
Scoping Study on the Culture Sector in Somalia

A Research Study Report

December 2013

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Acknowledgements

This Study is the result of a global consultation process involving many scholars and experts in the field of culture in Somalia, including representatives from Government Departments and international partner agencies. UNESCO wishes to thank all those persons who contributed to its development and would like to acknowledge the contributions from colleagues of the European Union Mission to Somalia.

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List of Acronyms

AFRICOM	United States Africa Command
AU/UN IST	African Union and United Nations Information Support Team
AWHF	African World Heritage Fund
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
HDI	Human Development Index
HIBF	Hargeisa International Book Fair
HIPS	Heritage Institute for Policy Studies
ICCROM	International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
ICOM	International Council of Museums
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SOMAC	Somali Academy of Sciences and Arts
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization

Foreword

Culture is a fundamental pillar for the reconstruction of the Somali social fabric. It can effectively contribute to the revival of the Somali identity and be a development opportunity for future generations. Restoration of the political, economic, and social structure of the country will only be sustainable if a common view and interest in a cultural heritage is shared.

But efforts for the reconstruction of Somalia are coming up against a new challenge. Seventy per cent of the population in Somalia is under the age of 30. During the past few decades, this entire generation was born and matured in an environment that was not conducive to the transmission of cultural values and traditional skills.

International and local efforts have led to the beginning of national reconstruction, its stability and new democracy. Further efforts however are needed to build a solid and sustainable social structure. These need to focus also on the revival of an ancient culture which would engender a positive feeling of national pride for the new and for future generations.

Therefore, it is against this background that UNESCO, with support from the European Union and wide ranging consultations with Somali authorities, non-state actors and civil society, has conducted a comprehensive assessment that reflects a wide spectrum of past, on-going and planned cultural interventions. The study indicates that present conditions in the post-transitional era could be conducive to coordinated interventions in the culture sector of Somalia. While identifying continued socio-economic, political, legal and institutional challenges, the study gives recommendations for cultural interventions which can support peace building and the reconstruction of Somalia.

In order for Somalis to best manage and protect their cultural heritage, the capacity of State / non-state actors and development organisations must be strengthened and new policy frameworks developed in order to revive the country's culture. This should include improving human resource capacity, implementing capacity building programmes that focus on mainstreaming gender equality and the inclusion of cultural policies for socio economic development.

This study aims to be the beginning of a new type of development approach. Somali heritage should be revived to promote inclusive dialogue and peace building through various tangible and intangible cultural assets to raise awareness on the important role that culture can play in reconciliation and rehabilitation in Somalia and showcase Somali music, poetry, dance, art and many other cultural manifestations.

UNESCO would like to express its profound gratitude to the EU mission to Somalia for the resources provided for the scoping study. UNESCO is also grateful for the collaboration and contributions of all involved in this project. Somalia is facing new challenges and we hope that this report will attract the attention of key stakeholders and humanitarian workers to realize the need for a new approach for development through a strengthened Cultural Sector.

Djelid Mohamed
Director, UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa

Executive Summary

After more than twenty years of conflict and civil strife, Somalia's once vibrant cultural sector has been all but destroyed, with buildings and institutions of national cultural significance such as theatres, museums, libraries, and archives dilapidated, and cultural activities a shadow of their former dynamism. The absence of government structures to coordinate the management of cultural property has been a key factor in the decline of the Somali cultural sector. Although currently there are some governmental institutions—national and regional—that have been mandated to administer the Culture Sector in Somalia, the country in general lacks national policy frameworks, and is not a signatory to key international Conventions on Culture.

In the past years including the transitional era, international cooperation and governmental policies in Somalia have given, for evident reasons, emphasis to urgent needs such as humanitarian support and food security. Efforts in the culture sector have been sporadic and limited. However, following the generally positive transition in the year 2012 and the establishment of the new Federal Government, efforts of early recovery are increasingly being seen. As a result, the role of culture is being recognized as a key element in the design and implementation of development policies. Hence, it is necessary to reinforce efforts to rehabilitate the culture sector in Somalia and allow it to play its role in promoting shared values and dialogue – both critical tools in building sustainable peace.

In this regard, and in an effort to preserve and restore the culture sector in Somalia, it is important to exercise the “do no harm” principle by being cautious not to destroy cultural heritage and national identities in the rush towards development. Somalia in particular has experienced damage to national symbols such as the Abdul Aziz Mosque –a symbol of great historical and cultural value. The mosque survived the civil conflict for more than two decades but UNESCO reported that it was recently destroyed as a result of other reconstruction works undertaken by Somali authorities with international support. This is a clear example of development causing more harm than good.

Religion is an important element in all aspects of daily life in Somalia and plays a major role in society. For most Somalis, religion is more than just a belief system; it is a way of life. Ensuring that those involved in reconstruction efforts are aware of this religious context will further guarantee the preservation and restoration of Somali culture.

Also important to the culture sector is the role of Somali youth in preserving the country's national identity and heritage. Somalia's youth are a potential economic engine of the country as 73% of its population is below the age of 30. Having witnessed a civil war, this generation of future leaders knows very little about Somalia's history and the value of its culture. A focus on preserving and restoring the culture sector will therefore reinforce a national identity among the youth that has, for so long, been lost.

Notwithstanding the dire situation of the culture sector in the country, there are efforts by a diverse number of actors in developing a variety of cultural initiatives focusing on tangible and intangible cultural elements: from the rich Somali oral traditions, to modern musical expressions among Somali youth; and from revitalizing the literary scene to the protection of eight-centuries-old monuments that tell the rich history of Somalia.

It is against this background that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was commissioned to undertake a “Scoping Study on the Culture Sector in Somalia”; in order to examine the current situation of the Culture Sector in Somalia and to propose recommendations for sequenced actions that can be financed and supported by the European Commission and other international actors based on the country’s priorities.

The Scoping Study has identified the following main challenges for the Culture Sector in Somalia:

1. Lack of legal (national and international) and policy frameworks;
2. Lack of or poor infrastructure, financial resources, human resources and weak institutions;
3. Loss of cultural, tangible and intangible, heritage due to looting and civil conflict;
4. Absence of conservation practice, including lost memory related to culture and traditional practices;
5. Imposition of foreign cultural practices and intolerant/extreme attitudes; and
6. Inadequate awareness on the part of the government and communities regarding the value of promoting cultural policies and activities.

Following an analysis of main findings of this study and taking into consideration the views of Somali and non-Somali stakeholders, the Study suggests a strategy for the rehabilitation of the Culture Sector in Somalia focusing on three priority areas:

- Priority 1: Strengthening the capacity of State and non-state actors engaged in the preservation and development of cultural heritage
- Priority 2: Safeguarding Somali heritage for the promotion of inclusive dialogue and peace building
- Priority 3: Protection, safeguarding and restoration of immovable cultural property and movable cultural property

Each priority area has its own key outputs and activities but the Recommendations of the Study can be summarized in the following:

1. Support to Somali authorities and partners for the creation of unified policy-legal-regulatory frameworks and priority schedules
2. Sensitize all partners on the importance of integrating cultural heritage into the long-term national development goals
3. Support to secure sufficient financial resources for cultural development
4. Capacity building support for skilled and competent professionals for cultural heritage and cultural promotion professionals
5. Facilitate Somalia’s accession to relevant international instruments on culture
6. Seek coordinated cooperation and support from the international community for cultural matters
7. Support the rehabilitation of key cultural institutions such as the Somalia National Museum and Somalia National Library.

At a Governmental level, it would be highly desirable to have an independent body responsible for the culture sector. Before the civil war, the Somali Academy of Sciences and Arts (SOMAC) was the main body in charge of the implementation of cultural policies and activities. There are some plans for the restoration of such an organization but there has been little interest as well as a lack of resources. Support is urgently needed in order to realise this objective.

It is important to propose from the outset that based on other best practices, the above recommendations can best be implemented through a coordinated framework support of the International community. This could take the form of a group that could be referred to as “Friends of Somali Culture”, to include International Organizations and donors, NGOs and Civil Society actors as well as individuals involved in the Culture Sector.



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Introduction

Culture, in all its dimensions, is a fundamental component of sustainable development. As a sector of activity, through tangible and intangible heritage, creative industries and various forms of artistic expressions, culture is a powerful contributor to economic development and social stability.

As a repository of knowledge, meanings and values that permeate all aspects of our lives, culture also defines the way human beings live and interact both at local and global scales¹.

Culture is:

- Identity, innovation and creativity;
- A set of distinctive spiritual and material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or a social group;
- A complex web of meanings, relationships, beliefs and values that frames people's relationship to the world;
- Acquired through the process of cultivation and improvement of the individual, especially by means of education;
- An evolving dynamic force relevant to all societies, local and global;
- Influenced by and in turn influences world-views and expressive forms;
- Located in time and place, and;
- A renewable resource².

A. Description and objective

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the political, legal and institutional situation of the culture sector by taking into account the Somali context;

2. Identify key institutional and non-governmental actors in the culture sector;
3. Highlight examples of past/on-going/planned interventions related to the protection and promotion of Somali culture;
4. Identify international agencies, implementing partners, donors and individual experts currently engaged in the Somali cultural sector and/or who can contribute to new proposals that will add value to efforts to reconstruct and reactivate the sector;
5. Provide an updated mapping of priorities, vision and needs of the Sector as prioritized by Somali authorities (federal and regional) and cultural actors.

B. Justification and purpose

In the last twenty five years the concept of development has evolved from a singular universal model and vision to a broader concept that entails multiple and diverse paths with a human-centered approach. This broadening of the development paradigm has gradually paved way for acknowledging the indispensable role of culture in sustainable development, highlighting the importance of understanding the complexities of societies and the contextual implications in development³. In this sense, cultural policy has been marked as one of the key elements of development strategies⁴.

Although progress towards the integration of culture into global and national development policies has been slow, the process towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals has provided an unprecedented opportunity to document the link

1 The Power of Culture for Development; UNESCO

2 Our Creative Diversity, Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development, 1996.

3 Our Creative Diversity, Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development, 1996.

4 UNESCO was entrusted to lead the World Decade for Cultural Development from 1988 to 1997, culminating in the Stockholm Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, which called for a cultural approach to human development.

between culture and development and encourage international cooperation in the cultural field to contribute towards achieving development objectives. In this line, data, facts, figures and best practices on the linkage between culture and development, have already demonstrated the impact of culture on the social and economic well-being of peoples and societies, thus informing national and international development policies⁵.

In the case of Somalia, the commitment to strengthen existing Government structures must take into account the cultural influence of clans and kinship, and institute programmes to promote the positive considerations of these cultural influences in the governance structures, particularly at local government levels. Such action will contribute to the overall objective of encouraging reconciliation, democracy and the development of governance structures at all levels.

Strengthening the capacity of State and non-state actors in the field of culture, including re-establishing the country's cultural institutions, is a good entry point into the revival of Somali culture. Actions to strengthen the governance of culture in Somalia will contribute to integrate culture and inclusive dialogue in the reconstruction and development of Somalia and the strengthening of institutional structures for the governance of the various sectors. Human and institutional capacity building initiatives may speed up recognition and acceptance of International Conventions on culture. For these reasons, this scoping study looks to support the reconstruction, development and promotion of Somali culture to reinforce Somali identity and national pride, and to be used as a tool for reconciliation and a means of facilitating sustainable peace in a post-transitional era.

With culture being a vehicle for economic growth and job creation for younger generations, this study also focuses on possible channels for the participation of youth. Unfortunately, despite many years of development aid, the country ranked very low in all aspects of the 2012 Human Development Index (HDI); it has high inequality rates with 82% of Somalis being ranked as poor, especially women⁶.

In this difficult context, Somali youth have consistently borne the burden of the protracted conflict for the third generation now. About 73% of Somalia's population is below 30 years of age; youth between 14 and 29 years, comprise 42% of the population⁷. Since Somali youth have limited access to education, health and standards of living, major determinants of human development, there can be far-reaching intergenerational consequences for promoting human development. Unemployment for young Somalis is one of the highest worldwide, at 67%⁸. Upon completing some basic education, until the age of 15 or 20, young people face major decisions about continuing education, entering the labour market and/or starting a family. Depending on the family and other pre-determined circumstances beyond their control, youth are forced to choose one or more of these options. Until Somalia's young generation is equipped with the opportunities to engage in dialogue and decision-making related to reconciliation, peace building, state-building and overall development, at community and national levels, they will increasingly be distracted by other less constructive, risky behaviours⁹. Being the largest young generation in Somalia's history, in most instances with a sincere desire to lead better lives and contribute to society productively, young Somalis can channel their energy, drive and potential towards serving their Country as agents

5 Culture and development, Note by the Secretary General, General Assembly 66^o session, 26 July 2011 (A/66/187)

6 In Somalia, HDI is 0.285 out of an ideal of 1 [Empowering Youth for Peace and Development, Somalia Human Development Report (HDR), UNDP, 2012 (www.so.undp.org/shdr/)].

7 UNDP's HDR 2012, focus on youth empowerment, and defines youth as persons between the age of 15 and 24. However, the survey conducted for the Somalia HDR targeted young people between 14 and 29 years of age for specificity, as a result of consultations with key stakeholders to define youth in Somalia based on culture, perceptions and realities in the country.

8 Regarding the major issues affecting young Somalis today, according to the survey conducted for the HDR, youth are most frustrated with the lack of employment opportunities, primarily aggravated by the lack of appropriate training available locally (a mismatch between educational content and market needs); inability to afford and access education, which remains a challenge particularly for the large nomadic or refugee populations; and lack of capital to serve as start-up for business or a means for migration to other countries –over 60% of all youth have intentions to leave the country for better livelihood opportunities.

9 About 21% of youth respondents in the HDR survey were neither working nor in school. Regarding health issues, 8% of chew khat –a narcotic that is known to contribute to psychosocial problems–, 11% smoke and less than 2% used illicit drugs, although under-reporting is common in most surveys on these topics.

of change. Development in Somalia cannot be planned or achieved without involving this large and dynamic group.

Peace and reconstruction in Somalia are just germinating and need to be watered with initiatives that will reinforce understanding and tolerance among the Somali people. As plans and priorities of governmental and non-governmental organisations are currently being developed in Somalia; integrating the role of culture in this process is a high priority.

In recent years, other priorities have occupied international and Somali efforts in order to support pacification and stabilization of the country. In the current post-transitional situation, culture cannot continue to be neglected and is indeed the momentum to interpose plans and actions. This applies especially in areas where fast interventions are also needed, like in the case of immediate identification and protection of architectural cultural heritage. The recent destruction of the Al-mnara Tower of Abdul Aziz Mosque is a key example of lack of coordination and planning that resulted in the loss of a Somali national symbol that survived war but sadly has disappeared with the need for infrastructural development.

The range of ideas and the determination among Somalis and international actors involved and/or interested in Somali culture (see Chapter 3), is a positive sign for possibilities of the meaningful interventions in this Sector. Nevertheless, the comparatively uncoordinated efforts of different organizations and individuals who are planning and/or implementing various cultural activities also show that interventions are relatively fragmented and hence the urgent need for a coordinated framework.

The newly appointed institutions in Mogadishu need to be supported in order to have strong governance in the Culture Sector. Institutions working with different cultural aspects need to develop clear mandates, strategies and plans in line with international cultural policies and standards. A good coordination between federal and regional government levels is also critical.

C. Methodology and structure of the study

UNESCO has analysed the situation of the cultural sector in Somalia by carrying out:

1. Direct research and field visits,
2. Consultations with key Somali and international stakeholders,
3. A review of existing documentation, and
4. Focus group interviews and questionnaires.

Previous efforts have been made to assess the Culture Sector in Somalia. Notably, in the year 2006, UNESCO took the initiative of dispatching a mission to Somalia, to conduct a situational analysis and a needs assessment of the cultural resources in Somalia¹⁰.

One of its objectives was to contribute to the overall UN/World Bank-led Somali Joint Needs Assessment (JNA) –conducted later that same year– which has a wider scope but which also includes a section on culture and heritage. Following this report, in the year 2007, a meeting on “Rehabilitation of Somali Culture” was held in Nairobi, Kenya, with the participation of experts from all regions of Somalia as well as from the Diaspora communities, resulting in a series of recommendations related to the Culture Sector in Somalia¹¹.

These efforts were followed by other interventions led by UNESCO as described in Annex A of this Study that culminated in a *UNESCO Strategy for the Rehabilitation of Somalia Culture Sector 2012-2015*. These efforts constitute the background for this Scoping Study, and some of their key findings have shown that the needs and priorities in the Culture Sector in Somalia have not changed drastically in the last few years.

Nevertheless, the new focus and approach to this sector and the changes that have taken place in Somalia in the last one year have created a clear need to take stock, with a new assessment exercise and an updated directory of key actors in the Culture Sector in Somalia.

10 Cultural Needs Assessment in Somalia, Dahir Afrax, Maxamed, (UNESCO Mission Report, October 2006).

11 UNESCO, Expert Meeting on the Rehabilitation of Somali Culture [12-14 June 2007, Nairobi, Kenya, Report of the meeting (version 17 March 2008)]

In line with the objectives indicated above, this study has been structured sequentially in order to:

1. Understand Somali culture in a historical and socio-political context (see Chapter 1);
2. Explain the legal and national-regional institutional framework in which the protection and promotion of Somali culture has taken place (see Chapter 2);
3. Provide information regarding actors/ activities/projects so as to get a better understanding of the Somali cultural scene (see Chapter 3);
4. Present recommendations for sequenced priority actions in the Culture Sector in Somalia (see page 44).

Context of Somali Culture

1.1 Geographical information

Somalia, located in the Horn of Africa, has a population of approximately 10 million. It borders the Gulf of Aden with Yemen on its North, Djibouti to the Northwest, Ethiopia to the West, the Indian Ocean to the East and Kenya to the Southwest.

Although the Southern tip of the land of Somalia straddles the equator, it is not a tropical country but a dry land where humidity is not present except along the southern coastal areas. There are two wet seasons and two dry seasons that impact the work of agriculturists and pastoralists and the way of living of Somalis in general¹².

In the Northern regions, facing the Gulf of Aden, the topography of the land consists of three zones. These are the coastal Guban, the mountainous Golis, and the high plateau Haud. The Guban has the most ancient towns in the entire region. Berbera, Bosaso, Zeilah and Bulahar are just some of the ancient ports in the Guban coastline and sailors, travellers, and merchants as far back as the time of the ancient Egypt have visited it¹³. In the Golis, the northern mountain top has altitudes of almost 8,000 feet above sea level, the highest peak being Mount Surat. Hargeisa, Borame, Erigabo and Sheikh are the major towns situated in the mountains. The Haud plateau is the zone that slowly descends in

a north to south direction. It extends from below the city of Hargeisa in the west to as far south as the plains of central Somalia and the Somali region of Ethiopia¹⁴. South of the northern regions, the landscape consists of mostly flat plains, as the Ethiopian high plateau slowly smoothes to Sea level. However, there are outcrops that occasionally break the monotony of the land, such as the Bur Hakabo rock. This zone has Somalia's only two permanent rivers, the Juba and the Shebelle, both rising in the Ethiopian highlands. The Juba reaches the sea near the city of Kismayu, while the Shebelle finishes its course in sand dunes, a few miles away from the Indian Ocean¹⁵.

1.2 Anthropological and demographic information

The origin of the Somali people is uncertain. Current theory suggests that the Somali originated in the southern Ethiopian highlands and migrated into northern Kenya during the first millennium B.C. They then gradually migrated northward to populate the Horn of Africa by 100 A.D.¹⁶

The ancient Egyptians knew Somalia as the Land of Punt (the Land of the gods). They valued its trees, which produced the aromatic gum resins frankincense and myrrh¹⁷. Too often, the Somali people have been represented as homogeneous

12 The two wet seasons are gu –long rains from March-April to June-July and a very important season whose related prosperity is deeply integrated into Somali culture– and dayr –short rains from October to December. The two dry seasons are haggaa –July to September, the hottest time of the year temperatures with 43C (80F) to 48C (100F) –, and jilaal –long dry season from mid-December to March or April and the cool season in the northern highlands where water levels can drop dangerously low affecting productive activities.

13 Guban means “the burnt”, an allusion to its desert environment, searing heat and sandstorms, although it has grass and shrubs in other areas, which afford excellent grazing to sheep and goats, especially when it rains. During the hot season (June-September), the local people use to move to higher ground to the extent that the population of the coastal towns was sometimes at half the usual during that time of the year, but this is being modified by permanent settlements on higher grounds, leaving less land for the migration between coast and mountains.

14 Haud is the Somali word meaning “a country of thickets and grassy plains”. This zone forms the best rangelands for the pastoralist and supports the largest number of livestock; it is livestock from this region that forms the bulk of Somali livestock exports to Arabian markets.

15 Diriye Abdullahi, Mohamed (2001), Culture and Customs of SOMALIA. Culture and Customs of Africa Series, London: Greenwood Press, pp. 1-3.

16 “History of emergence of the Nation,” www.everyculture.com/Sa-Th/Somalia.html

17 Punt is also mentioned in the Bible; this area was known as the land of the Barbaroi to the Greeks and the ancient Romans called it Cape Aromatica or Regio Cinnamafore because they thought the Somali coasts produced cinnamon, although no cinnamon has been known to grow from Somali coasts.



