community unequally. Therefore, the project would benefit from a stronger gender-sensitive approach as this would likely result in more inclusive and optimal project gains.

Testimonies and stakeholders' feedback

One beneficiary, mother of eight children, widowed from clan conflicts over land access, asserted in an emotional statement:

"The project changed my attitudes towards other people who are not my clan. My husband was killed during skirmishes based on clans as a result of land issues. I held grudges and wanted to avenge for my husband, but the project enabled me to cope with that painful incident and forgive those who orchestrated the killing of my husband."

After the death of her husband, she moved to a settlement for internally displaced people, leaving her four hectares of land behind as clan tensions continued to escalate. She returned to farming while the rehabilitation of canals was taking place. Through the project's reconciliation efforts, she was compensated for her loss as the responsible group for her husband's loss sought formal forgiveness from the widow. She currently earns a living through farming activities, purchased more agricultural land, and has built a modest house for her children. This case illustrates the ability to reach genuine reconciliation, as the underlying issue of negative attitudes towards other clans was addressed.

Creating job opportunities for the youth contributes to the reduction of their engagement in negative coping mechanisms, increases household incomes, and enhances longer-term contributions to localized and sustaining peace efforts.

A 52 year-old farmer and father of nine children reported that prior to the rehabilitation of the canal he did not have any motivation to cultivate his land as the canal was dysfunctional due to siltation and scarcity of water. However, after the rehabilitation of the canal he was able to cultivate and grow various crops on two hectares of land in partnership with other farmers. He now plans to clear more land for farming so he can further increase land under production. He shares:

“Before FAO reached out to us our life was at stake. We were forsaken people in the dark side of the world. Hunger emaciated us and affected the growth of my children. Now we are on the recovery path both economically and physically.”

Sustainability

- **Community participation helps increase community ownership and can have a positive role in reducing resource-based conflicts.** It is mandatory for FAO and government authorities to ensure a higher degree of community engagement that takes into consideration longer term and respected community arrangements for resource sharing.
- **Partnering with ministry representatives at state and federal levels enhances ownership of the project benefits.** It is important to strengthen the local conflict management capacities through capacity development and trainings, involving the security forces in the area to participate in peacebuilding meetings and workshops. While ensuring the sustainability of the intervention through the collaboration with government actors, this also reinforces the operationalization of the HDP nexus.
- **Creating job opportunities and related benefits for the youth contributes to their economic empowerment.** It is important that youth living around the main canals are employed after the rehabilitation of the canals ends.

Replicability and upscaling

The Somalia GNAFC country investment project is the first FAO project that undertook a complete conflict-sensitive programming process including: (1) a context analysis; (2) a Programme Clinic exercise; (3) the implementation of conflict-sensitive recommendations in terms of adaptive management and elaboration of a specific conflict-sensitive MEAL framework; and (4) a conflict assessment follow-up study done by a third-party monitoring company. The project provided foundational programming in irrigation access and peacebuilding, to apply for complimentary funding from the United Nations Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund's Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative. FAO will potentially undertake the same approach with the GNAFC country investment in the Sahel (Burkina Faso and Mali), and this brief will serve as a reference for future similar interventions that aim to improve conflict sensitivity and possible contributions to sustaining peace.



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Key learning and recommendations for programming

Stronger efforts need to be made towards encouraging women to develop their roles in peacebuilding activities, and ensuring that they play a key role in decision-making and the implementation of activities.

- **Understanding the peace and conflict dynamics of the context of intervention, prior to project design and implementation, is essential.** This ensures that the project does not have a negative impact on the beneficiaries and community dynamics, even when the intentions are set right at the beginning. Context analysis can benefit from quantitative data collection complementing qualitative analysis, therefore applying a mixed analytical approach.
- **Integrating various representative stakeholders into the context analysis and conflict-sensitive process is crucial when working in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.** Participation in the context analysis process and the Programme Clinic exercise helped government authorities and FAO staff to relate the context analysis findings with the Programme Clinic's recommendations and their consequent implementation in terms of adaptive management and elaboration of a specific conflict-sensitive MEL framework. Clarity on the objectives of the context analysis and the Programme Clinic exercise demystifies the concepts, and reduces fear and suspicion associated with the word "conflict".
- **Aligning Programme Clinic recommendations to the project's key result areas is a productive exercise.** It is key that implementing teams realize that proposed activities promoting conflict sensitivity are achievable within their existing frameworks, and could be integrated in already-budgeted activities. This approach is expected to enable staff as well as implementing partners to understand how to institutionalize the practice of conflict sensitivity.

- **Assigning conflict sensitivity focal points facilitates the processes at various stages.** It is important that country programmes identify a focal point who receives training on the Programme Clinic approach, and that a conflict sensitivity monitoring and reporting role is included in the Terms of Reference of one of their staff. This is an important first step to enhance capacity and institutionalize the conflict sensitivity approach.
- **Gender-sensitive planning needs more elaboration.** To avoid the stigmatization of women involved in peacebuilding activities there should be an effort to advocate for the acceptance of women within consultative spaces and to ensure that women play a key role in the implementation of activities and decision-making.
- **A robust methodology to collect evidence to answer the learning questions should be articulated and designed at the project design stage.** The MEAL framework can generate evidence to respond to the learning questions if the indicators are aligned to the learning questions from the onset of the project. This can also ease the linking of information and evidence collected through regular project monitoring, which is essential to respond to the learning questions.

Implications of COVID-19

Due to COVID-19-related restrictions, some of the activities were delayed or difficult to monitor with the access limitations. Additional support was given to some of the most vulnerable target farmers in Lower Shabelle affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected the transportation, and therefore,

the distribution of resources. Some of the beneficiaries under the GNAFC country investment project received a productive stimulus and cash injections, which supported their livelihoods and increased production. This was funded by the European Union through top funding and reprogramming of some projects.



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LEARNING BRIEF SERIES: UNPACKING THE LEARNING

What is being learned, and how, to strengthen resilience-building

This product was developed with the support of FAO's Knowledge Sharing Platform on Resilience (KORE) and is available on its online portal. FAO's knowledge management and normative work, through KORE, aims at generating learning and disseminating evidence-based knowledge to support decision-making, resource allocation and programming processes.

This work falls under the Global Network Against Food Crises, an alliance which was launched by the European Union, FAO and WFP at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit to step up joint efforts to address food crises along the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and continue to raise global awareness and commitment from all relevant actors.

GNAFC offers a coherent coordination framework to promote collective efforts in analysis and strategic programming for a more efficient use of resources to prevent, prepare for and respond to food crises and, ultimately, support collective outcomes related to Sustainable Development Goal 2 for lasting solutions to food crises.

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