Somalia

PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (PAR)
A TOOL FOR TRANSFORMING CONFLICT

A case study from south central Somalia

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Acknowledgments

Finally, gratitude is extended to the communities and authorities across Galgadud, Hiran and Middle Shabelle in central Somalia, for their commitment and courage in furthering peacebuilding in protracted conflict and their openness to embrace new approaches for doing so.

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Foreword

25 years after the collapse of Siad Barre's regime, international attention has focused predominantly on containing threats from armed groups, particularly al-Shabab, and strengthening the Federal Government of Somalia. Local communities, however, are still caught in an intractable conflict system, where local drivers of conflicts, connected to competition around access to and control of life-essential resources and political power, interlink with national, regional and global engagement with the Somali crises. While statebuilding may be widely seen as a remedy for Somalia's structural instability, it will not gain traction if local clan dynamics and grievances are overlooked, and therefore may do more harm by contributing to additional layers of conflict, especially around competition over state power.

In this context, communities have largely relied upon their traditional practices to manage emerging tensions and further reconciliation. Clan elders have traditionally been responsible for conflict resolution on different levels of the clan structure at the core of the Somali social system. Impacted by nearly three decades of war, this traditional institution has come under considerable strain. Given the complex multi-layered causes of the conflicts and the ad-hoc nature of traditional conflict resolution, it has become increasingly clear that traditional systems are necessary, but not sufficient.

With the aim of supporting longer-term sustainable processes, enhancing existing capacities for peace, and incrementally building trust and collaboration between community-level conflict stakeholders, the Life & Peace Institute (LPI) has worked with its local partner Zamzam Foundation (ZZF) in adapting Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach to the context of south central Somalia. PAR, in contrast to conventional forms of research, goes far beyond collecting and analysing information. In fact, through its process character, it inherently provides the space for conflict stakeholders to reflect on and elicit their own understanding of the conflict situation, while also being faced with the perspectives of others. This understanding provides the critical foundations that are then further strengthened through incremental dialogue, starting from "single-identity" to inter-group dialogue. Dialogue then fosters interaction and collaboration, with the objective to address some of the divisive factors triggering conflict within and between communities.

The actors involved in this PAR process were able to open traditional mechanisms to new ingredients and have also contributed to critical reflections on the approach taken, thus allowing it to adapt to contextual realities. As a result, traditional conflict resolution capacities have been validated and capitalised. Such community-based peacebuilding and reconciliation processes are needed to continue to provide avenues and space for those most directly affected by conflict, and therefore constitute a critical complement to a conflict-sensitive statebuilding process.

The engagement of LPI and ZZF has rendered crucial learning opportunities on why and how such a participatory incremental approach is relevant and has led to tangible positive changes in the contexts of conflicts in three regions of south central Somalia.

The documentation and systematisation of learning shared in this publication would not have been possible without the efforts of the communities and local authorities, supported by ZZF and LPI staff accompanying this process over four years. My sincere appreciation is therefore directed to their tireless commitment and dedication to promote peaceful change in Somalia.

Charlotte Booth
Programme Manager
Life & Peace Institute

Executive Summary

This publication outlines the key processes, as well as challenges and opportunities, with implementing Participatory Action Research (PAR) in the Somali context – expanding upon the Life & Peace Institute's (LPI) own internal research and scholarship on implementing PAR in different conflict contexts. The report engages with current research on applying PAR to local peacebuilding efforts, and offers new insights from original participant and staff interviews, and findings of a summative evaluation of the first phase of LPI's Conflict Transformation and Inter-Clan Joint Resource Management (or CRM) project (implemented from March 2012 to September 2015) in central Somalia.

The report, thus, aims to examine the processes of negotiation and adaptation of applying the PAR methodology to the specific context of peacebuilding programming across south central Somalia, to explore whether PAR programming (as a methodological approach to dialogue and peacebuilding discourse) has proven effective and contributed towards de-escalating local tensions (around certain issues and in certain contexts), and if so, how it could be further adapted and standardised (across programmes and disciplines).