©Wikipedia.org

as some 95% of the people of Somalia are ethnic Somalis. Somalis also live in northern Kenya, in the Ogaden region of eastern Ethiopia, and in Djibouti. In spite of national boundaries, all Somalis consider themselves one people after whom the country took its name¹⁸. This unity makes them one of Africa's largest ethnic groups¹⁹.

However, there are a number of ethnic groups and cultures different from those of the majority Somalis. A small percentage of the peoples of the riverine and southern coastal area are descendants of a pre-Somali people who lived in the Horn of Africa. These cultural groups are called *habash*.²⁰

The Somalis are a people of predominantly pastoralist culture, even if their ancient cities have

maritime tradition spanning several millennia. The original Somali homeland was along the coast of the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea areas. It is there among the hot coasts and the cool mountains that oral history places the ancestral homes of the clans. This is true even for clans today residing in southern Somalia, which is why the northern regions hold a spiritual and cultural significance for all Somalis.

The population figures for Somalia have never been constant²¹, but recent estimations have indicated a population of approximately ten million²². Somalia's population is predominantly rural, with over 50% being traditionally linked to the nomadic pastoral food economy and about half that figure associated with sedentary agro-pastoral/riverine livelihoods²³.

18 It is generally agreed that Somalia is named for the legendary father of the Somali people, Samaal (or Samale). Nevertheless, a popular unscientific etymology includes *soo maal*, which means "go and milk", heard, as the story says, by some foreigners who were visiting the land. The source might as well have been *Salama*, which means, "became a Muslim", since Somali identity is intertwined with Islam (Diriye Abdullahi, Mohamed (2001) p. 8).

19 For many years, the central government actively promoted the idea that Somalia was the most homogeneous nation in Africa and one of the few in the world—a view further spread by scholars, both Somali and non-Somali.

20 While not poorly treated, *habash* are considered inferior by some Somalis. Most *habash* are Muslims and speak Somali, although some, such as the coastal groups Bajuni and Amarani, speak Swahili ("Ethnic Relations" www.everyculture.com/Sa-Th/Somalia.html).

21 Population counts in Somalia are complicated by the large number of nomads, refugee movements and also, because of a lack of official data. For example, the population census of 1974/5 was published, but the 1985/6 population census for Somalia was not. In the absence of up to date census figures, efforts have been made to estimate the size of the population and its age and sex distribution, and to make projections. The most notable attempts are the ones done by UNDP/UNFPA in 1997 and the 2006 Settlement Surveys (UN/WB Joint Needs Assessment Report on the Reconstruction of Somalia Vol.1 2008).

22 The CIA World Factbook indicates an estimated 10,251,568 inhabitants in July 2013. The estimated population growth rate is 1.67% in 2013 (www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html). The population density (people per sq. km) in Somalia was reported at 14.87 in 2010, according to a World Bank report published in 2012.

23 The Rural population in Somalia was last reported at 62.60% in 2010, according to a World Bank report published in 2012.

However, urbanization has been very rapid in recent years, especially since the start of the civil war²⁴. While the absence of hard demographic data makes it impossible to gauge the extent of the phenomenon, it is clear that the rural/urban population profile is in the process of radical change²⁵.

1.3 Socio-cultural information

1.3.1 The clan system, leadership and conflict resolution

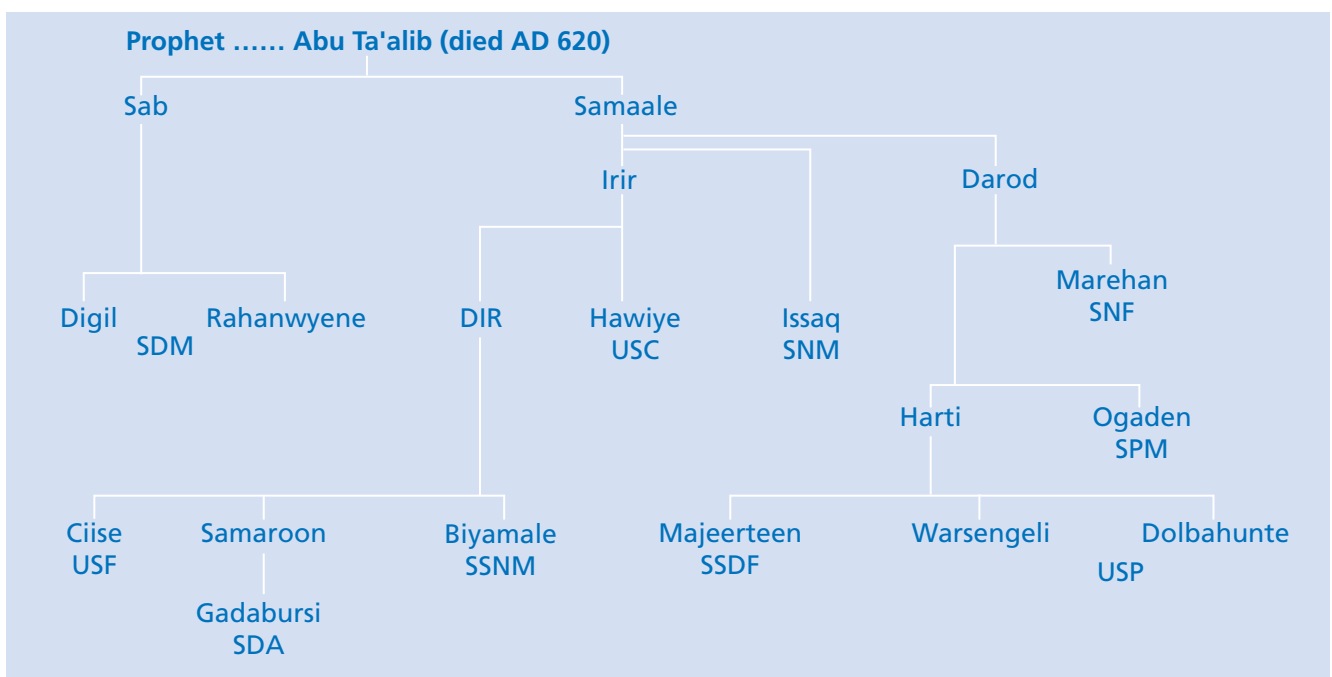
Somali society is based on a clan-family structure. The two major clan groups are the Samaal (or Samale) and the Saab (or Sab), named after brothers who are said to have been members of the Prophet Muhammad's tribe, the *Quraysh* of Arabia.

The *Samaal*, which make up about three-quarters of the Somali population, are divided into four main clan-families: the *Dir*, *Daarood*, *Isaaq*, and *Hawiye*. The Saab are divided into the *Digil* and *Rahanwayn* clan-families. Major clans can have thousands of members, each claiming descent from a common ancestor. These clans are subdivided into sub-clans and into primary lineage groups. Somali men trace their membership in a particular clan-family through their paternal lineage, going back a dozen

or more generations. Clan groups with the longest ancestry have the most prestige. Clans and sub-clans are associated with the territory they occupy for most of the year.

Somalis are traditionally an independent and egalitarian people but are fiercely loyal to their clan and its associated political party. Ceremonial clan leaders are called Sultans, or bokor in Somali, a term referring to binding the people together. Actual rule and enforcement of clan laws usually falls on the elders and a council made up of the clan's adult males.

Somali clans have a traditional means of compensating for lives lost in inter-clan disputes. The clan responsible for the death pays the victim's clan compensation, called *dia*, traditionally a set number of camels or other livestock. A certain percentage of the *dia* (called *jiffo*) is paid to the family of the deceased by relatives of the one responsible for the death. *Dia* is also paid, in a lesser amount, for other crimes, such as rape, adultery, and theft. *Dia*-paying groups are formed by agreement among closely related clan members. Enforcement of *dia* customs falls on the elders and the clan council. If a matter cannot be settled peacefully, fighting breaks out between clans, followed by another peace council²⁶.



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24 For example, as consequence of the civil war, there has been a big migration of IDP's and refugees to the cities. As of October 2012, some 2,200 refugees and 8,500 asylum-seekers, predominantly of Ethiopian origin, live in urban areas (www.unhcr.org/pages/49e483ad6.html).

25 The CIA World Fact book indicates an estimated rate of urbanization of 3.79% (annual rate of change for 2010-2015).

26 "Social Stratification" www.everyculture.com/Sa-Th/Somalia.html

1.3.2 Domestic unit and gender roles

The Somali domestic unit consists of a man, his wife or wives, and their children²⁷. The male is considered the head of the household, except where it is headed by a divorced or widowed woman²⁸. Somali marriages have traditionally been considered a bond between not just a man and a woman but also between clans and families. Until very recently, most Somali marriages were arranged, usually between an older man with some wealth and the father of a young woman he wished to wed. These customs still hold true in many rural areas in the 21st century. The Samaal traditionally marry outside their family lineage or, if within the lineage, separated from the man by six or more generations. The Saab, follow the Arab tradition of marrying within the father's family lineage, with first cousins often marrying²⁹. Inheritance passes from father to son in Somali families. A wife remains a part of her father's lineage, while her children belong to her husband's lineage. Under Islamic law, daughters are entitled to inherit half of what sons get, but in Somali society daughters usually do not receive valuable animals or land. Under Siad Barre's regime, social reforms included equal inheritance rights for women although some traditional leaders opposed this new approach³⁰.

Somali women are expected to submit to men and to fulfil their duties as daughters, wives, and mothers, though there has been a slow evolution of attitudes. Women generally do not socialize with men in public places. Women in nomadic clans are responsible for caring for children, cooking, and moving the family aqal. Women and girls in farming clans are responsible for planting and harvesting crops, caring for children, and cooking. Urban women may hold jobs in shops or offices or may run their own business.

Women and their role in culture

Women, historically the givers and maintainers of life, necessarily have a pivotal role to play in peace building processes, particularly given the myriad care-taking, social and cultural functions that have traditionally been theirs. UNESCO believes that women can give an alternative approach to conflict prevention and resolution, and can play an important role in transmitting the messages of a culture of peace because they are usually the principal transmitters of cultural values to children and youth. By virtue of their specific role in society, they often have a vision that can be most valuable for ensuring peace and tolerance in a society, but this is often overlooked or underestimated.

Women's involvement in various spheres of intangible cultural heritage is both central and vital. Such spheres include what may be described as essential realms of culture, which are often indispensable in maintaining familial and cohesive social relations. Examples of these include language, codes of ethics, behavioural patterns, value systems, and religious beliefs. In most cultures, women maintain principle roles in the upbringing of children, through which the intergenerational transmission and renewal of many of these essential forms of intangible heritage occurs.

Women are also custodians of intangible cultural heritage. This encompasses the performing arts, culinary, medicinal knowledge and the know-how for the creation of material culture. The latter includes, but is not limited to handicrafts, weaving, textiles, habitat production and the making of tools for a wide range of subsistence activities in areas such as horticulture, agriculture and fishery. In maintaining and passing on these forms of intangible culture, women often integrate new forms and techniques with the traditional, thereby refashioning culture.

27 Islamic law permits a man to have up to four wives if he can provide them and their children with equal support. In homes with more than one wife, each wife usually lives with her children in her own house, and the husband and father divides his time among them. Elderly or unmarried relatives may live with the family.

28 If a man repeats three times to his wife, "I divorce you," the couple is considered divorced. The couple often signs an agreement giving the bride a certain amount of property should the couple divorce, which is common in Somalia. Tradition calls for the wife to relinquish her right to the property if she initiates the divorce. The children will usually stay with the mother, although boys may remain with their father and his wives.

29 The man pays a bride price—usually in livestock or money—to the woman's family. A Somali bride often lives with her husband's family after marriage, with her own parents providing the home and household goods. She keeps her family name, however.

30 Gender Equality and Equity, A summary review of UNESCO's accomplishments since the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing 1995), Unit for the Promotion of the Status of Women and Gender Equality, May 2000



©Turku.fi

With many Somali men killed during the civil war or lost to diseases such as tuberculosis, women have learned to fend for themselves. They have shown remarkable adaptability and a talent for business. The United Nations and other international organizations launched campaigns in the late 1990s to help Somali women and girls get better health care, education, and job skills training. Somali natives who have been educated abroad are returning to help with these endeavours. Several programs have been started to promote nomadic women's enterprises, such as the collecting of henna leaves for grinding into natural cosmetics. Women in urban areas sell wares in the streets or marketplaces or run their own shops³¹.

Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to the consequences of insecurity. With traditional structures and coping mechanisms breaking down, limited financial resources require decisions on where money is spent; in most cases, the priority goes to male children and men. Many girls marry or are forced to marry before the age of 14 and the practice of female genital mutilation is widespread. Somalia also has one of Africa's highest maternal mortality rates with approximately sixteen mothers dying for every one thousand live births.

Widespread efforts to correct unsafe practices in reproductive health are expected to improve these conditions in the 21st century.

1.3.3 Arts, education & culture

The arts in cultures are integral to life. Their function, creation and learning are intertwined. The arts have the potential to be instrumental in promoting the learning of different disciplines. This instrumental approach to arts education neither limits the arts as a supplementary educational tool, nor simply aims at bringing arts into curricula as the main content or a study subject.

UNESCO basically promotes two main approaches to arts education, which can be implemented at the same time. The "learning through the arts/culture" approach demonstrates how we can utilize artistic expressions and cultural resources, as a learning tool. It aims to draw on the rich wealth of culture, knowledge and a wide range of skills.

The "learning in the arts/culture" approach, stresses the value of cultural perspectives, multi and inter-cultural, and culturally sensitive languages through learning processes. This kind

31 "Gender roles and statuses" www.everyculture.com/Sa-Th/Somalia.html



©UNHCR/R. Gangale

of approach contributes to the understanding of the importance of cultural diversity and reinforces behavioural patterns underlying social cohesion.

The benefits of introducing the arts and cultural practices into learning environments are a balance of intellectual, emotional and psychological development of individuals and societies. Such education not only strengthens cognitive development and the acquisition of life skills, innovative and creative thinking, critical reflection, communicational and inter-personal skills, but also enhances social adaptability and cultural awareness for individuals, enabling them to build personal and collective identities as well as tolerance and acceptance, appreciation of others. The positive impact it gives to the development of society ranges from cultivating social cohesion and cultural diversity to preventing standardization and promoting sustainable development.

At present, there is no coherent educational system in Somalia. Planning and implementation are piecemeal, mirroring the wide assortment of schools run by local and international NGOs, or by private individuals on a for-profit basis. Most of the currently operating schools tend to follow the educational models used in the past, which were

adopted from different countries.

Most primary and secondary schools teach similar subjects. At the primary level, these are Islam, mathematics, social sciences, natural sciences, and languages. Although some classes may include discussions of peace, environmental, and civic education, very little formal education in these subjects is provided in the current school system. The schools may differ in the weight they give to different subjects, according to the medium of instruction.

At the primary level, the Arabic language schools devote considerable time to religious education. At the secondary level, both English and Arabic schools tend to teach the following ten subjects: language courses of Somali, English and Arabic, and courses on Islam, mathematics, physics, biology, chemistry, geography and History³².

In terms of higher education sector, there has been significant growth across South-Central, Puntland, and Somaliland. Although there are many positive aspects to this rapid growth given the initial conditions and recent history of the country, it raises serious concerns about the quality of education provided. These concerns warrant an urgent

32 Somalia: Education in Transition; Lee Cassanelli and Farah Sheikh Abdikadir

intervention given the magnitude of challenges facing HEIs, coupled with the limited involvement and oversight of governing authorities.

The concentration of a large number of students in computer-related, business administration and social sciences courses raises crucial questions about the relevance of courses being offered and their alignment with the human resource needs of the economy and the country's development needs in general³³.

1.3.4 Shelter and food in daily life in rural and urban somalia

Shelter and food are elements of daily life that not only shape the anthropological and sociological context of Somalis, but also constitute part of their cultural heritage. In this sense, knowing about these elements is important in order to keep them in mind for future cultural projects that could include them such as the creation of documentary inventories or museum exhibitions.

Nomadic herders spend nearly their entire time outdoors³⁴. The traditional shelter of the herders is the *aqal*, a dome-shaped, collapsible hut made from poles covered with hides, woven fiber mats, or sometimes cloth or tin. Easy to break down and reassemble, the *aqal* is carried on a camel's back and set up by the women of the family once a new camp is made. Nomads have few possessions, and each item has practical uses. A bed made from wooden sticks covered with hides is the only furniture in the *aqal*. Cooking utensils, storage boxes, stools, woven mats, and water bags are among the family's only household goods and constitute part of the Somali crafts. All these constitute elements of Somali daily life and cultural heritage as traditional decoration (*farshaxan*) was also highly appreciated in traditional Somali society.

Farmers make permanent homes that are similar to the *aqal*. Round huts called *mundals* are made from poles and brush or vines plastered with mud, animal dung, and ashes and covered with a broad, cone-shaped thatched roof. Rectangular huts, often with flat tin roofs, are called *arish*. Other homes are built from logs, stone, brick, or cement. Farmers have a few pieces of wooden furniture and decorative pottery, gourds, or woven goods.

City dwellers often live in Arab-style whitewashed houses made of stone or brick covered with plaster or cement. These are one or two-story houses, with a flat roof. Bars cover the lower windows, which rarely have screens or glass. Wealthy Somalis, Europeans, and others may have traditional Western-style homes with tile roofs and walled courtyards. Many Somalis, even in the cities, do not have electricity and running water in their homes. Italian occupants also built their own neighbourhoods in Mogadishu and other cities during colonial times³⁵.

Regarding food customs, weddings, births, circumcisions, and Islamic and secular holidays call for celebrations involving food. Families slaughter animals, make bread, and prepare food for guests and for the poor, who are often invited to join in the celebration³⁶.

Camels and cattle are considered the most valuable domestic animals by the Somalis. A major diet for Somali herdsman and nomadic families is milk from camels, goats, and cows. Aging camels may be slaughtered for their meat and the fatty camel's hump is considered a delicacy.

Meat from sheep and goats is also popular. But meat is served only a few times a month, especially when guests are expected for a celebration. Honey, dates, rice and tea are other food staples for nomads³⁷.

33 The Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, *The State of Higher Education in Somalia: Privatization, rapid growth, and the need for regulation*, 2013.

34 Cooking is usually done over a wood or charcoal fire outdoors or in a communal cooking hut because homes are large enough only for sleeping. A large shade tree might provide a meeting place or a classroom. A fence made from thorn bushes to keep out predators may surround a nomad camp. Animals are also kept in corrals made from thorn bushes. A prayer area may be set apart within the camp by a circle of stones.

35 "Urbanism, Architecture, and the Use of Space," www.everyculture.com/Sa-Th/Somalia.html

36 "Food Customs at Ceremonial Occasions," www.everyculture.com/Sa-Th/Somalia.html

37 Other food consume by Somalis are corn, beans, sorghum, millet, squash and a few other vegetables and fruits grown in South of Somalia. Boiled millet and rice are staples, but rice must be imported. The most popular bread is muufu, which is flat bread made ground corn flour. Somalis season their food with butter and ghee, the clear liquid skimmed from melted butter. They also sweeten their food with sugar, sorghum or honey. A holdover from Italian occupation in the south is a love for pasta and marinara sauce. Although fish is plentiful in the waters off Somali coast, Somalis generally do not like fish. In accordance with the Muslim faith, they do not eat pork or drink alcohol. Milk, tea, coffee and water are favorite drinks. Carbonated drinks are available in cities.

1.3.5 Language

Language can be considered as a unifying cultural element that facilitates interaction and understanding among different groups of people. In the case of Somalia, the official language is Somali. Somali as a language has retaken a great importance in the last few years as an element of identity and national pride and also a tool to counter certain "arabization" tendencies that are currently taking place in Somalia.

Somali was maintained as a spoken language until 1972 when Latin script was introduced as official orthography for writing the Somali language. Somali was soon announced the country's official language, the medium of education, administration and communication. In the Afro-Asiatic family of languages, Somali is an Eastern Cushitic language. Common Somali is the most widely spoken dialect, but Coastal Somali and Central Somali are also spoken. Arabic, the language of the Quran, is spoken and read for religious purposes. A small percentage of Somalis also speak Italian, and a growing number speak English. Educated young adults from privileged urban families sometimes speak five or more languages³⁸.

1.3.6 Religion

Religion is a major influence on the lives of Somalis and impacts their culture and public and private life; it is evident that there is no separation between religion and State issues.

Arabs introduced the Islamic faith to Africa at the beginning of the 7th century. By the 10th century, Arab trading posts thrived in southern Somalia, along the Indian Ocean. These included Mogadishu, established as one of the first Arab settlements in East Africa, together with other important ports along the Indian Ocean coast.

The city was at the height of its influence and wealth during the 13th century, when it controlled the gold trade on the East African coast. Most Somalis converted to Islam around the year 1100. They joined the Arabs in fighting the Islamic holy

wars against Ethiopian Christians in the 15th and 16th centuries. By the 18th century the Somalis had defeated the Oromo people, who had threatened both Muslims and Christians in Ethiopia and Somalia. Christianity's influence was significantly reduced after independence in the 1970's when church-run schools were closed and missionaries left the country. There has been no Archbishop of the Catholic cathedral in the country since 1989; the cathedral in Mogadishu was severely damaged at the beginning of the civil war in January/February 1992³⁹.

The Somalis predominantly follow Islam. Apart from Mosques that can be found in all Somali cities and towns, tombs of the Somali holy men or sheiks, venerated as saints, have become national shrines for pilgrimages. Somalis celebrate Islamic holidays with feasting and storytelling, visiting graves, giving to the poor, parades, plays, and ceremonies.

1.3.7 Traditional beliefs and rituals

Traditional medicine

Somali traditional medicine is practiced by "traditional doctors" who are usually men in the community, who have learned their skills from older family members. They are especially skilled at treating hepatitis, measles, mumps, chicken pox, hunchback, facial droop, and broken bones. Modalities used include, fire-burning, herbal remedies, casting, and prayer. Fire-burning is a procedure where a stick from a special tree is heated till it glows and then applied to the skin in order to cure the illness. It is also commonly used for malnutrition; when the head is larger in proportion to the body. Then heated stick is applied to the head in order to reduce the head size. Pneumonia is treated with fire-burning, herbs, and sometimes percutaneous removal of fluid from the chest. Seizures are treated with herbs and readings from the Quran. Stomachaches and backaches are treated with the herb habakhedi, while rashes and sore throats are treated with tea made from the herb dinse.

Traditional doctors are also responsible for helping to cure illnesses caused by spirits. Somalis have a concept of spirits residing within each individual.

38 "Language" www.everyculture.com/Sa-Th/Somalia.html

39 The Union of Islamic World Students, "Facts about Somalia", in Introduction to Muslim States, www.rohama.org/en/news/11521/facts-about-somalia-introduction-to-muslim-states

When the spirits become angry, illnesses such as fever, headache, dizziness, and weakness can result. The illness is cured by a healing ceremony designed to appease the spirits. These ceremonies involve reading the Quran, eating special foods, and burning incense⁴⁰.

Burial tradition

In Somalia, people follow a specific protocol after someone has died to ensure they pass on to the afterlife. The first step is to bury the body on the same day that they have died. Family members read passages from the Quran to encourage the spirit to leave the body.

While the verses are read, another family member prepares the body by straightening the limbs and closing the eyes and mouth. If the deceased is female, female family members wash the body with a warm cloth and vice versa if the deceased is male. While people in Somalia don't apply make-up to their dead, they apply a traditional perfume called Adar. Family members then wrap the body securely with white cotton clothes from head to toe. Additional prayers are chanted as the deceased is washed and prepared for burial. Once they complete the initial phase, Somalis take their dead to a mosque for a service that combines prayers with a special ritual called Janaaso. After the service ends, they cover the body with a green cloth embroidered with gold. An opening is left in the cloth for the face to have direct contact with the earth. The body then goes directly into the ground without a casket or any other coverings. Family members cover the body in layers of different natural elements including grass, leaves, sawdust, soil and wood.

1.4 Cultural expressions

Before the outbreak of the civil war, Somalia used to enjoy a vibrant cultural life. External observers have repeatedly pointed out the unusual richness of the orally produced aspects of Somali culture. These cultural expressions are considered as the primary source of Somali history and tradition and



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they also constitute the predominant aspect of the overall Somali cultural heritage.

Various aspects of Somali physical culture were no less abundant, although they may be less influential⁴¹ Somalia has a long tradition of craft making, including wood, cotton, pottery, wicker and basketry. Like the forms of verbal culture described above, tangible forms of cultural expressions were also closely associated with people's livelihood activities carried out as part of the daily routine. Like poetry in verbal art, traditional decoration (*farshaxan*) was also highly appreciated in traditional Somali society.

In the 20th century, urbanization affected the Somali culture in two different ways. On one hand, it progressively eroded and distorted traditional way of life. On the other hand, however, the cultural life of the country was greatly revitalized and remarkably modernized in the three decades

40 The United States National Library of Medicine and National Institutes of Health published a complete inventory of plants used in traditional medicine in Somalia. For each of the 59 species that are listed, the botanical name with synonyms, collection number, vernacular name, medicinal use, preparation of remedy and dosage are noted. Results of a literature survey are also reported, including medicinal use, substances isolated and pharmacological effects.

41 The 19th century English explorer, Richard Burton, described Somalia as a "nation of poets" and added that their culture has elements that can be used for moral regeneration (Burton, Richard F, 1984. *First Footsteps in East Africa*, London: Tylson and Wards).

preceding the civil war. Cultural infrastructure rapidly developed. Cultural industries boomed. Facilities such as cinemas, theatres, libraries, museums and cultural centers became prominent features of the country's cultural life.

Two of the most developed cultural expressions in Somalia will be described in more detail below; although aspects of Somali culture will be presented again while talking of on-going or planned projects in the culture sector (see Chapter 3).

1.4.1 Poetry and literature

Somalia has long been known as a nation of poets. A people with few possessions and no written language until the 1970s, Somalis developed an oral tradition of poetry and storytelling since at least the 12th century and that has been passed down through generations. In day-to-day interaction between family members or even while addressing a council of clan elders in order to influence their decision making, Somalis have formulated their speech or message in a poetic form or at least with ample quotes of poetry, proverbs and words of wisdom. Although poetry has been mainly an expression for elders, today's young Somalis have been encouraged to develop their poetic talent (see section 3.3.1)⁴².

Oral poetry, oral narratives, proverbs and words of wisdom were an integral part of every aspect of life in nomadic Somali culture. Every activity of day-to-day life was depicted in one or more of these forms of oral culture, from herding and watering livestock, sewing mats, sailing boats and harvesting crops, to organizing feuds and debating the complex socio-political issues of the time. Singing and chanting poetry helped reduce the burden of the hard work in a harsh environment. In the process, traditional Somalis continually produced a wealth of oral literature and oral tradition materials mirroring their lifestyle or their way of life and thought. In the late 20th century, heello was a popular new

genre of song played on the radio. It was taken from Somali poetry, including themes like history, philosophy and clan politics, as well as praise or ridicule of humans or animals.

Apart from the Somalis' fame as an oral society⁴³, less known is the fact that in the years before the civil war and especially after Somali language was written, there was also an established culture of reading, research and inquiry in most urban areas and a rich literary scene in both Somali and Arabic⁴⁴. During the decade of 1970s, a huge body of Somali oral tradition materials was collected and transcribed. A bulk of new literature was also created in Somali. This included poetry, fiction, drama, textbooks and various studies in almost every discipline. This was considered as a remarkable progress, even though free enterprise and freedom of expression were restricted by the military regime of the time (1969–1990)⁴⁵.

Also in the Somali literature scene but written in Arabic, Somali Islamic prose is called *manqabah*. Writers record the deeds and virtues of Somali sheiks, or religious leaders, some with miraculous powers. Written in Arabic and often in the form of prayer, Islamic poetry is also a Somali tradition; many poets were great religious leaders and are now considered saints. Somalis also read Arabic religious classics.

1.4.2 Painting, carving, textile

Painting

With art, sports and various other forms of entertainment forbidden by the extremist group Al-Shabaab, many Somali artists had given up their craft or were painting in secret. Recently, UNIFEED instituted a programme to promote Somali artists⁴⁶.

Carving

Known in Somali as *qoris*, carving is a much respected profession in Somalia both historically and in the modern times. Many wealthy urbanites

42 Some of the best known Somali poets of different times are Muhammad Abdullah Hasan, Seylici, Sheik Suufi and Sheik Uweys Maxamed. In addition, Mohamed Ibrahim Warsame "Hadraawi", has recently being Recipient of the Prince Claus Award.

43 Lewis, I.M. 1993, *Understanding Somalis: Guide to Culture, History and Social Institutions*, London: Haan Associates.

44 For example, modern Somali novelist Nuruddin Farah born in 1945 has become internationally famous for his novels about African women's issues and the struggle for human rights in postcolonial Africa. His novels include *From a Crooked Rib* (1970), *Maps* (1986), and *Gifts* (1992). He was awarded the Neustadt International Prize for Literature in 1998.

45 Cultural Needs Assessment in Somalia, UNESCO, 2006, p.11-12

46 <http://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/unifeed/2013/01/somalia-artists/>



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in the medieval period regularly employed the finest wood and marble carvers in Somalia to work on their interiors and houses. The carvings on the mihrabs and pillars of ancient Somali mosques are some of the oldest on the continent. Artistic carving was considered the province of men similar to how the Somali textile industry was mainly a women's business.

Amongst the nomads, carving, especially woodwork, was widespread and could be found on the most basic objects such as spoons, combs and bowls, but it also included more complex structures such as the portable nomadic house, the aqal. In the last several decades, traditional carving of windows, doors and furniture has taken a backseat to the introduction of workshops employing electrical machinery, which deliver the same results in a far shorter time period⁴⁷.

Textiles

The textile culture of Somalia is an ancient one, and the Somali textile centre in Mogadishu was, from at least the 13th century to the late 19th century, considered to be one of the main textile hubs in the Indian Ocean.



©Courtesy of nkds.net

47 Culture and customs of Somalia, Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi p.97



©News.xinhuanet.com

Typical somali clothing

Somali men typically wear the *macawis* (ma'awiis), which is a sarong-like garment worn around the waist. On their heads, they often wrap a colourful turban or wear the *koofiyad*, an embroidered taqiyah. Due to Somalia's proximity to and close ties with the Arabian Peninsula, many Somali men also wear the jellabiya (*jellabiyad* in Somali), a long white garment common in the Arab world⁴⁸.

During regular, day-to-day activities, women usually wear the *guntiino*, a long stretch of cloth tied over the shoulder and draped around the waist. The *guntiino* is traditionally made from a plain white fabric sometimes featuring with decorative borders, although nowadays alindi, a textile common in the Horn region and some parts of North Africa, is more frequently used. The garment can be worn in many different styles and with different fabrics. For more formal settings such as weddings or religious celebrations, women wear the *dirac*, a long, light, diaphanous voile dress made of cotton, polyester or sari fabric.

The *dirac* is related to the short sleeved Arabian kaftan dress. It is worn over a full length half-slip and a brassiere. Known as the *gorgorad*, the underskirt is made out of silk and serves as a key part of the overall outfit. The *dirac* is usually sparkly and very colourful, the most popular styles being those with gilded borders or threads. The fabric is typically acquired from Somali clothing stores in tandem with the *gorgorad*.

Married women tend to wear head scarves referred to as *shash*, and also often cover their upper body with a shawl known as *garbasaar*. Unmarried or young women, however, do not always cover their heads. Traditional Arabian garb such as the jilbab is also commonly worn. Additionally, Somali women have a long tradition of wearing gold and silver jewellery, particularly bangles. During weddings, the bride is frequently adorned in gold. Many Somali women by tradition also wear gold necklaces and anklets. Furthermore, *xirsi*, an Islamic necklace also donned in Ethiopia and Yemen, is frequently worn.

1.4.3 Performance arts and film industry

The theatre and other forms of modern performing arts became part of a vibrant cultural life in Somalia in the 20th century with several performances running every night. By the 1960s and 1970s, virtually every adult in Somali towns was a regular theatre goer⁴⁹. Somali plays were performed in the National Theatre in Mogadishu and at small theatres in other cities. Somalis began to write plays under the influence of British and Italian colonists⁵⁰.

While the history of the film industry in Somalia is not known abroad or even among Somalis, especially young generations, in the colonial 20th century and in the independent Somalia before the civil war, cinemas were built all over the country. At one time there were as many as 120. The Italians first introduced cinema to Somalia in the form of newsreels during colonial times from 1913 to 1934. By the 1940s and 1950s, Somalis assisted Italians in the making of political films while learning the craft of filmmaking in various production roles, including cinematography, editing, sound, and even acting in some of the early films.

48 Michigan State University, Northeast African Studies Committee, *Northeast African Studies, Volume 8*, (African Studies Center, Michigan State University: 2001), p.66.

49 Professor Andrzejewski, "Modern and Traditional Aspects of Somali Drama", in *Folklore in the Modern World*, ed. Richard M. Dorson (Paris, Mouton Publishers, 1978, pp. 87-101).

50 A well-known modern Somali playwright is Hassan Mumin (*Leopard Among the Women*, 1974; *Contes de Djibouti*, 1980).



Somalia: A Nation of Poets

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When Somalia became independent in 1960, Somalis established a motion picture industry themselves. They began setting up production companies, distributed their films worldwide, and even launched an annual international film festival in the capital city of Mogadishu. In the 1970s, the Somalia Film Agency was created to oversee the production and importation of films in the country. The government eventually nationalized the film industry.

In the early 1980s, popular musicals known as Riwaayado dominated the productions of new films in Somalia. In 1991 came the collapse of the central government and the civil war, which virtually shut down the film industry for the next two decades. Outside of Somalia, a young generation of Somali refugees has carried on this tradition of making films⁵¹.

1.4.4 Somalia: a land of poets

"The poets that gain the widest renown tend to be those who seek to build bridges and promote peace".

In spite of the primacy of the written word in the Western cities where many Somalis have sought refuge, oral poetry has lost little of its traditional appeal. Indeed, some have successfully taken up the pen to write novels and memoirs, most notably the acclaimed novelist Nurrudin Farah, however oral poetry remains by far the most popular medium of cultural expression and social commentary.

Today, Somali poetry is experiencing somewhat of a Diaspora revival with multicultural festivals and the Internet offering new platforms for verbal creativity. And as Somali poetry has always been primarily a reflection on lived day-to-day reality, the collective experience of war and exile figures prominently in the new wave of Somali verbal expression.

This common understanding of the communal functions of poetry has facilitated the continuation of a shared poetic discourse across the vast space over which Somalis have fanned out. The Internet has become another important platform for poetic debate across space, and there are many websites dedicated to poetry, most of which have been created in the Diaspora. Poetic duels on these sites

51 One such filmmaker is Abdisalam Aato, who left Mogadishu as a young boy with his family in 1996 and settled in Columbus, Ohio. Watching Hollywood movies as a child inspired him to become a film director. He now owns his own film studio, and is the only known Somali director in America today [Brecke, Mark, "Somalia in the Picture, The story of the Somali film industry", proposal concept note (courtesy of the author)].

often revolve around the civil war and "chains" similar to those discussed above are very popular.

As in the past, some poetry is partisan and supports one or the other clan or warlord, but the poets who gain the widest renown tend to be those who seek to build bridges and promote peace. One of those is the poet Hadraawi, arguably the most famous living Somali poet, who has travelled across Somalia and the Diaspora to promote peaceful resolutions to Somalia's problems through his poetry. Many poetry recitals by both men and women are now recorded on video and popular ones quickly circulate throughout the global community.

In spite of the continuing popularity of the classical genres of poetry among first generation Somali migrants, there is now a growing group of young Somalis who were brought up in the Diaspora and feel little connection to the rustic language and countryside imagery of the gabay and buraanbur, let alone being able to compose in it. Some of

them are now exploring new ways of creatively expressing their cosmopolitan identity and, perhaps unsurprisingly, often choose to do so verbally.

Rap music, with its roots in social and ethnic struggle and its strong emphasis on verbal skills, has a natural appeal for young Somalis in the West, and a plethora of Somali "MCs" have "stepped up to the mike" since the mid-90s; some rhyming in Somali and others in English.

The most successful of them is the Somali-Canadian rapper K'naan. Now in his late twenties, he fled as a 9 year old with his family from Mogadishu in the early 90s and eventually settled in Toronto, where he developed his brilliant lyrical talent. Now a regular on MTV, K'naan has stayed true to his roots. His lyrics are a testimony to the troublesome journey of the Somali people and an indication that their legendary eloquence will find new forms for exile and will continue to pay tribute to the place where it all began⁵².

52 Somali Oral Verse in Exile, by Rahma Bavelaar. Rahma Bavelaar is the IOL Art & Culture editor and holds an MA in African Studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies in London.

Current Situation of the Culture Sector in Somalia

As the international community supports the reconstruction of Somalia, it needs to be cognizant of the fact that the education system should supply the culture sector with the necessary skills base. In this sense, the international community needs to play a significant role in assisting the ministries responsible for Education and Culture to develop appropriate curricula, standards and frameworks for cultural education through the formal and informal education systems. One such approach would be through partnership with communities to re-establish the traditional schools as a means of preserving traditional knowledge.

A direct consequence of the political, economic and social environment in Somalia after years of war is the severe shortage of skilled human labour in the culture sector. Many professionals have either been killed or maimed in the fighting, become refugees in neighbouring countries, contributing to a large Diaspora or are internally displaced from traditional production and operation centers. The majority of personnel left behind suffer from lack of or limited skills and competence as they are poorly trained and inexperienced. The result is low professional standards and lack of basic equipment and materials leading to amateurism and poor standards in the management of cultural property. Before the civil war, Somalia had functioning museums, theatres, libraries and archives as well as arts institutions and cultural industries. However, over two decades of civil war has resulted in the devastation of the cultural infrastructure and severe loss of Somali national heritage with almost all cultural institutions damaged or destroyed.

With the weakened government structures and limited public funding, most culturally significant buildings lie dilapidated and neglected. Facilities

that were once used for the preservation and restoration of artefacts, databases of collections and equipment are now damaged or in a state of disrepair following years of neglect⁵³.

The poor state of cultural institutions and other types of infrastructure in Somalia, such as roads, renders much of the cultural property, spread around the country remote and inaccessible. It is at the mercy of environmental degradation and the communities living around it. With lack of awareness on the importance of such assets, much of the archaeological material such as rock art as well as artefacts are damaged and lost⁵⁴.



Mogadishu city hall before and after the civil war.
©www.veooz.com

53 The urgent rehabilitation of some of the cultural infrastructure in Somalia was cited as a priority by experts at the meeting on "Rehabilitation of Somali Culture" convened by UNESCO and held in Nairobi in June 2007.

54 Mire, Sada, *The Knowledge-Centered Approach to the Somali Cultural Emergency and Heritage Development Assistance in Somaliland*, African Archaeological Review Vol. 28 No. 1, 2011, pp. 71–91 (courtesy of author).

Without strong institutional structures to coordinate the management of cultural property, coordinated and concerted national approaches are lacking. The resulting vacuum has to some extent been filled by civil society organizations and community based organizations.

Civil society has been particularly instrumental in mobilizing resources from donors and through remittances and other kinds of contributions from the diaspora, to support the rehabilitation of some cultural property sites and community cultural conservation initiatives.

2.1 Current political challenges faced by Somalia

It is indeed important to analyse the recent and current political challenges the country faces in order to frame the situation of Somali culture at present. The challenges that face Somalia in the context of more than two decades of armed conflict, and in particular those relating to efforts to establish and build governance, cannot be addressed without some understanding of:

- a. Basic clan structures, dynamics and their central role in shaping the social, political and economic landscape;
- b. Fragmentation of Somali territory into regional blocks, loosely reflecting the territorial distribution of the major clans, and other regional dynamics in the Horn of Africa and beyond, especially those coming from north of the Gulf of Aden;
- c. The presence in Somalia of extreme groups like Al-Shabaab and a tendency of extremism in certain groups of society, overshadowing a more tolerant traditional form of Islam.

With the exception of the brief administrative structures established in the colonial period and the subsequent highly centralized and progressively autocratic state apparatus that collapsed in 1991, the Somali people have not historically espoused a governance system predicated on a national state⁵⁵. During the last two decades, the pre-eminent focus of the social, legal, political and economic

organization of the Somali nation has been and remains the clan, itself an agglomerate of extended family and lineage groupings. As indicated before (see section 1.3.1), localized conflicts can be and are regularly solved through traditional, clan based mechanisms through the intervention of clan elders and the *xeer* (customary legal) system, which is based on the concept of group liability and compensation.

The self-declared autonomous region of Somalia, the north western region⁵⁶, Somaliland, a former British protectorate, which had opted for unification with Italian Somalia in 1960, unilaterally declared its independence from Somalia in 1991. Somaliland remains internationally unrecognized, but as a result of a home grown, clan-based reconciliation process, culminating in the Boroma Conference of 1993, has developed its own political institutions, judiciary, police, armed forces and currency and has self-declared as the Republic of Somaliland. Largely under its own steam, Somaliland has made considerable progress towards stabilization and democratization. Nevertheless, the State remains fragile, not least owing to international ambivalence in the matter of recognition; the international community largely considers the territorial integrity of Somalia an issue to be resolved first and foremost among Somalis themselves, and then to be addressed by the African Union.

Puntland, the north-eastern region followed Somaliland's example in 1998 with the creation of the semi-autonomous Puntland State of Somalia⁵⁷. Unlike Somaliland, Puntland does not seek international recognition as an independent State, but advocates for a federal Somalia in which it would exist as an autonomous entity. Puntland formally endorses the transitional federal process.

Although the three regional blocks of Somaliland, Puntland and South Central Somalia are all, to varying degrees, characterized by fragility and vulnerability to conflict, they are distinguished by markedly different levels of political and institutional development. While the Federal Republic of Somalia remains the *de jure* sovereign entity, the *de facto* situation on the ground requires a "variable geometry" approach to development, employing

55 Conflict in Somalia: Drivers & Dynamics, World Bank Report, 2005.

56 Somaliland comprises five of the eighteen administrative regions of Somalia and although not hegemonic, the Isaq clan is dominant.

57 Home to the Darod Majerteyn clan, Puntland comprises three of the eighteen regions of Somalia and contests control of two other regions (Sool and Sanaag) on its western marches with neighbouring Somaliland, a dispute exacerbated by the reportedly significant mineral deposits in the area.

flexibility and sensitivity, while continuing to advocate and promote a politically sustainable solution for Somalia as a whole⁵⁸.