To date, top-down institutional approaches to peacebuilding attempted by a range of government and non-government actors have proven largely unsuccessful. As such, the aim of this report is to examine the new neo-liberal push, by international actors and domestic governments, for local agency and traditional and hybrid governance structure, as the solution for positive societal change and a way for building bridges for national and federal peacebuilding and national dialogue processes. Thus, this report hopes to examine the applicability and relevance of the PAR approach to local peacebuilding in the context of deeply-divided communities, to ensure that PAR programming (ensconced in this new development framework and its focus on local decision-making and agency) is demonstrating positive effects on the levels of tensions and violence, is strongly supported by the community, and is in line with values and conditions deemed necessary by the community for longer-lasting peace (and doing "no harm").

It is also hoped that this report will contribute to standardising the institutional practice of PAR more broadly. Examining the impact of peacebuilding projects is notoriously difficult, and the inherently open and flexible approach of PAR programming makes this no easier. Yet, findings indicate that clear guidelines and risk mitigation measures, as well as systematisation of dialogue procedures, have served to standardise both programme responses and ensured a degree of continuity in project implementation and outcome in the Somali context that has enhanced local reception of PAR programming, as well as eased the task of analysing and deciphering cross-cutting trends. LPI certainly encountered key challenges applying the PAR approach to the local Somalia context, and in attempting conflict transformation in ways that fundamentally deviate from tradi-

tional clan-based systems of conflict resolution, namely the prominence of elders in decision-making and the focus on quick-impact resolution.

Yet, findings indicate that participants were receptive to key elements (the focus on incremental and longer-term dialogue processes, the unique staggered approach to intra- and inter-clan conflict, and the focus on peace agreements). The wider inclusion of women and young people still remains a significant challenge, although significant strides were made (with all intra-clan dialogues comprising at least 15 per cent women).The findings show that despite initial scepticism and participant concerns about project gains (the lack of immediate tangible benefits and concerns about more time required for seeing visible change or peace), the majority of participants interviewed as part of an external evaluation[1] (including elders) indicated high trust in the incremental, sustained and inclusive dialogue processes.

Community members strongly support PAR programming in the project areas, noting positive changes in attitudes towards conflict resolution (its mechanisms and operators). In participant estimations, this was due to 1) strong community trust in the local implementing partners (trust established on pre-existing knowledge of the institution, and its commitment, capacity and integrity), and 2) the observed standardisation as well as flexibility in approach (its strong focus on incremental sustained dialogue and agreement formation, but also openness to holding dialogue quickly in the event of crisis situations if called for by the communities).

Participants also noted tangible effects of PAR programming. Following the first phase of programming, participants who had reported high rates of segregation between clans and low levels of clan cohesion, noted positive transformations in the attitudes and behaviours towards intra- and inter-clan conflict (its value and cost), as well as the strategies toward conflict prevention (preferring more sustained agreements to resolving underlying issues rather than quick-impact solutions). Participants reported an increase in informal engagement between clans in the business and social spheres (indicating transferrable practices of open dialogue into the informal sphere), as well as a commitment to embracing nonviolent approaches to conflict (characterised by a willingness to negotiate and engage in dialogue during periods of high tension before the conflict starts, as well as promoting nonviolent approaches once conflict had begun, either through the returning of seized property or the convening of peace committee discussions).