It is also important to indicate that Somalia's history since the collapse of the Siad Barre regime has been characterised by the interference of neighbouring countries and other international actors⁵⁹. While the tenor and thrust of this interference clearly evolved during the latter parts of the process that lead to the integration of a Transitional Federal Government (2002-2006), and thereafter, the sub-region continues to play an influential role in the country's internal political, military and economic affairs. As Somalia strives to re-establish its eroded sovereignty, the regional political dynamics (notably the simmering conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea) and the strategic interests of its individual neighbours remain paramount to the success or failure of attempts to establish governance⁶⁰.

The spread of extreme Islamism in Somalia and terrorist activities is also a factor of concern and a key element to take into account when planning development interventions in Somalia. In 2006, the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) was substituted by the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), which stoked extremist flames and catapulted Al-Shabaab, previously a mere fringe movement into a full-blown insurgency. Six years later, in 2012, the Obama administration publicly stated that U.S. military forces are engaged in direct action against suspected terrorists in Yemen and Somalia⁶¹.

After more than 20 years of internecine wars and widespread disorder, Somalia entered a new era of optimism during the last quarter of 2012 with several UN-backed political processes and advancements in security, culminating in the selection of a new leadership. With this relative gain of stability, business vibrancy and civil society activities slowly but steadily started returning to Somalia. In August 2012 Somalia's first formal parliament in more than 20 years was sworn in at Mogadishu airport, ending the eight year transitional period. Pro-government forces captured the port of Merca, South of Mogadishu from Al-Shabaab. In September 2012, the first presidential

election in Somalia since 1967 took place, when MPs elected Hassan Sheikh Mohamud as President. In October the same year, the African Union and government forces recaptured Kismayo, the last major city held by Al-Shabaab and the country's second-largest port, and the town of Wanla Weyn northwest of Mogadishu. President Mohamud appointed Abdi Farah Shirdon Saaid, as Prime Minister⁶². Despite the progress, significant challenges remain. The Somali State is profoundly fragile, and chronic contestation over political and resource control persists. The draft constitution needs a lot of work, and the nature of Somalia's federal structure remains unclear and contested. The new government has yet to articulate a set of national policies on security, state structures, reconciliation, education, health, foreign policy and a myriad of other issues.

On the security front, although the Islamist armed group Al-Shabaab lost ground in 2012, abandoning control of key towns such as Beletweyne, Baidoa, and the strategic port city of Kismayo, the militants have persisted by maintaining control of large rural areas of southern and central Somalia.

In addition, their staging of guerrilla style attacks and targeted killings are clearly affecting government staff, civilians and international officers. Somalia's long running armed conflict continues to leave civilians dead, wounded, and displaced in large numbers, a fact that should be taken into consideration when planning any kind of intervention in Somalia.

2.2 Institutional policy and legal frameworks in the culture sector

Due to the lack of a stable government over the last twenty years, the legislative and policy cultural environment in Somalia is characterized by:

- Lack of or weak national and institutional policies on culture;
- Out-dated and outmoded policies on culture that do not adequately respond to current realities, needs and challenges for cultural development;

58 UNESCO, Strategy for the Revitalization of Somalia Culture Sector 2012-2015, Nairobi, Kenya, April 2012.

59 For a list of some of the recent foreign incursions in Somalia see: BBC Somalia Profile, 4 July 2013, www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14094503.

60 UNESCO Strategy for the revitalization of Somalia Culture Sector 2012-2015, Ibid.

61 White House: Military is fighting terrorism in Somalia and Yemen, Pam Benson, CNN on line, 15 June 2012, <http://security.blogs.cnn.com/2012/06/15/white-house-military-is-fighting-terrorism-in-somalia-and-yemen/>.

62 Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, www.heritageinstitute.org.

- Lack of or outdated and outmoded legal Instruments and regulatory frameworks on culture;
- Increase in piracy and illicit trafficking in cultural property;
- Lack of or limited access to international instruments on culture.

Nevertheless, there have been some efforts to have some governance in the Culture Sector. For example, after the establishment of the Transitional Federal Government in 2004, there was some progress with the naming of a Cabinet to run the affairs of government and consequently, an office was appointed to run the culture sector under the Ministry of Education and Culture. At the regional level, culture was under the care of the Somaliland's Ministry of Tourism and Culture for Somaliland, while for Puntland culture was within the Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture⁶³.

In the post-transitional period in Somalia, the new Federal Government is still in the process of restructuring. However, some institutions have been assigned to run cultural affairs. Some changes have also occurred at the regional level. At the international level, it is important to mention the efforts undertaken to promote and protect Somali culture in the Horn of Africa. An example is the Intergovernmental Academy of Somali Language based in Djibouti that will be described below.

2.2.1 Somalia federal institutions

At the time of writing, there are two main institutions at Somalia's Federal level in charge of cultural policies and activities:

- a. The Department of Culture and Somali Language, of the Directorate of Education,

Culture and Higher Education inside the Ministry of Human Development & Public Services.

- b. The Department (Chamber) of Entertainment of the Directorate of Orientation (Mobilization) and General Affairs within the Ministry of Information, Post and Telecommunication.

The Department of Culture and Somali Language has inherited the mandate of the former Somali Academy of Sciences and Arts (SOMAC), the organization that mainly undertook several cultural projects before the collapse of the central government of Somalia in 1991⁶⁴. Some of these projects include research about the camels in Somalia⁶⁵, forming a collection of Somalia's history and poetry books⁶⁶, Somali language development activities⁶⁷ and an archaeological project⁶⁸. There are plans to revive SOMAC under the auspicious of the Ministry of Education although the scope and structure of the organization has not been decided yet. This could be a more independent organization that would benefit from the experience of Dr Osman Mohamed, former President of the Academy who is already in discussion with the Ministry in order to agree on a way forward.

The Department of Culture and Somali Language, has its own objectives and priorities with budgeted activities in a timeframe comprising May to December 2013⁶⁹. Regarding the institutional side, in addition to the rehabilitation and equipment of SOMAC; as mentioned before, they are also planning the same for a national library and a national museum. Other activities and priorities will include:

- a. Advocating for cultural revival;
- b. Identification and collection of some of the traditional artefacts lost during the war;

63 S/2011/227; see Secretary General's Report on Somalia, United Nations Security Council, 28 April 2005, par. 5.

64 Even during the time of the TFG, SOMAC was operating with limited resources; the former SOMAC offices building is now occupied by IDPs and is not functional. Dr. Osman Mohamed was appointed by the TFG as its President and he is currently advising federal institutions on their current mandate on culture (UNESCO interview with Dr. Osman Mohamed, Mogadishu, Somalia, 7 August 2013).

65 Including the usage of camels in nomadic culture and their history, composition of their milk, diseases and ways of caring for them

66 Including a collection of many cultural stories and about 300 manuscripts in Somali that were ready for publication.

67 Including a four years research towards the publication of a language and scientific dictionary in Somali sponsored by an Italian university

68 This includes the findings of a big underground mosque in Hamar Weyne district in Mogadishu, and old scripts found in Buur-Haybe in Burhakaba district in Bay region. Also SOMAC was taking care of the Somali monuments in Somalia such as Dhagahtuur, Haawa taako, the old museum, Abdulaziz mosque tower and other cultural sites.

69 Other small-scale projects could include: the organization of cultural events and performances, the creation of poets and play composers organizations and competitions for these sectors involving the youth, promoting cultural awareness among the religious leaders and elders, and the general society, with seminars and workshops of conflict prevention; also the publication of books for children and mothers containing stories with conflict prevention elements, the publication of a book with Somali proverbs from the year 1800 till present, the publication of well-known poets collections, and the organization of cultural workshops for the media sector and Somali language trainings especially for TV and Radio editors (Culture Strategy by Directorate of Education, Culture and Higher Education, in the Ministry of Human Development & Public Services).

- c. Identification and collection of some cultural and literature documents (poems, traditional stories and songs, etc.);
- d. Capacity building programmes for cultural staff;
- e. Review and updating of a Somali dictionary;
- f. Establishing centres for culture development and drama performances;
- g. Establishing a research unit in the Somali Academy of Science and Arts (SOMAC).

On the other hand, the Ministry of Information, Post and Telecommunication is in charge of administering the National Theatre and has indicated that under their mandate is the recording of all kinds of arts and literature such as Somali books, songs, poetry and also the supervision of Somali history and artifacts⁷⁰. The Ministry has indicated the following priorities for the revitalization of the Culture Sector in Somalia:

1. Identification of key institutional and non-governmental actors, and on-going/past activities;
2. Activities related to the protection and promotion of Somali Culture and recommendations for further action;
3. The priorities for the Somali central/local authorities in order to revitalize the culture sector in Somalia should include reinstating the national theatre and archives, museums and libraries.

Although the two Ministries should be coordinating their efforts, it is not very clear, at the time of writing this report, how different their two mandates are and what strategies are being followed in order to avoid duplication and reinforce collaboration of their activities.

Finally, it is important to mention that at local level the Mayor of Mogadishu, within the Benadir Authority, has expressed a clear interest to be

involved in the protection of the Somali heritage, especially in the capital Mogadishu (i.e. the support provided to an exhibition intending to create awareness of the cultural tangible heritage of Mogadishu).

2.2.2 Somalia regional institutions

In Somaliland, cultural responsibilities fall under the Ministry of Information, Culture and National Cohesion although the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Tourism would also have some interest in culture⁷¹.

Whereas the latter is mainly concerned with tangible heritage, the Ministry of Information, Culture and National Cohesion is more concerned with intangible heritage such as poetry and music, although their information portfolio dominates their work⁷².

A possible project to promote in the link between the Information and Culture sector would be to assist Radio Hargeisa to digitalize and preserve their collection of old audio recordings that date back to its inception in 1943 as opposed to 1951 for Radio Mogadishu. As the Somali language did not exist in written form until 1972, the stories/songs/interviews, represent a precious historical record that would constitute part of the intangible heritage of Somaliland. A good example for this project would be to replicate the on-going digitalization of Radio Mogadishu archives.

In an analysis included in the draft Somaliland National Development Plan (NDP) of October 2011, the Somaliland authorities recognized that there were no proper theatres or other cultural/entertainment venues in Somaliland, although in all the main towns there were locals who showed old movies and videos for an admission fee⁷³. A privately owned national theatre was under construction in Hargeisa at the time the NDP

70 UNESCO's basic questionnaire filled by Marian Masalah and Salah Shire Adem, Ministry of Information, Post and Telecommunication, 3 August 2013.

71 In Somaliland, the department of culture was shifted, at the end of 2012, from the Ministry of Youth and Sports to the Ministry of Information and National Guidance (orientation and culture), a move that followed ministerial portfolio realignments. This cabinet change included the transfer of around 84 civil servants including departmental heads, drivers and various artists like composers, musicians, singers, dancers and poets (Yusuf M Hasan, "Somaliland: Ministry of Information Assumes Cultural Mandate", Somaliland Sun, 13 November 2012. www.somalilandsun.com/index.php/component/content/article/1790-somaliland-ministry-of-information-assumes-cultural-mandate

72 UNESCO interviews at the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Tourism and Ministry of Information, Culture and National Cohesion, mission to Somaliland, 19-22 August 2013.

73 Draft Somaliland National Development Plan (NDP) 2012 – 2016 For Full recovery and Rapid development, October 2011.

was drafted and is almost completed⁷⁴. From an analysis of Somaliland's Draft NDP, it is evident that the activities on culture were included as a way to support the development of Somaliland youth⁷⁵.

Aspects of the 5-years NDP related to the link between the promotion of culture and the support to youth are:

- a. Challenges:
 - Lack of a strong sense of patriotism and pride;
 - Exposure to extremist ideology.
- b. Opportunities:
 - National awareness of the need for the provision of proper and adequate sports and recreation facilities.
- c. Sector priorities and strategies include:
 - Conserving cultural heritage;
 - Advancing a healthy life style;
 - Encouraging youth participation in decision making and political life;
 - Promoting patriotism and a sense of national identity through intercity and inter-regional youth activities.
- d. Legal and policy framework initiatives that need to be addressed include:
 - Formulation of a national cultural policy.
- e. Programs and Projects to be carried out during the NDP period:
 - Building a national theatre in the capital and regional theatres in regional capitals;
 - Establishing a national museum and heritage archives;
 - Establishing a national heritage research and development institute;
 - Commissioning scientific research into the language, heritage, history, handicrafts, fine arts, oral literature, traditional folklore, beliefs, astrology, customary law, traditional medicine and other cultural features, which constitute the identity of the Somaliland people;
 - Promoting cultural and sports cooperation and exchange with other nations;
 - Supporting youth organizations.

It is important to note that Somaliland has two established cultural initiatives that can serve as good examples to be replicated in other regions of Somalia. The first one is the Hargeisa International Book Fair and the second one is the development of the rock art site, *Las Geel for tourism*, which is increasingly visited by national and international tourists⁷⁶.

The Somaliland Non State Actors Forum (SONSAF) is a possible partner of the civil society to provide a platform to discuss cultural initiatives in Somaliland as it is mainly concerned with policy dialogue. Other possible partners could be the Somaliland Culture and Sport Association (SOSCA), which is a member of the Somaliland National Youth Organization (SONYO), another umbrella organization and *Hydro Academy* (an NGO)⁷⁷.

In Puntland, culture is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism. There is apparently no comprehensive planning/strategy documents related to culture, although the Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture is currently working to map out heritage sites in Puntland.

Two priorities have been identified⁷⁸:

- a. To build museums in the four main towns (Garowe, Bosaso, Khardo and Galkayo), which will help the youth learn about their culture and train staff on how to manage the museums;
- b. To build theatres or other types of cultural spaces that can be used by communities for various activities.

2.2.3 Intergovernmental academy of Somali language

A meeting was organised in Djibouti from the 17th to the 21st of December 2012 to mark the 40th anniversary of the official Somali Language

74 The project is invested by Omar Aideed Company, a multi-millionaire Somaliland / Djibouti businessman with the intention of creating jobs and bring cultural renaissance to Somaliland ("Hargeisa National Theatre is almost completed after rebuilding that took more than four years", posted by Amuur, 18 July 2013. <http://oodweynenews.com/2013/07/Hargeisa-national-theatre-is-almost-completed-after-rebuilding-that-took-more-than-four-years/>).

75 There is also a National Youth Policy for Somaliland (NYPS) being implemented by the Minister of Youth, Sports and Tourism and supported by the Somaliland National Youth Organization (SONYO).

76 While the Government of Somaliland has in place security, a small visitor's centre and built stairs to access the site, other facilities as well as protection / cleaning of the rock paintings are needed (UNESCO mission to Las Geel, August 2013). For information of explorations on this and other archaeological sites in Somaliland see section 3.5.

77 UNESCO interview with Mohamed "Barwani", SONSAF Chair, Hargeisa, August 2013

78 UNESCO interview with Puntland Minister of Information, Communication and Culture, Ahmed Sheikh Jama, Garowe, 18 August 2013

Script. The meeting celebrated and reflected on the development of the written form of the Somali language. Following the event, various recommendations were made, one of which was to create an academy for the Somali language, an idea also shared by scholars and politicians. It was noted in numerous conferences that Somali orthography needs to be improved, its written literature to be enhanced and its innovation to be encouraged. Despite the fact that the Somali language is the only mother tongue spoken in the Horn of Africa region, it is easily observable that Somali is currently under pressure from Arabic and English languages in the area where it used to be so strong, especially in the educational system⁷⁹. The meeting agreed to create an intergovernmental institution as the best way to secure scientific efficiency and economic sustainability.

As the Academy establishes standards and references, it is clear that only an intergovernmental institution, representing all countries and regions where Somali is spoken, can effectively play this role⁸⁰.

On June 26th 2013 to coincide with the day in 1960 when the first Somali region gained independence, Djibouti's Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Culture and Waqf and the Somali Speaking PEN Centre of Djibouti organised a ceremony for the Intergovernmental Academy of Somali Language, whose members are Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya⁸¹.

2.3 International legal framework

Legal instruments enable States to more effectively protect all forms of culture. UNESCO elaborates legal instruments in the form of declarations, recommendations or conventions, which are adopted by UNESCO's Member States. Among the UNESCO core Conventions in the area of culture are:

1. Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954);
2. Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Cultural Property (1970);
3. Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972);
4. Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001);
5. Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003); and
6. Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005).

While Somalia has not adopted any of the above UNESCO conventions, it is a State Party of UNESCO⁸² and this membership provides for support to countries that, in the absence of normally established government institutions, have not been able to sign or ratify the Conventions related to culture.

In this sense, the fact that Somalia has not ratified any of the Conventions should not be an obstacle for urgent interventions by different international and local actors including UNESCO. Such support may concern capacity building in terms of human resources, institutional development and policy development activities, in particular taking into account the need to participate, institutionalize and implement legal instruments to safeguard the country's rich cultural heritage.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned, ratification of the Conventions could provide a good basis for the drafting of new laws and other policy instruments for the management of cultural heritage resources. They would also provide the international community with a strong legal mandate to support Somalia's fight against illicit

79 This is one of the principal reasons why Acalan (African Academy of Languages) of the African Union has paid particular attention to this language amongst other cross-border languages of Africa. However, the promotion and preservation of a language primarily concern its speakers (www.acalan.org).

80 The event was preceded by an expert meeting -from the Horn and beyond- held on June 25th 2013 at the IGAD Headquarters Hall in Djibouti to review and validate the work of the nine-member expert committee tasked by the participants of the international conference on the Somali language held the previous December. The official launch that took place at Kempinski Hotel on June 26th, was opened and closed with performances by the celebrated Djiboutian 4th of March Band, which presented traditional songs and dances to highlight the cultural ties that bind the countries of the Horn ("The launch of an Intergovernmental Academy of Somali Language". www.waayaha.net/view.php?articleid=16669).

81 Djibouti's Minister of Culture, Islamic affairs and Endowment, Aden Hassan Aden, Somalia's Minister of Information, Posts and Telecommunications, Abdullahi Ilmoqe Hirsi, Somaliland regional Minister of Culture, Abiib Diriye Nur, and Vice President of the Somali region of Ethiopia, Abdihakim Igal Omar, attended the event at the Kempinski Hotel in Djibouti, as did other ministers, parliamentarians, journalists, and about 50 prominent Somali-speaking intellectuals from the region and abroad (Sabahi on line "Regional Somali Language Academy Launched in Djibouti", Washington, D.C. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201306280199.html>).

82 Somalia became a member of UNESCO on 15 November 1960 (www.unesco.org/new/en/member-states/countries/).

trafficking of its cultural heritage, conservation of its immovable heritage, the safeguarding of its underwater cultural heritage and the documentation of its immensely rich intangible heritage elements.

Specifically, becoming a State Party to the UNESCO *Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (1972), Somalia would take the first step needed for the identification and protection of its national heritage before it can be considered for World Heritage Listing. The next step would be to draw up a “Tentative List” of natural and cultural sites within its territory that are deemed as having “outstanding universal value” for possible inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List. After this, a nomination dossier should be prepared for each site, and then this dossier would be submitted to the World Heritage Committee for consideration of inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

There are cases where a site is inscribed simultaneously on the World Heritage List⁸³ and on the List of World Heritage in Danger such as the Buddha’s of Bamiyan in Afghanistan but usually a site is first inscribed on the World Heritage List, and then if the very characteristics for which

it was inscribed on the World Heritage List are endangered, the Committee can decide to inscribe the site on the List of World Heritage in Danger in order to draw international attention and support for the site⁸⁴. On the other hand, Somalia is party to other international cultural related legislations whose implementation should be secured and supported. The UNESCO Database of National Cultural Heritage Laws lists six international legal instruments related to the protection of Somalia’s heritage⁸⁵:

1976	Cultural Charter for Africa* ⁸⁶
1981	African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights* ⁸⁷
1985	Protocol concerning Protected Areas and Wild Fauna and Flora in the Eastern African Region ⁸⁸
1989	Declaration of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) on the return or restitution of cultural property ⁸⁹
2000	“Cotonou Agreement” (Partnership agreement between the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States, of the other part, signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000) ⁹⁰
2003	African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources* ⁹¹

*African Union normative instruments

83 States Parties are countries that have adhere to the World Heritage Convention. They thereby agree to identify and nominate properties on their national territory to be considered for inscription on the World Heritage List. When a State Party nominates a property, it gives details of how a property is protected and provides a management plan for its upkeep. states Parties are also expected to protect the World Heritage values of the properties inscribed and are encourage to report periodically on their conditions.

84 For more information about the World Heritage Convention: Information Kit, available at <http://whc.unesco.org>

85 “UNESCO Data Base of National Cultural Heritage Laws” <http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL ID=339228&URL DO=DO TOPIC&URL SECTION=201.html>).

86 Accession and deposit by Somalia in 1978 (<http://www.au.int/en/content/cultural-charter-africa>).

87 Signed by Somalia in 1982, ratified in 1985 and deposit in 1986 (<http://www.au.int/en/content/african-charter-human-and-peoples-rights>).

88 <http://www.ecolex.org/ecolex/ledge/view/RecordDetails?id=TRE-000821&index=treaties>

89 www.unesco.org/culture/natlaws/media/pdf/africa_regional_leg/afr_declaration_acp_retour_restitution_freorof.pdf.

90 Somalia joined the “Cotonou Agreement” on 7 June 2013 (www.acp.int/content/acp-ec-partnership-agreement-cotonou-agreement-accord-de-partenariat-acp-ce-accord-de-cotono).

91 Signed by Somalia on 23 February 2006 (www.au.int/en/content/african-convention-conservation-nature-and-natural-resources-revised-version)

Directory of On-going and Planned Interventions in the Culture Sector

The Directory of on-going and planned cultural interventions in the Culture Sector in Somalia is intended to document the diverse initiatives and activities related to Somali culture that are currently taking place or being planned. The Directory is not intended to be exhaustive. It includes a summary of projects comprising diverse cultural elements and expressions as well as a listing of the relevant individuals/organizations including their contact information.

3.1 Cultural property

3.1.1 Digitisation of radio Mogadishu archives

The Archives of Radio Mogadishu have been stored in a backroom of the Somali Ministry of Information. There are, according to official figures, more than 35,000 tapes. More than half of them are songs but they also include drama, poetry, religious programmes, speeches and broadcasts in foreign languages including Italian, Arabic and English. The news and current affairs programmes were never archived⁹².

The archive collection began in 1951, the same year that Radio Mogadishu was launched and was built up over the years. The current archivist has been there since the fall of President Siad Barre in 1991, becoming in part the live memory behind the archives. Currently, the archives are much disorganized hindering its use but the most pressing concern is that the condition of the tapes is

deteriorating fast; some have already degenerated beyond repair⁹³. The information contained in the tapes is an important part of Somali history and a key tool to preserve the memory of the rich oral Somali tradition especially considering that, as indicated before, written documents in Somali dated only from 1972.

In recent years, there have been various offers to digitize the tapes to preserve them and there was some governmental support, but little progress was made⁴. The African Union and United Nations Information Support Team (AU/UN IST)⁹⁵ has started a project for the digitization and re-cataloguing of this archive, with the purpose of making this resource available to Somali language media. They are also planning to repeat the same project with Radio Hargeisa's archives⁹⁶.

3.1.2 The reconstruction of the Somali National Library

It is evident that the existence of well stocked and wisely managed public libraries in Somalia will be essential for creating a culture of reading, universal literature and better knowledge of Somali cultural expressions and heritage. As main users will probably be young students, public libraries will contribute to the provision of tools for learning and activities that will prevent them from engaging in crime. The access to library resources with a variety of topics and languages can also contribute to better understanding of other cultures, ways of thinking and thus contributing to peace and reconciliation in Somalia.

92 Susannah Price, "Somalia's archives in danger of disappearing", Public Information Office, UNPOS, Quarterly Newsletter, Issue No. 4, April 2012.

93 Most of the tapes are on ¼" magnetic tapes and is stored in the library of the Ministry of Information in an uncontrolled environment, with no regular examination or assessment of the archive.

94 Nazanine Moshiri, "Somalia archives survive conflict: Trove of poetry, music and political speeches among remnants of country's history after decades of conflict", Al Jazeera's reports from Mogadishu, 4 September 2012 www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/09/20129454718676998.html.

95 The AU/UN IST is a United Nations contracted organization that provides strategic communications support to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) through the Chime / Albany consortium. Contact : Steve Turner, Media Development Consultant; steve.turner@auunist.org

96 UNESCO interview with Steve Turner, IST, Media Development Consultant, Nairobi, Kenya, 11 July 2013



Proposed Somalia National Library.
©bbc.co.uk/news/Africa

Although Mogadishu has more than 50,000 students at all levels of education⁹⁷, it does not have a public library⁹⁸. Therefore, the Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (HIPS)⁹⁹, Somalia's first independent, non-profit, non-partisan think tank has decided to start a project aimed at rehabilitating the former National Library, a four storey government building at the heart of Mogadishu¹⁰⁰. Three floors will be shared by languages (Somali, Arabic and English), fiction and non-fiction books, journals, textbooks and DVDs.

The HIPS is also planning to hold Mogadishu's first international book fair in 2014. Along with enabling an environment of reading and research, HIPS hopes these two projects will assist in the revival of culture and art. The library in particular will

serve as the mother institution for other libraries to be established across the country¹⁰¹. They also see the library as a fundamental tool in the battle for ideas amongst the youth as it will serve as a venue to expand their knowledge, organize debates and other social functions such as poetry night.

The greatest challenge the HIPS has thus far encountered is that the reading culture has almost become alien in Somalia. To overcome this, the HIPS is organizing the 'Get Somalia Reading' national campaign, which aims to instil a sense of national pride, civic education and mental development through the art of reading. They are planning to partner up with Mandeeg TV, Somalia's first TV entirely dedicated to education to promote this campaign.

97 Zakia Hussen from HIPS strongly believes that culture is a great weapon against the spread of extremist ideologies as well as criminal activities, including terrorism and piracy (UNESCO online Interview with Zakia Hussen, Programme Manager, HIPS, Mogadishu, Somalia, 17th July 2013).

98 Lack of a safe and adequate place for reading, no electricity access and no Internet access or poor signal justify the need for public libraries (Michelle Shephard, "Somalia's national library rises amid the ruins: Project aims at rebuilding war-torn nation's rich literary history one story at a time", National Security Reporter, 19 July 2013 www.thestar.com/news/world/2013/07/19/somalias_national_library_rises_amid_the_ruins.html).

99 Zakia Hussen, Programme Manager, zhussen@heritageinstitute.org

100 HIPS has worked very closely with the Prime Minister's office, Ministry of the Interior, Mayor of Mogadishu and the Police Commissioner to gain authorization to revive the library and coordinate the safe relocation of the current IDPs that are settled in or next to the building. HIPS has also approached major Somali business companies including Dahabshiil and Hormuud Telecom who have both pledged to sponsor the project (UNESCO online Interview with Zakia Hussen, Programme Manager, HIPS, 17 July 2013). In this same line, HIPS already have the backing of U.S. Democratic Congressman Keith Ellison, who represents Minnesota, home to the U.S.'s largest Somali diaspora. He has recently shipped 22,000 books from the U.S. ("Congressman Ellison Joins with Minnesotans to Send Books to Somalia", 25 June 2013. www.keithellison.org/news/2013/06/congressman-ellison-joins-with-minnesotans-to-send-books-to-somalia/)

101 HIPS plans to capitalize on its experience, connections and resources from Mogadishu's project to open libraries in other cities with large populations and no public libraries, such as Kismayo, Baidoa, Galkayo and Boosaaso (see www.heritageinstitute.org/libraries_prog/).

Activities will include live reading sessions where famous/known Somali authors will read extracts of their books on TV; encourage people to send in short YouTube clips on their latest reads which would then be available on the campaign's website and shown on the channel and an annual writing competition for Somali youth globally to encourage authorship¹⁰².

3.2 Cultural industries

3.2.1 Restoring the somali oral tradition and literature

The Hargeisa International Book Fair (HIBF)¹⁰³ is one of the most successful examples of cultural initiatives in the Horn of Africa that celebrates literature, theatre, film and music. Even if its venue is the relatively more stable and developed city of Hargeisa, capital of Somaliland, it is still difficult for many foreigners to imagine that such an event can occur in Somali territory¹⁰⁴. Also Hargeisa, lacking a theatre, a permanent library and even a cinema, is an unlikely spot for a literary festival. However, Hargeisa is carving out a reputation by attracting readers and writers from around the world to its book fair and other events.

The Hargeisa International Book Fair is in its sixth year and, as its name suggests, is truly international in the sense that Somali authors, poets, artists, musicians and intellectuals from all over the world are invited to the event, reflecting the truly globalised nature of the Somali people. The book fair is also international in the sense that a truly global mix of non-Somalis is also invited to take part¹⁰⁵.

The HIBF was established by Jama Musse Jama, a senior analyst with a computer science company who lives in Pisa, Italy. Jama started the Book Fair not

only to ensure the survival of Somaliland's rich oral tradition, but also to fill what he saw as a cultural void. Ayan Mahamoud, who co-manages the book fair and organizes its sister festival in London every October, also highlights the importance of the arts and culture in building national identity and a culture of peace and tolerance. In her opinion, the book fair provides "a space for our youth to engage and discuss with each other"¹⁰⁶. The fair's organizers also want it to be a showcase for Somali literature, to export it to other countries and to bring international literature through translations to Somalis. Beyond the fair, its organizers have been promoting readers' clubs in Somaliland's six regions as a way of pressurizing regional HIBF organizers, Kayd Somali Arts, Culture and Redsea online Cultural Foundation and other partners¹⁰⁷. They also organize Somali Week Festivals in London. This is an integral part of Black History Month and offers the best of Somali arts and culture, including poetry, literature, panel discussions, documentary film screenings, music and theatre.

3.2.2 Recreating Somalia's film industry

While the media has the important role of raising awareness about current events, there is little room for any real historical or other cultural exploration into a culture that has gone through so much tragedy like that of Somalia. Documenting the history and architectural heritage of Somali cities, including Mogadishu, through films or pictures is a way to promote peace, reconciliation and Somalis' national pride through art.

Looking to tell a positive story about Somalia, and supported by a professional film and research team, the filmmaker and director Mark Brecke¹⁰⁸ plans to film a documentary entitled *Somalia in the Picture*¹⁰⁹.

102 UNESCO online Interview with Zakia Hussen

103 Ayan Mahamoud, Programme Manager, ayan_mahamoud@kayd.org

104 "Somaliland: Mary Harper sees a country in microcosm at the Hargeisa International Book Fair", 20 July 2012. <http://africanarguments.org/2012/07/20/somaliland-mary-harper-finds-creativity-and-entrepreneurship-at-the-hargeisa-international-book-fair/>

105 In opinion of Matt Baugh, Hargeisa literary festival is rapidly becoming a global phenomenon and already inviting very favourable comparisons to the UK's own Hay Festival (Matt Baugh, British Ambassador to Somalia, "Hargeisa Book Fair – Arts, Culture and so much more", Nairobi, Kenya, 20 July 2012 <http://blogs.fc.gov.uk/mattbaugh/2012/07/20/hargeisa-book-fair-arts-culture-and-so-much-more/>).

106 Up to 70% of Somaliland's inhabitants is aged under 30, so the fair intends to provide through arts a healthy alternative for the young to chewing khat – the ubiquitous drug in the region – or worse, following the siren call of Al-Shabaab, the Islamist militants in Somalia (UNESCO telephonic interview with Ayan Mahamoud, London, UK, 10 July 2013).

107 So far HIBF organizers had pledges of land and two regions have pledged buildings for libraries (Mark Tran, "Somaliland's Hargeisa book festival celebrates fifth year", The Guardian, Hargeisa, 16 July 2012. leaders to build libraries¹⁰⁷. www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jul/16/somaliland-book-festival-fifth-year)

108 Mark Brecke, Director and filmmaker, balkins@hotmail.com

109 UNESCO interview with Mark Brecke, Nairobi, Kenya, 11 July 2013

This film intends to tell the recent history of Somalia through the lens of a vibrant cinema history that started in 1913 and lives on in the Diaspora¹¹⁰. It will show how Somalis drew from their strong narrative tradition, that dates back as far as the 14th century and applied it to the new medium of filmmaking. The back-story of the film will be an overview of the civil war from 1991 until present, along with the important humanitarian issues at stake in Somalia today, and the on-going efforts to rebuild the country.

One of the most immediate expected impacts of this film will be to change preconceptions among Somalia's East African neighbours, especially within Kenya where the relationship between the two countries has been strained since the collapse of Somalia's central government. The film intends to be a testament to an important cultural accomplishment and could have long term effects on a younger generation of Somali population who have only known war.

The timing of the release of this film is pivotal. It could be part of a psychological rebuilding of a cultural identity while the country is simultaneously rebuilding its government and infrastructure. A secondary objective of this proposal would be to promote cinema as a cultural and leisure activity for Somalis and to motivate the reconstruction of the Somali film industry¹¹¹.

3.2.3 Refreshing Somali cultural memory through visual expressions

Once, well renowned as "white pearl of the Indian Ocean", Mogadishu was, from the early part of the 20th century to the late 1980s, considered as one of the prettiest and most cosmopolitan cities in Africa. Sadly, since the beginning of the civil war in 1991, Somalia's capital has gained the reputation of being the most dangerous and violent city in the world¹¹².

Trying to counter this situation, a photo exhibition and later the publication of the book *Mogadishu Then and Now, A pictorial tribute to Africa's most wounded city* was conceived by Ms. Rasna Warah¹¹³, a Kenyan writer and photojournalist, who teamed up with Mohamud Dirios, the former curator of the Mogadishu Museum, and Ismail Osman, a US-based activist and telecommunications engineer, who organized and curated the exhibition¹¹⁴.

The exhibition and book showcases Mogadishu in all its splendour prior to the civil war and contrasts this with the devastation and destruction that has characterized the city for more than two decades. It is dedicated to Mogadishu's children and youth, who have never known lasting peace. This initiative also looks to encourage Somalis and foreigners, especially young ones, to learn about Mogadishu's rich cultural heritage and inform future urban planning activities, especially now that Somalis and the international community are strengthening their efforts to restore peace and stability and to rebuild all kinds of infrastructure in Somalia. In this sense, this exhibition and book should be of particular interest to historians, urban planners, architects and anthropologists.

Another similar initiative¹¹⁵ is being undertaken by The Mosaic Rooms, a cultural space focused on Presenting Contemporary Culture from the Arab World in London. As part of their project, "Disappearing Cities of the Arab World", they are planning to host an exhibition on Mogadishu, developed by architect Rashid Ali and photographer Andrew Cross, who have visited Mogadishu to collect materials and information¹¹⁶.

3.3 Intangible heritage

The revitalisation of the oral culture and literacy scene is a key element in the preservation of the cultural memory of Somalis. Cultural memory is

110 As indicated in section 1.4.2, from the colonial period till the 80's, Somalis were involved in the different aspects of the production of movies, until the civil conflict shut down the film industry for more than 20 years, but even today Somali diaspora has carried on this tradition of making films ["Somalia in the Picture, The story of the Somali film industry", Concept Note by Mark Brecke (courtesy of the author)].

111 For example, Somalia's first movie theatre, built in 1937 by the Italians, which currently houses internally displaced refugees.

112 "Mogadishu Then and Now", Mary Harper's blog, 7 May 2012. <http://mary-harper.blogspot.com/2012/05/mogadishu-then-and-now.html>

113 Rasna Warah, Reporter and photojournalist, rasnah.warah@gmail.com

114 Most of the photos in this exhibition are from the collection of Mr. Dirios, who has carefully and meticulously preserved them for years, while others are from Ms. Warah's visit to Mogadishu in November 2011. The exhibition, sponsored by Yildiz Holding, a group of companies based in Turkey, was shown in Istanbul during the Conference on Somalia organized by the Turkish Government from 31st May to 1st June 2012 and at the Alliance Française in Nairobi from 4th to 24th June 2012. It was also presented in Mogadishu with the support of the Mogadishu's Mayor.

115 UNESCO interview with Rasna Warah, Nairobi, Kenya, 10 July 2013.

116 The exhibition is planned to take place in March-April 2014. www.mosaicrooms.org.

essential to providing young Somalis with tools that foster a sense of national identity and love for their country. In this regard, music is also a powerful tool that motivates young people to talk about peace and reconciliation. The following projects include poetry, literacy and music as powerful tools that are used to educate the Somali youth.

3.3.1 Transforming Somali youth through social media

Poet Nation is an online hub for Somali art and culture that engages youth through poetry, music and storytelling¹¹⁷. This platform has been used to inspire young Somalis in Somalia and around the world by showing positive role models¹¹⁸. The aim is to showcase the positive images of Somali culture to enrich and inspire Somalis as well as show the outside world that Somalia is about more than pirates, war or famine. Poet Nation believes that poetry is in the lifeblood of Somalis as it is an oral society that seeks to use this strong asset to foster positive change.

The response from Somali youth from around the world has been overwhelmingly positive¹¹⁹. Poet Nation is believed to have inspired youth to use their voice to take an active role in their societies and has helped raise the profile of Somali artists¹²⁰. The lesson learnt is that art and culture bring people together across many divides and away from politics. One challenge to be addressed is that many types of Somali artists have been practicing for decades without proper compensation. This lack of funding along with major upheavals within people's lives has contributed to the hindrance in the preservation of cultural forms and the development of new ones. Somali artists need to be paid for their contributions. The major challenge encountered by Poet Nation is finding funding for new projects and shifting priorities of the international organizations they have worked with¹²¹.

Poet Nation will be launching a new project in collaboration with Cultivate Sports, an NGO that seeks to locally grow youth sports partnering with community leaders to provide and enhance



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117 www.thepoetnation.com Matthew Erickson, Director, matthew.erickson@thepoetnation.com

118 For example, they have shot a short documentary during the Somali famine in 2011 at the Dadaab Refugee Camp –intending to put a human face on the incredibly horrific statistics– which was showed at many events and had much press in the US to raise money and support for people in the famine.

119 Poet Nation has 45 videos on YouTube that have been viewed more than 500,000 times, as well as several thousands of followers across Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

120 For example, Somalis have won national awards from the FBI and have been honoured by the President of the United States.

121 UNESCO questionnaire filled by Matt Erickson, 8 July 2013

contextually appropriate, society benefitting, and locally sustainable youth sports programs of societal benefit, and locally sustainable youth sports programs¹²². Although this project is not related to culture, it recognizes the power of another leisure activity, sport, to serve as a vehicle for peace, unity and character-building as well as the important role youth can play in directing the future of Somalia¹²³. *Poet Nation* and Cultivate Sports will merge their different expertise and experience working with Somali youth to carry out this project in collaboration with Somali athletic associations and youth groups. The project will work directly with youth in Central South Somalia (Mogadishu) and in Somaliland (Hargeisa)¹²⁴.

3.3.2 Promoting peace among the youth through music

With the idea that music can unify Somali youth, several organizations are supporting a series of

concerts in and outside Somalia. One of these organizations is Humanitarian Bazaar¹²⁵ (formerly known as HELO Media/HELO Magazine) producing alternative humanitarian media, guidebooks, music events, and social spaces to help people survive war and disaster, and promote peace.

HELO have created the Humanitarian Bazaar Music project to be the world's first alliance of performers who risk their lives for music, groups who perform in war zones and places where musicians are threatened. They have also put together concerts and events in high-security environments¹²⁶. In Somalia, they co-organized the Mogadishu Music Festival which took place from the 27th March to the 3rd April 2013, where *Waayaha Cusub*, Somalia's top hip-hop group, and other performers, successfully completed a six-concert series festival, the first of its kind and the largest festival in over two decades in Mogadishu¹²⁷. They



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- 122 Cultivate Sports has already been working with the Somali youth resident in Nairobi, Kenya, providing basketball technical foundations courses at the Eastleigh Fellowship Centre (www.cultivatesports.org/ and <http://kenyaschoolofbasketball.com/>).
- 123 The idea behind the project is that well trained coaches have an opportunity to harness the potential of the sporting context. Although Somali culture is filled with competition it should not be avoid, but rather train young people to have a healthy and proper perspective of it. Basketball and football are both a part of Somalia's culture for both men and women (UNESCO Interview with Matt Erickson and Brad Ibs, Nairobi, 30 July 2013). "Transformation Through Sports", Concept Note by Poet Nation and Cultivate Sports (courtesy of author).
- 124 "Transforming Through Sports", Concept Note by Poet Nation and Cultivate Sports (courtesy of author).
- 125 Daniel J. Gerstle, Founder and Director, humanitarianbazaar@gmail.com
- 126 Although there are other human rights groups out there helping musicians (www.freemuse.org and www.impossiblemusic.org), Humanitarian Bazaar Music produces projects aimed at developing selected performers' music business strategy rather than simply telling the world about their plight (<http://humanitarianbazaar.tumblr.com/about>).
- 127 This festival is part of the Somali Sunrise Concert Tour for Peace that includes concerts in the US, Kenya and Somalia (www.somalisunrise.org).

are also producing the feature documentary *Live from Mogadishu*¹²⁸.

3.4 Protection and conservation of somalia's architectural tangible heritage

Cultural heritage plays an irreplaceable role in national identity and pride in the common ownership of its diversity, especially during war and rapid social change. "Architectural heritage in particular is of seminal importance for the collective psychology of a Nation. Somalia does not only need food and contemporary comforts, but also deep and meaningful cultural roots. The built Heritage works as the Nation's soul, it physically represents its cultural spirit. No country is able to confidently look at the future without respecting its past"¹²⁹.

Although there is currently a wide debate and interest among different scholars on the historical and cultural value of East African coastal cities, Somalia's coastal cities have never been the subject of careful and detailed researches. Arab influence in architecture is widespread in Somalia. In neighbouring countries such as Kenya and Tanzania, monuments of the same period are listed in the UNESCO World Heritage site¹³⁰.

3.4.1 Mogadishu as a historical coastal town

Mohamed Abdulkadir Ahmed¹³¹, chairman of the Human Heritage Centre, is one of the few researchers working on Somalia's architectural heritage¹³². In his opinion, Somalia's previous governments did not recognize the importance of preserving



Al Uruba hotel before the civil war.
©www.wardheernews.com

- 128 In this project they are partnering with the top Somali hip-hop group, Waayaha Cusub, Radio Daljir, Somali Public Radio, and others to produce a documentary film and media package about Waayaha Cusub and their quest to rally Somali youth for peace through a live hip-hop concert tour through Somalia and in Mogadishu ("Waayaha Cusub's Tour for Peace & Solidarity in Somalia and the African Horn", <http://humanitarianbazaar.tumblr.com/music>).
- 129 UNESCO basic questionnaire filled by Livio Sacchi, Dipartimento di Architettura, Università degli Studi "G. d'Annunzio" di Chieti-Pescara, Rome, Italy, 8 July 2013.
- 130 Arch. Mohamed Abdulkadir Ahmed, "The Past for the Future, The Protection and Conservation of Somalia Historical Coastal Towns: The Case of Mogadishu", Urban Heritage Centre, Mogadishu, Somalia (courtesy of author).
- 131 Mohamed Abdulkadir Ahmed, mahmed.shaan@gmail.com
- 132 UHC is a registered research and consultancy centre on urban and cultural heritage issues. Currently, it provides technical expertise and advice to the Municipality of Mogadishu. UHC is also advocating the restoration of historical building, landmarks, ancient mosques in Mogadishu and other coastal towns and archaeological sites in Somalia.

and enhancing Somalia's architectural heritage. It was subject to "degradation and deterioration, to violent transformation and destruction during previous regimes" due to the civil conflict. There has also been uncontrolled use of land¹³³.

During the 20 years of Somalia's civil war, and even today, the process of frequent transformation has impacted Somalia's historical cities. Somalia's tangible heritage is in a state of utter neglect and destruction. Mogadishu and some of the historical cities along the Somali coast, (Warshiikh, Jesira, Marka, Barawa, Kisimayo, Zeila and Bosaso), are in the same situation. In Mohamed Abdulkadir Ahmed's opinion there is need for deeper and more specialized studies with the active involvement of UNESCO for a more justified way for the defence and valorisation of Somalia Tangible Heritages. It would also be necessary to work towards setting up a Department of Antiquities and Conservation within the Banadir Administration. This could represent the first operational support of protection, introduction of restrictive clauses in the future building code, restoration and conservation¹³⁴.

Somalia's capital city, Mogadishu, is the most important town of the Banadir coast. It was one of the city-states founded more than ten centuries ago along the East African coast, and flourished on commerce with the Arabian Gulf countries, Persia, India, and China. It is recognized as one of the most interesting historical centres on the coast of Somalia, and the city knew a period of magnificence from the 13th century onwards¹³⁵. Much later, the Italians were the first to formulate and effect urban planning in Mogadishu and erect a number of landmark buildings. The exceptional former beauty

of Mogadishu is still perceptible despite the wanton destruction of the past 20 years¹³⁶.

On the beachfront in Mogadishu is the oldest mosque in the city, known as Abdulaziz, in Abdulaziz district. In May 2013, the landmark Abdulaziz tower (situated next to the Old Port City Heritage Site) was demolished in connection with a project for the Somalia Federal Ministry of Religious Affairs and Justice, funded by the Turkish Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Turkish Diyanet Foundation. The destruction of Abdulaziz is a major setback for Somalia's culture. Whatever the reasons that led to the destruction of this building, although now reconstructed, replicas may not have the same effect of giving Somalis a sense of nationalism and pride¹³⁷.

In response to this event, on 15 July 2013, the Urban Heritage Centre addressed an open letter to the President of the Federal Republic of Somalia, the Speaker of Parliament, the Prime Minister and the Mayor of Mogadishu, titled *Today the Destruction of the Al-Mnara Tower of Abdulaziz Mosque in Mogadishu and Tomorrow?* The idea behind this letter is to appeal to the Federal Government of Somalia and the Banadir Regional Administration to take action in protecting and preserving the architectural and cultural heritage of Somalia¹³⁸.

3.4.2 Young diaspora's initiatives in the preservation of cultural heritage and the environment

In the same line as the Urban Heritage Centre, Horn HeRo¹³⁹, a small NGO registered both in the UK and in Somalia, has an on-going online petition

133 For example, this has compromised some stretches of beautiful beaches in Mogadishu Lido I and II.

134 Livio Sacchi, from the Dipartimento di Architettura, Università degli Studi "G. d'Annunzio" di Chieti-Pescara, has suggested as possible partners that could be involved in the research and design for reconstruction programmes of the Somalia's Architectural Heritage: UNESCO; Professor Pasic, Director of IRCICA (Organization of Islamic Cooperation - Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture); Foreign Universities and Research Centres (from Europe, Africa and the Middle East) such as the Section of Built heritage of the Department of Architecture of the University of Chieti-Pescara for research programmes; King Saud University in Saudi Arabia for financing research and design programmes.

135 It was at this time that famous Mosques were built in Hamarweyne, Shingaani and Abdulaziz. Fakhruddin Mosque in Hamarweyne district, for example, dates from 1269 and was built by the Mogadishu's first Sultan, Fakhruddin.

136 The old, original urban centres, Hamarweyne and Shingaani, still stand on Mogadishu's initial site, but they were extensively damaged during the years of civil war. Shingaani suffered the most visible damage.

137 It is understood that the Somalia Federal Ministry of Religious Affairs and Justice request the Turkish Government to execute this project by a local contractor, with Turkish supervision (Arq. Mohamed Abdulkadir Ahmed, "Today the Destruction of the Al Mnara Tower of Abdulaziz Mosque in Mogadishu and Tomorrow?", open letter to the President of the Federal Republic of Somalia, the Speaker of the Parliament, the Prime Minister and the Major of Mogadishu, Executive Director, Urban Heritage Center, 15 July 2013. <http://markacadeey.com/2013/07/today-the-destruction-of-the-al-mnara-tower-of-abdulaziz-mosque-in-mogadishu-and-tomorrow/>).

138 The Municipality could circumscribe the historical sites with a security cordon for future use and attempt to assess and classify –with the support of experts in the field of heritage restoration- not only monuments such as the famous mosques of Mogadishu (Hamarweyne Jamia, Fakhruddin, Arba'rukun, Barqash Museum and surrounded Uruba beach area, Haji Ali, Sheikh Abdulkadir, Sheikh Sufi, Abdulaziz), but, also the other historical architecture in Mogadishu and other towns of Somalia.

139 Sagal Abshir Osman, Managing Director Horn HeRo, sagal.abshir@hornhero.org

–mainly through Twitter– for the conservation of national historical sites in Mogadishu that can be considered as focal points for Somali cultural references. In their view, the importance of signatures is a collective effort to bring the issue of heritage and culture to the attention of the Somali government.

The influx of signatures garnered by the petition has allowed Horn HeRo to communicate with several national and international media organizations. Horn HeRo is planning to publicize the urgency of conserving Somali heritage in order to strengthen their advocacy for a democratic culture. Letters have been sent to the President requesting information on Somalia's status with UNESCO as well as attaching all the names and comments of the petition. Although they are still waiting for a response, this kind of initiative shows the power of technology such as social media and the Internet in organizing and mobilizing public opinion.

In an effort to conserve national sites, Horn HeRo¹⁴⁰ has also indicated that, some cultural sites have been targeted by private economic interests thus complicating their preservation and making it harder to reopen them for public access. In this sense, the misallocation of land in Somalia is one of the challenges that should be addressed¹⁴¹.

The involvement of young Somalis in the diaspora is also a good sign of the awareness that has been raised around the revitalization of Somali culture in the post-transitional era. Horn HeRo believes that such cultural projects in the culture sector would return a sense of unity, patriotism, pride and honour as well as self-actualization. A push for cultural projects in Somalia will enable the nation to unite and promote positive images to the rest of the world.

3.5 Research in archaeological tangible heritage

Before the civil war, the Somali Academy of Sciences and Arts (SOMAC) had under its mandate all archaeological research, protection and conservation in Somalia, but all this work stopped with the collapse of the Federal Government in 1991. After this date, the only work done in the archaeological arena has taken place in Somaliland.

Sada Mire, an Archaeologist from the University College of London Institute of Archaeology, the first British based researcher to work in Somaliland for approximately 30 years and one of the few Somali archaeologists, has tried to encourage interest in cultural heritage in Somaliland, as a very important tool for reconciliation in the country¹⁴².

Her project has explored an important part of the Somali cultural heritage. Many African societies have little written history, making archaeology a key means of exploring their past. Being the first indigenous archaeology project to take place in Somaliland, the project has focused on the cultural uses of the landscape, and has included archaeological survey of significant sites¹⁴³. But the added significance of landscape for Somali people is that it predates modern nation/state politics, and is common to many of the ethnic groups that live in the region¹⁴⁴. She has indicated that looting and uncontrolled developments are major threats to the local sites. In addition, the fact that archaeology causes conflict when it is used for political and religious purposes has been a challenge to her work. She has also highlighted the importance of involving dialogue with local communities in order to include their views and methodologies regarding heritage conservation¹⁴⁵.

140 UNESCO on-line interview with Sagal Abshir Osman and Katrina Mayers, Horn HeRo, London, UK, 17 and 22 July 2013.

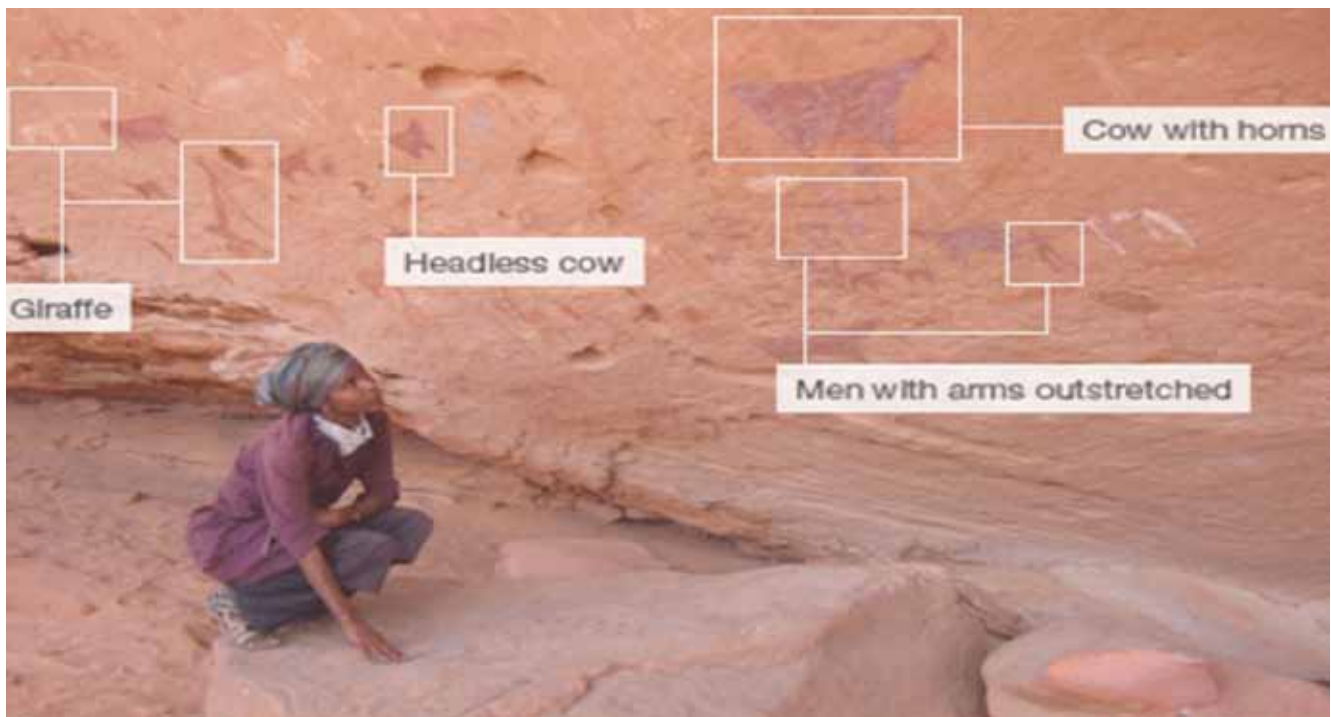
141 Horn HeRo's has several projects proposals directed to re-establish the traditions and environmental stability of Somalia. Study Hero is a project that looks to produce educational materials, workshops and reading literature in Somali language for young individuals so that they may form an affinity to the traditions of Somali culture. Go Green looks to support rural communities to start or reinforce productive sustainable farming in their own lands in order to restore the natural environment and encourage the sustainability and independence of the natural resources.

142 She has returned to her native Somaliland in 2007 to conduct her PhD fieldwork, after 16 years living in Sweden as a refugee from the civil war and studying in UK (Dan Watson, "UCL archaeologist returns to Somaliland", UCL Communications, 13 September 2007. www.ucl.ac.uk/news/news-articles/0709/07091301).

143 B. T. Newberg, "Sada Mire, Archaeologist Hero of Somalia", 8 August 2011. <http://blogcritics.org/sada-mire-archaeologist-hero-of-somalia/>.

144 Modern-day borders are largely the result of sometimes-arbitrary divisions of land between European powers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, whereas free movement in the land has remained culturally important to this predominantly pastoral nomadic people.

145 Sada Mire, "The knowledge-Centred Approach to the Somali Cultural Emergency and Heritage Development Assistance in Somaliland", *African Archaeological Review*, Volume 28, Number 1, 1 April 2011.



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Sada Mire, leading a team of 50 helpers, has discovered in Somaliland almost 100 sites with prehistoric rock art by pastoralist people; at least 10 of these could receive UNESCO's World Heritage status. For example, the Dhambalin ancient rock art site, recently discovered, is located in the desert approximately 40 miles (64 km) from the Red Sea. It contains rock art in sandstone shelters, which are said to be about 5,000 years old, with paintings of animals that haven't lived there in many years. The paintings reveal an environment that was once more hospitable than today's desert¹⁴⁶. From an archaeological standpoint, Laas Geel, is considered as one of the oldest in Africa and the most important ancient site in Somaliland.

This well preserved 5000 to 11,000 year-old cave art site contains images of cows painted with no heads but big udders apparently to symbolize fertility being worshiped by human figures wearing painted hides, which are perhaps idols themselves.

The government in Somaliland expressed their support for her project, and Sada Mire helped establishing a Department of Antiquities for the Ministry of Tourism and Culture of Somaliland and became its director in 2007. Furthermore, in order to educate Somaliland's people on their cultural heritage and to continue with the archaeological explorations, Sada Mire has established and become the chairperson of the "Horn Heritage", a non-profit organization to fund her work, in Hargeisa, capital of Somaliland, in 2011.

Horn Heritage is a voluntary, purely humanitarian organization for the protection and promotion of the archaeological heritage in the Horn of Africa¹⁴⁷. It works to improve the quality of life for Somaliland community through the provision of appropriate education, promotion of cultural heritage protection, research, capacity building in heritage conservation, and the creation of employment through income generating activities in the tourism industry¹⁴⁸.

146 A part from horned cattle and goats, it's the only site in the region decorated with images of sheep, along with antelope, ibex as well as giraffes, in red, green, pink, white, brown, yellow, and black.

147 Somali heritage is a website that presents the extensive work carried out by Sada Mire and aims to raise worldwide awareness about Somali cultural heritage and pre-history, providing unique information about the current status of Somali cultural heritage in all the Somali territories and, in the near future, also inform about belonging and identity within the Somali Diaspora.

148 Other Horn Heritage organizational programs include the support to: institution building and co-operation between national and international institutions; the mapping of all monuments and sites of Somaliland; the creation of a Somaliland National Heritage Law; the construction of a centre in Hargeisa for scientific research facility, storage and education (schools, universities and the public); and the publication of reports, books, articles, newsletters, films and photos (Somali Heritage and Archaeology, <http://www.somalih heritage.org/index.php>).

Interface between Education and Culture

What education for ensuring Somalia's culture for development?

"Culture is the primary source of knowledge ... the understanding of nature begins with local culture"¹⁴⁹.

The role of culture in relation to education is crucial for sustainable development. Education has been a means of transmitting one's culture from one generation to another. It is the process of bringing about a relatively permanent change in human behaviour. As the oldest industry, it is the main instrument used by society to preserve, maintain and upgrade its social equilibrium. A society's future depends largely on the quality of its citizen's education.

In all human societies, education is meant to pass on to the new generations the existing known edge of their physical environment, to introduce individuals to the organisation of society, give them skills for performing their daily jobs and enjoying their leisure, as well as inculcate sound morals in them for their own benefit and that of the society. In other words, education is a process by which the society assists the younger generation to understand the heritage of their past, participate productively in the society of the present as well as contribute to the future. Based on these reasons, education draws inspiration and nourishment from a society, but in turn, it contributes to the growth, renewal and development of that society¹⁵⁰.

4.1 Political commitment

The African Union (AU) by the implementation of the NEPAD¹⁵¹ philosophy of developing Africa-led solutions to African challenges offered a new and favourable context for a political leadership

committed to African regional integration and provided a mechanism for addressing history teaching within the continent as a whole. Furthermore, the Action Plan of the Second Decade for Education in Africa (2006 to 2015), which emphasizes the strengthening of the links between education and culture and improving the quality of pedagogical content, constitutes an ideal framework for the implementation of the project.

The Assembly of Heads of State and Government, as the supreme organ of the African Union, agreed upon the importance of education and recognize its relationship with culture.

Decision on the linkage between culture and education

The Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Africa Union reaffirms "*the indisputable interface between culture and education* and the role of both in sustainable socio-economic development; CONVINCED of the need to promote cultural literacy among Africans and that culture and education are important weapons for the fight against poverty, HIV/AIDS pandemic and promotion of peace, stability and governance; determined to eliminate certain cultural practices that have negative impacts on health, development, human rights and education; RE-COMMITS to *strengthen the interface between education and culture* and give our full support to the implementation of programmes and projects to this effect"; and therefore "URGES Ministries of Culture and Education to create the fora for regular consultations and streamlining culture in education and education in culture, in particular through the rebuilding of African educational systems; Assembly/AU/Dec.96 (VI)

149 Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka, UNESCO, Education and Cultural Diversity. http://www.unesco.org/education/features_en/ecd.shtml

150 EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY, A Esu and A Junaid. <http://www.onlinenigeria.com/education/?blurb=536>

151 The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is an economic development program of the African Union. NEPAD was adopted at the 37th session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 2001 in Lusaka, Zambia. NEPAD aims to provide an overarching vision and policy framework for accelerating economic co-operation and integration among African countries.

This statement confirms the political will of all State members to support efforts to strengthen the educational system. It encourages educational leaders to recognise the importance of including culture in the curricula as a way to generate a consciousness and identity which could set the foundation for dialogue and peace.

Culture and education in Somalia

In Somalia, the interface of education and culture plays a fundamental role in determining how communities live together and the way society evolves. Elements such as a common language and history can provide an effective platform for the rebuilding of identity towards peace and development.

Many cultural expressions can be shared and learned in schools and other educational facilities. Education is the best way to teach culture, contributing to the integrated development of individuals, generating abilities and skills useful for their behaviour in the family, community and life in general. Indeed, Somali being until recently a purely spoken language the importance of storytelling and verbal communication in education cannot be overstated.

Somalia has a very rich culture in the form of poetry, music, dance, crafts and others. A well-structured educational system should include all of these cultural expressions in its curricula, providing the opportunity to the new generations to revive the identity of Somalia.

Moreover, attention needs to be focused on strengthening those aspects of education that promote the full development of the human personality, especially the linguistic, cultural, physical, intellectual and creative dimensions of a learners' well-being.

Currently, due to the infinite difficulties the educational system faces in terms of organisation and resources, incorporating culture into curricula and teaching is a challenge. At the same time, the Culture Sector has minimum support. Even if some institutional and individual efforts are struggling

to revive culture and education in Somalia, the priorities for Somalia's development are others such as humanitarian assistance, revival of state institutions and development of infrastructure. Therefore international, public and private support is needed to help those working on education and culture in Somalia to make a meaningful contribution to Somalia's new era.

4.2 New curricula for a new era

Different actions have been taken in order to improve the education sector in Somalia. This is the case of a coalition representing 1,310 private schools across Somalia that agreed on a curriculum to standardize primary and secondary instruction¹⁵². The new curricula took three years to be developed and it is based on the national curriculum that was in effect before the civil war and a curricula used in schools now as a reference guide and model. "Its foundation is Islam and our good culture," according to Mohamed Farah Ali,¹⁵³ the coordinator of the group that co-wrote the curriculum.

With standardized curricula, it will be much easier to measure the performance of both the schools and the students at the end of term. Also, in knowledge of the multilingual teaching opportunities (some teach in Somali others in Arabic or in English), the new curricula will have textbooks translated into these different languages.

For the Federal Government this is a good initiative and Officials from the Ministry of Development and Social Affairs in charge of Education, will evaluate the blueprint in order to have a guide for a new planned curricula.

*"The new curriculum is a positive development that gives schools an opportunity to promote common national values. Whenever we meet for an educational debate, we cannot even agree on nationalism. Some of us defend Arab views, some Western and others Asian. The reason is that students have not been taught with the same goals; I mean we lack a unified national goal."*¹⁵⁴

152 Seven organisations comprise the coalition: the Formal Private Education Network in Somalia (FPENS), the School Organisation for Formal Education (SOFE), the Somali Formal Education Network (SOFEN), the Somali Formal Education Link (SOFEL), the Schools Association for Formal Education (SAFE), the Formal Education Network for Private Schools (FENPS) and the Somali Education Development Association (SEDA).

153 ABDI MOALI, SABAHI, MAY 2013 [HTTP://SABAHIONLINE.COM/EN_GB/ARTICLES/HOA/ARTICLES/FEATURES/2013/05/29/FEATURE-01](http://SABAHIONLINE.COM/EN_GB/ARTICLES/HOA/ARTICLES/FEATURES/2013/05/29/FEATURE-01)

154 Abdullahi Ahmed Maalin, a high school student in Mogadishu, Abdi Moali, Sabahi, May 2013 http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2013/05/29/feature-01

This example underscores that foreign influences in education and other aspects of life since the civil war have compromised Somali ideals.¹⁵⁵ Having a curriculum developed by Somalis would foster understanding and dialogue among youths and help support Somali identity.

4.3 Education through the generations

It is important also to recognize that “teachings” are a strong part of Somali culture and non-formal education should be supported and promoted to generate positive dialogue about Somali identity and the future of the nation. Non-formal education (NFE) refers to a broad set of learning opportunities that are offered to out-of-school children, youth and adults. These include vocational skills training, adult literacy, community health education, and agricultural extension activities¹⁵⁶.

Some examples of Non-formal education are from Mercy Corps Somalia and UNICEF: Mercy Corps Somalia provides Somali youth with education, economic and civic participation opportunities to bring about stability. Empowering youth reduces the appeal to joining extremist groups or piracy networks and helps them contribute to society in a positive way. Mercy Corps Somalia’s stabilization strategy includes providing education outside of formal schools so that students can contribute to creating a positive future in Somalia.

“I have been studying at this centre for one month; I am now a completely different person.... I can write my name, I can write and read the [Somali] numbers and alphabets. After a few months I hope to be fully writing and reading and calculating.” Fatumo Jama Ahmed is a 30 year old mother of two in Berbera, Somaliland.

Literate women tend to have healthier and better educated children. They also contribute to household income and community development than do their illiterate peers. Non-formal education programs give out-of-school youth and adults the opportunity to learn in flexible schedules and at

their own and practical skills, such as literacy and numeracy to improve farming methods¹⁵⁷.

On the other hand, UNICEF works with partners across Somalia to deliver an integrated package of school-based and non-formal activities to address the educational needs in Somalia. This includes advocacy with the Education Ministries in Puntland and Somaliland, the construction and rehabilitation of schools, including temporary emergency structures, provision of supplies, school health activities, teacher training and incentives, monthly food vouchers through schools for children without access to other food support, support to Child-to-Child clubs and Community Education Committees and support through non-formal alternative basic education to pastoralist children. UNICEF Somalia is beginning to explore how to make education programmes more conflict sensitive and support peace building efforts through education¹⁵⁸.

4.3.1 Religious education

Qur'anic schools (also known as *duqsi*) remain the basic system of traditional religious instruction in Somalia. They provide Islamic education for children, thereby filling a clear religious and social role in the country. Known as the most stable local, non-formal system of education providing basic religious and moral instruction, their strength rests on community support and their use of locally-made and widely available teaching materials.

The Qur'anic system, which teaches the greatest number of students relative to other educational sub-sectors, is often the only system accessible to Somalis in nomadic as compared to urban areas. A study from 1993 found, among other things, that about 40% of pupils in Qur'anic schools were girls. To address shortcomings in religious instruction, the Somali government on its own part also subsequently established the Ministry of Endowment and Islamic Affairs, under which Qur'anic education is now regulated¹⁵⁹.

The media has an important role to play here as well as the discussion of historical teachings, religious

155 ABDI MOALI, SABAHI, MAY 2013. http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2013/05/29/feature-01

156 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Somalia

157 Mercy Corps Somalia, <http://so.mercycorps.org/Second%20Chances%3A%20Women%27s%20Education>

158 http://www.unicef.org/somalia/education_113.html

159 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Somalia

beliefs and traditions, as well as cultural rituals and practices. Promoting intergenerational dialogue is also vital to ensure that the new Somalia respects and builds on the old whilst welcoming the new ideas and identities that the 21st Century brings with it. With the significant youth bulge new forms of communication and education are validated in everyday life which must be integrated with Somali tradition and culture.

4.4 A knowledge of society

While new technologies have changed the communication between people and brings them closer together, creating greater possibilities for understanding and exchange, at the same time they risk losing the richness and uniqueness of cultural identities and forms of sharing cultural values and traditions. More than ever before, education is at the heart of these relationships and is central to all efforts to ensure that knowledge societies are grounded upon considerations of equity, respect for cultural diversity and the protection of the common good.

An emphasis on building knowledge societies through quality education will also be linked with issues of linguistic and cultural diversity particularly in relation to the maintenance of a culture of peace. Respect for each other through understanding and the development of universal values such as tolerance, democracy, and non-violence imply learning about other cultures and languages and becoming aware of the fact that there are more ways than one of interpreting the world in which we live¹⁶⁰.

In summary, if we are to support an integrated and holistic development for the new Somalia, then education and culture are key facets that must receive similar attention and resourcing as other sectors. Respect for both traditional and modern, formal and non-formal education are key to ensure these values, the past and richness of Somali culture whilst embracing the new for today's generation of Somalis.

160 UNESCO, Education and Cultural Diversity, http://www.unesco.org/education/features_en/e.cd.shtml

The Role of Culture in Somalia's Development

5.1 Culture and development

Culture is a necessity for all human development. It creates the fundamental building blocks in our personality and in the ties that link us to communities and nation¹⁶¹.

A nation's cultural heritage is part and parcel of understanding a country and its people, and many development projects have suffered from a lack of cultural awareness and understanding. From a human capacity development perspective, societies are more able to make choices about their future, when people are aware of their history and culture¹⁶².

Culture is embedded in both the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (Art. 27) and in the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Art. 1 and 15) as well as a range of other international agreements and declarations (see Annex E). All these recognise the importance of culture in sustainable development and in fostering the emergence of dynamic cultural sectors in developing countries through international cooperation for development. Furthermore, in 2005 UNESCO made a special commitment to a Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

It is important then, to recognise the role of culture in a people and a nation's development. Culture influences identity, debate and dialogue. It is important for nation building and for peace and reconciliation as it ensures unity during crisis and it contributes to social inclusion, diversity and

development. Culture can promote the respect for human rights. A free and strong cultural sector will promote other rights and values such as freedom of expression, diversity and debate about needs in society. Cultural cooperation is good development cooperation because of its emphasis on multicultural dialogue. Such dialogue is a prerequisite for successful cooperation in other fields¹⁶³.

Yet, far from being seen as a core part of the development framework, culture and cultural assets are too often the first victims in development. When budgets are tight cultural interventions are the first to be cut. In the name of development cultural sites and monuments are put under risk to make way for infrastructure projects or other economic development interventions¹⁶⁴. Furthermore in times of war and conflict cultural property and assets often come under fire. In 2013 alone, valuable and ancient manuscripts in Mali were destroyed by fighting in Timbuktu and countless buildings of cultural importance have been damaged by the on-going conflict in Syria.

5.2 Somalia's cultural assets for development

The Somali culture is an amalgamation of traditions that were developed independently and through interaction with neighbouring and far away civilizations, including other parts of North-eastern Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, India, and Southeast Asia. It is therefore a great source of richness and inclusive exchange as Somalis have absorbed influences from different traditions and cultures.

161 Culture plays key role in nation building, Thorbjørn Gaustadsæther, Sunday Monitor, Norway, 30 SEPT 2011

162 CULTURE FOR, AND AS PART OF, DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY4DEVELOPMENT, 16 APRIL 2012

163 Culture plays key role in nation building, Thorbjørn Gaustadsæther, Sunday Monitor, Norway, 30 SEPT 2011, Putting culture first: commonwealth perspectives on culture and development, M Nowotny, Commonwealth Foundation 2008.

164 [HTTP://WWW.CULTUREINDEVELOPMENT.NL/NEWS/DISCUSSING_CULTURE_AND_DEVELOPMENT](http://www.cultureindevelopment.nl/news/discussing_culture_and_development), UNREGULATED MINING CAUSES PART OF GREAT WALL TO COLLAPSE, STRAITTIMES, 20 OCTOBER 2011

As shown in this study, culture is a fundamental pillar for the reconstruction of the Somali social fabric. It can effectively contribute to revive Somali identity and be a development opportunity for future generations. A focus also on the revival of an ancient culture would engender a positive feeling of national pride for the new generations.

The numerous cultural expressions in the form of music, dance, poetry, storytelling and even dress and crafts mentioned earlier in the study embody the past of Somali culture and provide a platform for the expression of modern cultural revival. Interventions to support these aspects of Somali society can be beneficial in fostering a feeling of pride and unity as well as recognizing and valuing differences and diversity.

The cultural assets (in the form of museums, monuments, important manuscripts etc.) so often neglected in development interventions are paramount in engendering a feeling of belonging and history for the Somali people. In particular, interventions with the large population of young people that ensure they receive cultural education and are aware of their cultural heritage are crucial in the reconstruction of Somali culture. The young population, in consultation with the old, also provide an opportunity to build new cultural identities based on peace, respect for human rights and democracy.

5.3 The benefits of cultural development for Somalia

Present conditions in the post-transitional era could be conducive to coordinated interventions in the Somali culture sector to support peace building and the reconstruction of Somalia.

A strengthened cultural sector in Somalia would have a multiplier effect on:

- Strengthening civil society, helping it to become a change agent and driving force in efforts to create a more transparent and democratic society.
- Strengthening cultural infrastructure and protecting cultural property and capital.
- Increasing respect for human rights in general and freedom of expression in particular.
- Strengthening understanding and value for Somali culture in Somalia by Somalis can also engender respect for other cultures.
- Building a potential source of revenue for the country in the form of tourism (internal and international).

Somali heritage should be revived to promote inclusive dialogue and peace building through various tangible and intangible cultural assets to raise awareness on the important role that culture can play in reconciliation and rehabilitation in Somalia and showcase Somali music, poetry, dance, art and many other cultural manifestations.

In order for Somalis to best manage and protect their cultural heritage, the capacity of State, non-state actors, and development organizations must be strengthened as well as new policy frameworks developed in order to revive the country's culture. This should include improving human resource capacity, implementing capacity building programmes that focus on mainstreaming gender equality and the inclusion of cultural policies for socio economic development.

Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

The Study has indicated that the situation of today's cultural environment is a little different from the one that existed at the time of the 2006 assessment, but that the present conditions in the post-transitional era are more conducive to coordinated interventions in the Culture Sector in Somalia. The aim should be the revitalization, protection and promotion of the Somali culture through the reconstruction, institutionalization and reinforcement of the Culture Sector in Somalia. General findings of the Somali Culture Sector analysis are highlighted below, and a strategy to serve as a guide for immediate and future interventions by different stakeholders in the Culture Sector in Somalia has also been proposed. The strategy presents conclusions, objectives, key outputs, and recommended activities, which are divided into 4 priorities, and include views of different stakeholders interviewed for this study.

Following an analysis of the information collected both from various documents and taking into account the views of Somali local and international stakeholders; the following are the findings, conclusions and recommendations:

A. General findings of the Somalia culture sector analysis

- i. Culture, centrally including the Somali language, is the common factor unifying Somali people while diversity within the country must also be duly recognized, encouraged and promoted;
- ii. There is a dire lack of "cultural spaces" in the country; individuals and groups wishing to stage plays/music/cultural events etc. have no appropriate venues;
- iii. Given the current political situation in Somalia, it is necessary to involve all stakeholders in discussions pertaining to cultural rehabilitation and development, protection and safeguarding, including the

- national and regional authorities, parliament, civil society, diaspora communities, youth, traditional elders and minority groups; the involvement of youth is particularly key;
- iv. Although a growing number of activities have been launched inside and outside of Somalia promoting and safeguarding the Somali cultural heritage, there is a marked lack of coordination and dissemination of possible creation of networks and use of good examples that could result from the same;
- v. Future actions towards the rehabilitation of Somali culture and heritage should be guided by the general aims of developing a policy framework, elaborating strategies in the matter, and building human and institutional capacities;
- vi. The new momentum in Somalia has opened up a new dialogue between Somalis on how to best protect/promote their culture;
- vii. Linking cultural issues to other fields such as education and communication and with other development agendas would also facilitate the reconstruction and revitalization of the Culture Sector in Somalia. It is especially important to rapidly introduce cultural material in schools.

B. Strategy for the revitalisation of the culture sector in Somalia

Based on the above findings the Study suggests a strategy for the rehabilitation of the Culture Sector in Somalia that is focused on 3 priority areas outlined below. Each priority area has its own key outputs and activities and recommendations, which can be summarized as follows:

- i. Support to Somali authorities and partners for the creation of unified policy-legal-regulatory frameworks and priority schedules;

- ii. Sensitize all partners on the importance of integrating cultural heritage into the long-term national development goals;
- iii. Assist with the provision/rehabilitation of cultural spaces;
- iv. Support to secure sufficient financial resources for cultural development;
- v. Support on capacity building in order to have more skilled and competent cultural heritage and cultural promotion professionals;
- vi. Facilitate Somalia's accession to relevant international instruments on culture;
- vii. Seek coordinated cooperation and support of the international community for cultural matters;
- viii. Support for the rehabilitation of key cultural institutions such as the Somalia National Museum and Somalia National Library;
- ix. Include cultural/civic elements in educational processes;

Strategic priority areas

Priority 1: Strengthening the capacity of State and non-state actors engaged in the preservation and development of cultural heritage

Culture, education and media contribute to peace building and to the normalization of the lives of people that have been traumatized by war. Considering that Somalia did not have a stable and unifying government for two decades, the legislative and policy framework within which the country can reverse the deterioration or disappearance of various forms of Somali cultural heritage is weak or non-existent. Strengthening the capacity of State and non-state actors and developing institutions and policy frameworks is a logical entry point to the revival of Somali culture. Actions to strengthen the governance of culture in Somalia should be a priority to integrate culture and inclusive dialogue in the reconstruction and development of Somalia. In this sense, one objective should be to mobilize existing governing structures to adopt and or adapt some of the international legal instruments as a basis for national legislation relating to heritage management in the country.

In order for Somali nationals to competently manage their cultural heritage, the human resource capacity in the country needs to be improved. As

a consequence of the civil unrest in the country, much of the skilled human capacity has found its way out of Somalia. The lack of skilled manpower has left much of the cultural heritage vulnerable to mishandling, theft and damage. The poor state of conservation of much of the cultural heritage in Somalia means that a capacity building programme to improve the skills and knowledge of the Somali cultural sector professionals is imperative.

The capacity building programmes should also focus on mainstreaming gender equality and inclusion of youth in cultural heritage policies and economic development. Education and training in conservation and management of cultural, natural and intangible heritage would also contribute towards women's and youth political and social empowerment. At the same time, it would be important to motivate and strengthen cooperation with women's and youth associations involved in dialogue, especially inter-religious dialogue, for conflict-resolution and reconciliation in Somalia, drawing on the results and recommendations of seminars and training courses previously held.

a. Objectives

- To support national and regional governments to develop legal/policy frameworks and strategies for cultural heritage preservation;
- To build capacity of State and non-state actors in terms of transfer of competences/knowledge to rebuild and perform cultural rehabilitation and preservation activities. The availability of competent, skilled and talented manpower will be critical to the process of cultural rehabilitation and development in Somalia.

b. Key outputs

- Improved structures for government bodies to collaborate with non-state actors engaged in the preservation and development of cultural heritage;
- Updated and strengthened national and institutional legal/policy frameworks and strategies for the Somali Culture Sector;
- Enhanced skills, knowledge and competences of individuals and communities that manage and safeguard the cultural heritage of Somali;
- Gender equality and youth integrated into the development and implementation of capacity building activities for heritage management and promotion.

c. Recommended activities

- Establish a national framework including representatives of national and regional authorities, experts, civil society representatives and UNESCO, to plan and coordinate overall activities leading to the development of policy and legal instruments;
- Develop a national policy, strategy and plan of action with short, medium and long-term priorities on rehabilitation and protection of cultural heritage on a federal, regional and local level;
- Create or strengthen linkages between government institutions and non-governmental organizations such as community and faith based organizations;
- Develop and implement training and other skills improvement opportunities for professionals and communities and various levels of stakeholders in the culture sector;
- Persuade decision-makers and the various stakeholders about the importance of investing in cultural diversity for sustainable development, ensure the effective exercise of universally recognized human rights and freedoms, and strengthen social cohesion and democratic governance.

Priority 2: Safeguarding Somali heritage for the promotion of inclusive dialogue and peace building

Culture drives both the roots of conflict and those of peace building, hence it can play an important role in peace building efforts, bridging gaps and fostering understanding between different ethnic groups. Culture has an important peace building effect if, in its broad sense, it is made a cross cutting element in reconstruction efforts in Somalia. This priority area focuses on the integration of culture in the national development and reconstruction efforts in Somalia.

Nearly all armed conflicts in contemporary Somalia break out along clan lines. Clan identity is a cultural phenomenon that is a double edged sword, acting as both conflict escalator and de-escalator. Yet clan identities are not the basis for conflict; it is rather their deliberate manipulation that creates and exacerbates divisions. This justifies the importance of a regular and interactive discussion on culture and development. The theme of dialogue among civilizations and cultures and of a culture of peace,

have been regarded as strategic imperatives for several years. These themes are implemented particularly through the 1972, 2003 and 2005 UNESCO Conventions and underscore protection and promotion of cultural heritage as a guarantee for sustainable development. It is therefore crucial to view safeguarding and promotion of Somali cultural heritage as central to its development and reconstruction agenda.

a. Objectives

- To create awareness on the importance of protection and conservation of the cultural heritage at various levels of the Somali society;
- Facilitate the establishment of frameworks for partnership and exchange of experiences among Somali communities to promote cultural understanding, mutual respect, and shared values for peaceful co-existence;
- Support the revival of interests in Somali through community participation in collection, inventorying, preservation and conservation of material and immaterial cultural heritage.

b. Key Outputs

- A community based framework for the identification, inventorying and safeguarding of Somali cultural heritage;
- Integration of culture and cultural considerations in Somalia's national and regional development plans.

c. Recommended activities

- Organize Somali cultural festivals and cultural heritage conferences with the view of raising awareness on the importance and the role that culture can play in reconciliation and rehabilitation in Somalia;
- Showcase Somali music, poetry, dance and art to intertwine tribes and traditions and as a source of education and restoration of pride;
- Support the building of networks with local and international partners to create awareness of the rich diversity of Somali culture;
- Support the inclusion in national primary, medium and higher education curricula of cultural topics such as history and Somali culture, literature, art workshops, etc., so that Somali children and youth may gain an affinity for the culture and can be stimulated into action;

- Prepare a national inventory of the country's intangible heritage such as festival events and rituals, oral traditions, poetry and social anniversaries;
- Promote community participation in the identification, recording and protection of cultural heritage resources in Somalia;
- Promote the creation of a team of artists representing different regions, age demographics and even diaspora to create art with themes that promote positive behaviours and transfer it into digital media, TV and radio to revitalize culture, create new content and promote peaceful messages;
- Create cultural content that is relevant for Somali youth and through methods and platforms youth use such as social media, video, music and poetry. Young people can easily be trained to be creators and producers of content as well;
- Build heritage centres such as the Bomas of Kenya¹⁶⁵ could be used as a good example to showcase Somali indigenous cultures and other types of art centres to bring unity and knowledge for Somalis, especially youth and children and visiting foreign tourists.

Priority 3: Protection, safeguarding and restoration of immovable cultural property and movable cultural property

The conservation of sites and monuments can contribute to social cohesion. Reflecting on the natural and cultural wealth that belongs to all of humanity, cultural sites and monuments constitute crucial landmarks for any country. They symbolize the consciousness of States and peoples of the significance of these places and reflect their attachment to collective ownership and to the transmission of this heritage to future generations. UNESCO 1972 World Heritage Convention sets the legal framework to reach this objective.

Years of civil strife have had a disastrous effect on the immovable and movable heritage of Somalia. From rock art to constructed heritage, much of Somali heritage has suffered from effects of armed conflict

such as vandalism, damage, pillage and looting. The instability of the country has shifted community focus from the conservation and preservation of their historical and sacred sites leading to their neglect and vulnerability. As Somali seeks to reconstruct, such sites of significance will immensely improve their national pride and a sense of identity.

Along this line, a strategy for culture with regard to post-conflict and post-natural disaster countries, should build upon cultural factors in reconciliation and reconstruction processes, primarily focusing on damage assessments and operational rehabilitation, safeguarding and conservation actions, including their monitoring. In addition, efforts should be strengthened to bring and foster an integrated vision that recognizes cultural heritage both as important in its own right and as a vector for national dialogue, reconciliation and social cohesion.

a. Objectives

- To facilitate and support assessment and mapping of the conservation status and existing efforts to protect sites of national, historic, cultural or community significance;
- To contribute to the protection of immovable and movable cultural property of Somalia and, in particular, to protect its movable cultural property from illicit traffic; but also facilitate restitution of Somalia's important cultural objects;
- Support the rehabilitation, safeguarding and conservation of some of the infrastructure and facilities critical to the management of cultural heritage in Somalia.

b. Key Outcomes

- Strengthened protection of immovable and movable heritage of Somalia;
- Conservation and restoration work for sites of significance to Somalis.

c. Suggested Activities

- Carry out a comprehensive conservation and rehabilitation needs assessment study on museums, sites and monuments;

165 Bomas of Kenya is a tourist village in Langata, Nairobi. Bomas (homesteads) displays traditional villages belonging to the several Kenyan tribes. It was established by the government in 1971 as a subsidiary company of Kenya Tourist Development Corporation as a tourist attraction. It also wanted to preserve, maintain and promote rich and diverse cultural values of various tribal groups of Kenya

- Update existing inventories of immovable and movable cultural property and draw up inventories for cultural property that has not been inventoried;
- Prepare management plans for the rehabilitation, interpretation and use of the sites and infrastructure;
- Support the reconstruction of ruined monuments and historic buildings;
- Prepare an environment to facilitate the fulfilment of the requirements for the listing of major cultural sites, historic buildings and monuments to the World Heritage List;
- Facilitate the accession by Somalia to the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols (1954 and 1999) as well as to the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property and the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects.

Priority 4: Raising awareness about Somali culture internationally through the promotion of cultural industries

Of primary importance is the promotion of cultural cooperation within the Horn of Africa in promoting heritage and cultural expressions and

advocating for the inclusion of inclusive dialogue in development processes. Such interventions would contribute greatly to improve the poor international image of Somalia as well as improving the self-image amongst the Somalis. Strategic objectives should focus on two mutually reinforcing areas, namely: (i) the diversity of cultural expressions and the development of creative industries; (ii) and the promotion of pluralism and inclusive dialogue. The UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions constitutes a standard setting instrument in support of cultural diversity as conveyed by cultural activities, goods and services. Such goods and services provide the perfect opportunity for Somalia to share its cultural diversity with the world. Somalia needs support to collect, exchange and disseminate information as well as best practices concerning the protection and the promotion of cultural expressions through cultural industries.

a. Objectives

- Promote cultural exchange in the Horn of Africa as a positive step towards regional integration and cooperation;
- Contribute to the promotion of Somali culture and image as a peaceful and rich culture rather than the perceived violent and hostile culture thereby encouraging integration, investment, and opening up to other neighbouring communities in Eastern Africa;



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- Contribute to the economic development of Somalia by linking Somalia to international trade cultural markets and networks.

b. Key Outcomes

- Enhanced cultural cooperation at the national, regional and international levels to rehabilitate and develop Somali arts and culture, considering the fact that the long years of civil conflict has driven Somalia into international cultural isolation;
- Mobilization of international support for cultural programmes in Somalia.

c. Suggested Activities

- Promote cultural cooperation between Somalia and other bilateral and multilateral organizations such as IGAD, COMESA, African Union, WIPO, ICOM, ICOMOS,

ICCROM, AFRICOM, AWHF, CHDA EPA Programme for Museum Development in Africa (PMDA) and countries in the region such as Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Tanzania and Uganda;

- Promote cultural and educational exchanges between Somali artists, cultural practitioners and students of arts and culture, with their counterparts in other countries in the region and abroad;
- Promote and support the participation of Somali artists and cultural professionals in regional and international meetings, programmes, exhibitions, festivals and performances as a way of exposing and marketing Somali arts and culture;
- Facilitate the exchange of artistic productions and the circulation of artists, including through a system of 'cultural visas'.

UNESCO Recent Interventions in the Culture Sector in Somalia

Somali authorities and other actors –such as local associations and NGOs– have undertaken some activities related to Somali culture in recent years. From 2006 to 2010, UNESCO’s Addis Ababa and Nairobi offices have made the interventions listed below in the field of culture to assist Somalia rehabilitate and safeguard its cultural heritage. These actions were integrated into UNESCO’s 2012–2015 strategy for the revitalization of the Somalia Culture Sector.

2006: Cultural Needs Assessment in Somalia to:

- Analyse the situation concerning Somali cultural resources;
- Assess the needs of the country in the field of culture with a view of contributing to the overall UN/World Bank-led Somali Joint Needs Assessment (JNA)¹⁶⁶ conducted later that same year;
- Provide UNESCO with information and practical recommendations that would be the basis for its future activities concerning Somali culture.

2007: Expert meeting to validate the findings of the Cultural Needs Assessment and as part of the implementation of UNESCO Resolution 33GC/Res 67 “Strengthening of cooperation with Somalia” adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in 2005. The meeting “Rehabilitation of Somali Culture” was held in Nairobi with the participation of experts from all regions of Somalia as well as from the Diaspora communities in Djibouti, Kenya, Sweden, the UK and the USA. It recommended a set of activities, including:

- Identification and documentation of a wide range of Somali artistic and cultural expressions and traditions;
- Establishment of cultural policies;
- Rehabilitation of sites and monuments;
- Support for the revitalization of cultural organizations and the promotion of Somali culture through fairs and festivals.

2007: Expert mission to assess the conservation needs of the mosque of Zeila (Zayl’a) a 7th century mosque that is believed to have been the gateway for Islam into the Horn of Africa by request from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Somaliland. The expert mission recommended further investigation through excavation.

Financial support was provided to the Harbuur Centre in Djibouti for the reproduction of a Journal on Somali literature and culture.

2008-2009: Project on “Safeguarding traditional Somali performing arts”. Following the spirit of the 2003 Convention, this project was designed to identify traditional Somali performing arts; those that are particularly relevant in conflict resolutions in the North Eastern province in Kenya, and was funded through the Japanese Funds in Trust.

2008: Participation of a Somali expert in the regional meeting organized by the Intangible Heritage Section for States not yet party to the 2003 Convention for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Pretoria, South Africa) and contacts with the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia regarding its possible ratification of the

166 http://www.somali-jna.org/downloads/vol5_III.pdf

2003 Convention. This ratification has not yet been possible due to the constant changes in the Somali administration that have delayed the conversations among the appropriate parties.

Training and skills development projects and programmes ranging from supporting Somali artists to attending festivals and workshops in the region and internationally

2008-2009: Translation of UNESCO's Cultural Heritage Protection Handbook series (volume 1-3) into Somali, within the context of UNESCO's programme on disseminating this protection handbook in local languages.

2010: Field mission as part of partnership agreement between UNESCO and Trust for African Rock Art (TARA) to document some art sites commissioned by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Somaliland.

Important Global Landmarks Regarding Culture and Development

2013: The Hangzhou Declaration: Placing Culture at the Heart of Sustainable Development Policies – May 2013¹⁶⁷

2003: United Nations Secretary General's Report – July 2013 – A/68/266¹⁶⁸

2012: UN Think Piece on Culture and Development – May 2012¹⁶⁹

2012: Realizing the Future We Want – UN Task Team on the Post 2015 UN development Agenda – June 2012¹⁷⁰

2011: The UN General Assembly adopts Resolution 66/208¹⁷¹ on Culture and Development thus reaffirming that culture is an important factor of social inclusion and poverty eradication, providing for economic growth and ownership of development processes.

2011: United Nations Secretary General's Report – July 2011 - A/66/187¹⁷²

2010: The MDG Outcome of the Millennium Summit adopted by the UN General Assembly explicitly recognizes the contribution of culture to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to development (para. 16 and 66). For the first time, a Resolution of the UN General Assembly on Culture and Development (Res. 65/166)¹⁷³ emphasizes the role of culture in sustainable development and in the achievement

of national and international development goals, including the MDGs.

2006: The 'Culture and Development' Thematic Window of the MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F) is a ground breaking experimental investment in large scale culture and development projects supporting country-based culture and development programmes for a total amount of 95 million USD.

2005: Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions¹⁷⁴, recognizes culture as a pillar of sustainable development (Art. 13) and creates the legal framework and operational mechanisms to foster the emergence of dynamic cultural sectors in developing countries through international cooperation for development (Art. 14, 18). The 2005 World Summit Outcome¹⁷⁵, adopted by the UN General Assembly, acknowledges the diversity of the world and recognizes that all cultures contributes to the enrichment of humankind (para. 14).

2004: UNDP's 'Human Development Report Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World'¹⁷⁶ underscores how diverse and unequal the world has become. It offers the view that poverty, in its many forms, is often linked with issues of access to opportunities and knowledge that have particular impact on minority social, ethnic and religious groups. It makes the case for adopting multicultural policies respecting diversity and building more inclusive societies.

167 <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/images/FinalHangzhouDeclaration20130517.pdf>

168 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002234/223464e.pdf>

169 http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/post2015/pdf/Think_Piece_Culture.pdf

170 http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Post_2015_UNTReport.pdf

171 <http://www.cultura21.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/UNGA-66-208-EN.pdf>

172 <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Brussels/pdf/SG%20Report%20Culture%20and%20Development%20A%2066%20187.pdf>

173 <http://whc.unesco.org/uploads/events/documents/event-794-1.pdf>

174 http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=31038&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

175 <http://www.who.int/hiv/universalaccess2010/worldsummit.pdf>

176 http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr04_complete.pdf

2003: Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage¹⁷⁷ promotes international cooperation to safeguard intangible cultural heritage, constantly recreated by communities in response to their environment, and recognized as a mainspring of cultural diversity and a guarantee of sustainable development (Preamble); its scope is limited only to such heritage as is compatible with the requirements of sustainable development (Art. 2).

2001: UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity¹⁷⁸ takes forward the policy agenda set by the Stockholm Action Plan and secures global consensus through the unanimous adoption of a Declaration and concrete strategies to integrate culture into development policies and programmes.

1999: UNESCO-World Bank Intergovernmental Conference 'Culture Counts: Financing, Resources and the Economics of Culture in Sustainable Development', held in Florence, acknowledges the cultural capital as being crucial to progress in achieving sustainable development and economic growth.

1998: Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, Stockholm: establishes a new global cultural policy agenda for development to be established through international cooperation mechanisms as well as national policy initiatives in partnership with civil society as key actors to implement this new agenda.

1996: The Report of the United Nations/UNESCO World Commission on Culture and Development ('Our Creative Diversity')¹⁷⁹, a landmark in setting new goals for international cooperation and bringing in culture from the margins. It advances the view that development embraces not only access to goods and services, but also the opportunities given to people everywhere to choose a full, satisfying, valuable and valued life. Its International Agenda was set up to transform conventional development strategies.

177 <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/convention>

178 http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13179&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

179 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0010/001055/105586e.pdf>

Most Relevant Events

The following are some of the most relevant events in which culture has been recognized as fundamental for development and peace building:

2012: The outcome document of the Rio+20 conference acknowledges “the natural and cultural diversity of the world and recognize that all cultures and civilizations can contribute to sustainable development” (article 41)

2010: The MDG Outcome of the Millennium Summit adopted by the UN General Assembly explicitly recognizes the contribution of culture to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to development (para. 16 and 66).

For the first time, a Resolution of the UN General Assembly on Culture and Development (Res. 65/166)¹⁸⁰ emphasizes the role of culture in sustainable development and in the achievement of national and international development goals, including the MDGs.

2006: The ‘Culture and Development’ Thematic Window of the MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F) is a ground breaking experimental investment in large scale culture and development projects supporting country-based culture and development programmes for a total amount of 95 million USD.

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of dynamic cultural sectors in developing countries through international cooperation for development (Art. 14, 18).

The 2005 World Summit Outcome¹⁸², adopted by the UN General Assembly, acknowledges the diversity of the world and recognizes that all cultures contributes to the enrichment of humankind (para. 14).

2004: UNDP’s ‘Human Development Report Cultural Liberty in Today’s Diverse World’¹⁸³ underscores how diverse and unequal the world has become. It offers the view that poverty, in its many forms, is often linked with issues of access to opportunities and knowledge that have particular impact on minority social, ethnic and religious groups. It makes the case for adopting multicultural policies respecting diversity and building more inclusive societies.

2003: Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage¹⁸⁴ promotes international cooperation to safeguard intangible cultural heritage, constantly recreated by communities in response to their environment, and recognized as a mainspring of cultural diversity and a guarantee of sustainable development (Preamble); its scope is limited only to such heritage as is compatible with the requirements of sustainable development (Art. 2).

2001: UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity¹⁸⁵ takes forward the policy agenda set by the Stockholm Action Plan and secures global consensus through the unanimous adoption of a

180 <http://whc.unesco.org/uploads/events/documents/event-794-1.pdf>

181 http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=31038&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

182 <http://www.who.int/hiv/universalaccess2010/worldsummit.pdf>

183 http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr04_complete.pdf

184 <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/convention>

185 http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13179&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Declaration and concrete strategies to integrate culture into development policies and programmes.

1999: UNESCO-World Bank Intergovernmental conference 'Culture Counts: Financing, Resources and the Economics of Culture in Sustainable Development', held in Florence, acknowledges the cultural capital as being crucial to progress in achieving sustainable development and economic growth.

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1996: The Report of the United Nations/UNESCO World Commission on Culture and Development ('Our Creative Diversity')¹⁸⁶, a landmark in setting new goals for international cooperation and bringing in culture from the margins. It advances the view that development embraces not only access to goods and services, but also the opportunities given to people everywhere to choose a full, satisfying valuable and valued life. Its International Agenda was set up to transform conventional development strategies.

186 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0010/001055/105586e.pdf>

Basic Questionnaire Used in the Study

1. Please describe the kind of project(s) you/your organization has been involved in the past in the culture sector in Somalia.
2. Please describe challenges and lessons learnt after finalizing the project(s).
3. In which ways do you believe projects in the culture sector of Somalia could be used as a tool for peace, reconciliation, and creation of National identity?
4. In your opinion, what kind of project(s) could/should be financed to revitalize the culture sector in Somalia?
5. In your opinion, what should be the priorities for the Somali central/local authorities in order to revitalize the culture sector in Somalia?
6. What other actors could/should be involved in the revitalization of the culture sector in Somalia?
7. Which ways would you suggest in order to involve the Somali youth in the revitalization of the culture sector in Somalia?

Information Sources List of People Interviewed

UNESCO undertook the following interviews in person, telephone, Skype or Email through the basic questionnaire copied in Annex D. The place indicated is the location of the interviewee. For a complete reference of organization/post and other contact information of the interviewees see list below.

NGOs and Individuals

- 5 July 2013, Abdulkadir Ahmed Said, Cape Town, South Africa.
- 8 July 2013, Livio Sacchi, Rome, Italy.
- 10 July 2013, Ayan Mahamoud, London, UK.
- 10 July 2013, Rasna Warah, Nairobi, Kenya.
- 11 July 2013, Mark Brecke, Nairobi, Kenya.
- 12 July 2013, Steve Turner, Nairobi, Kenya.
- 17 July 2013, Zakia Hussen, Mogadishu, Somalia.
- 18 July 2013, Mohamed Abdirizak, Nairobi, Kenya.
- 20 July 2013, Ahmed Abdikarim Hersi, Mogadishu, Somalia.
- 22 July 2013, Sagal Abshir Osman and Katrina Mayers, London, UK.

- 27 July 2013, Maxamed Daahir Afrax, Djibouti, Djibouti.
- 30 July 2013, Matt Erickson and Brad Ibs, Nairobi, Kenya.
- 19-22 August 2013, Mohamed "Barwani", Hargeisa, Somaliland.

Federal and Regional Institutions

- 20 July 2013, Ahmed Abdikarim Hersi, Department of Culture and Somali Language, Directorate of Education, Culture and Higher Education, Ministry of Human Development and Public Services.
- 3 August 2013, Marian Masalah and Salah Shire Adem, Ministry of Information, Post and Telecommunication.
- 7 August 2013, Osman Mohamed, SOMAC, Mogadishu, Somalia.
- 18 August 2013, Ahmed Sheikh Jama, Minister of Information, Communication and Culture, Garowe, Puntland.
- 19-22 August 2013, Ministry of Youth, Sport and Tourism, Hargeisa, Somaliland.
- 19-22 August 2013 Ministry of Information, Culture and National Cohesion, Hargeisa, Somaliland.

Useful contacts for the somalia culture sector

The following directory includes the interviewees for this Study and other organizations/individuals working with Somali culture.

NGOs and individuals

Organization	Name	Title/profession	Tel. number	Web/email
Academy for Somali Language	Maxamed Daahir Afrax	Vice-president	+253 77 85 69 19 (Djibouti)	mdafrax@gmail.com
AU/UN Information Support Team (IST)	Steve Turner	Media Development Consultant	+254 (0) 7 19 67 12 24 (Kenya) Somalia Mobile: +252 (0) 618 577124 (Hormuud) +252 (0) 699835447 (Nationlink)	steve.turner@auunist.org
Studio.14 Consultant for IOM	Abdul Fatah Adam	Architect	+252 618 235650 (Mogadishu)	abdulfatah@studio14.co.ke
Cultivate Sports	Brad Ibs	Director	+254 (0)7 08 08 70 27 (Kenya)	www.cultivatesports.org cultivatesports@gmail.com
Dipartimento di Architettura, Università degli Studi "G. d'Annunzio" di Chieti-Pescara	Livio Sacchi	Architect / Professor	06-6872835 06-6872836 335-8271843	livio.sacchi@archiworld.it
Freelance filmmaker	Mark Brecke	Documentaries Director	+254 (0)7 26 10 74 49 (Kenya)	www.warandweddings.org balkins@hotmail.com
Freelance photographer and writer	Rasna Warah	Author of "Mogadishu then and now"	+254 (0)7 00 27 81 66 (Kenya)	rasna.warah@gmail.com
Horn HeRo	Sagal Abshir Osman	Managing Director	Tel: +44(020)3286 9474 Mobile: +447950968905 (London)	sagal.abshir@hornhero.org
Ibn Batuuta, African Cinema Centre, Art & Ubuntu Trust	Abdulkadir Ahmed Said	Filmmaker	021-788 6786 Fax: 021-788 6786 (South Africa)	bondere@yahoo.com
Kayd Somali Arts and Culture	Ayan Mahamoud	Managing Director / Program Manager of HIBF	+44 79 03 71 29 49 (UK) +252 248 75 86 (Somalia)	www.kayd.org ayaan_ashour@yahoo.co.uk ayan_mahamoud@kayd.org
National Democratic Institute (NDI)	Mohamed Abdirizak	Resident Country Director	+254 (20) 2105805, Cell: +254 (0)7 33 88 80 24 (Kenya)	www.ndi.org/somalia mabdirizak@ndi.org
People's Palace	Omar Said Bileh	Director	Djibouti	www.impetusmundum.de/pictures/7096.uhtml omarbileh@gmail.com omar_bileh@hotmail.com
Poet Nation	Matt Erickson	Director & Managing Partner	+254 (0)7 25 21 81 17 (Kenya)	www.thePoetNation.com matthew.erickson@
Redsea-online Cultural Foundation	Jama Musse Jama	President / Artistic Director of HIBF	+39 33 89 67 95 05	www.redsea-online.com jmgurey@gmail.com
Rift Valley Institute	Mark Bradbury	Horn of Africa and East Africa Regional Director	Cell: +254 (0)7 05 97 84 13 +254 (0)7 89 25 38 05 (Kenya)	www.riftvalley.net mark.bradbury@riftvalley.net

Rift Valley Institute	James Smith	Horn of Africa Programme Manager	Cell: +254 (0)7 05 97 84 13 +254 (0)7 89 25 38 05 (Kenya)	www.riftvalley.net james.smith@riftvalley.net
Somali Heritage	Sada Mire	Archaeologist	www.somaliheritage.org sada.mire@gmail.com sada_mi@hotmail.com	Somali Heritage
Somaliland Non State Actors Forum (SONSAF)	Mohamed "Barwani"	Chair	Hargeisa, Somaliland	www.sonsaf.org
The Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (HIPS)	Abdi Aynte	Director	Somalia: +252 (0) 61 853 8888 (Hormuud) Somalia: +252 (0) 690004477 (Nationlink) Kenya: +254 (0) 704212485	www.heritageinstitute.org abdi.aynte@heritageinstitute.org abdi.aynte@gmail.com
The Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (HIPS)	Zakia Hussen	Program manager	www.heritageinstitute.org zhussen@heritageinstitute.org zakia.hussen@gmail.com	The Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (HIPS)
Urban Heritage Centre	Mohamed Abdulkadir Ahmed	Architect / Planner	+252 61 8474388 +252 69 8474388 Cell: 061 8474388 / 069 8474388 (Mogadishu)	mahmed.shaan@gmail.com
Federal and Regional Institutions				
Ministry of Human Development & Public Services, Directorate of Education, Culture and Higher Education, Department of Culture and Somali Language	Ahmed Abdikarim Hersi	Director of Culture	+252 615874988 (Mogadishu, Somalia)	ahmedabdikarrin@hotmail.com
Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture, Garowe, Puntland	Ahmed Sheikh Jama	Minister		
Ministry of Information, Culture and National Cohesion, Hargeisa, Somaliland				
Ministry of Information, Post and Telecommunication	Marian Masalah and Salah Shire Adem	marian@sonna.gov.so shiresalah@gmail.com	Ministry of Information, Post and Telecommunication	Marian Masalah and Salah Shire Adem
Ministry of Youth, Sport and Tourism, Hargeisa, Somaliland				
Somali Academy of Sciences and Arts (SOMAC)	Osman Mohamed	Former Director	+252 618 519 950 Mogadishu, Somalia	ojirfe@hotmail.com

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