The decrease in the number of requested crisis interventions in the project areas since the project inception – especially in the context of increasing local conflicts and contestation across Somalia since the commencement of state formation and federalisation agendas – also points to positive programmatic outcomes. Yet, through a continuous project of risk analysis, validation and feedback systems, LPI's approach to PAR will continue to adapt to vastly changing dynamics on the ground at the local level. National statebuilding processes have certainly affected local activities, and the ongoing state formation and implementation of
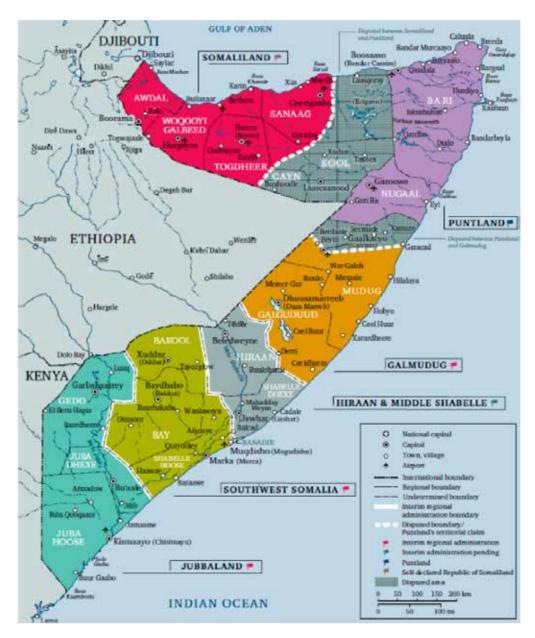
1 "Summative Evaluation of CRM Phase 1", Forcier Consulting, November 2015.

the federal project are generating new forms of conflict in addition to aggravating old clan rivalries.

Additional challenges for PAR programming more broadly come from fractured authority structures (lack of community trust in public institutions, regional administrations or the national 'state'), and high levels of clan mistrust (resulting from decades of protracted conflict and the implementation of a new federal system). The importance here is to ensure that the process remains locally-driven at every stage, that all stakeholders are involved, but that local conflict communities take the lead in identifying points of conflicts, convening dialogues, and forming and implementing peace agreements.

Introduction

"The communities are used to being told what to do and how to resolve their issues. On the contrary, in the PAR process, we ask them to tell us what they think their problem is and what their solution might be. They [the communities] are the driving force and know the solution." – Zamzam Foundation staff, male, 27 August, 2015

Somalia and administrative boundaries, 2015.
Source: Mosley J., "Somalia's Federal Future. Layered Agenda, Risks and Opportunities",
Research Paper, Chatham House, 2015.

The Life & Peace Institute's (LPI) implementation of Participatory Action Research (PAR)[2] as a peacebuilding strategy in conflict-affected contexts is part of a long institutional tradition. LPI has been applying PAR since 2007 in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where the local communities have successfully brokered agreements between pastoralists, traditional chiefs and state authorities to regulate the movements of livestock, among others[3]. Working in Somalia since the outset of the civil war in 1991 in community-driven conflict transformation, and more specifically since 2008 in south central Somalia, LPI has applied the PAR approach to local peacebuilding initiatives. This report describes LPI's expanded experience of implementing PAR in this 'new' context – Somalia.

The report draws specifically on findings from the most recent experience of implementing the first phase of a project entitled "Conflict Transformation and Inter-Clan Joint Resource Management" (CRM) – in coordination with LPI's partner the Zamzam Foundation (ZZF) – in the Somali context.[4] In addition, this report speaks to the convergence of empirical research and theory development – highlighting the empirical results, as well as the practitioner perspective of operationalising a growing literature on the use of PAR as a participatory intervention approach to peacebuilding[5]. Thus, this report attempts to highlight the strengths, weaknesses and challenges of LPI's unique approach to PAR and conflict transformation, as applied to the context of resource-based conflicts, as well as comment more broadly on implementing PAR in conflict-affected contexts. It is hoped that the findings presented in this publication will also inform wider academic research on resource-based conflicts, particularly in the context of statebuilding and violent conflict in Somalia.[6]

The publication is organised as follows: Chapter 1 gives an introductory overview of PAR and strengths attributed to it. It distinguishes between "conventional" research approaches[7] and PAR modes of engagement with communities and sets out the prospective benefits of PAR in local peacebuilding contexts. Chapter 2 describes the relevance of PAR in the conflict context of south central Somalia and sheds light on the role of LPI's partner ZZF in facilitating this process. The syncretism between the PAR and traditional ways of peacebuilding in Somalia is explored in Chapter 3. The concluding section distils key arguments of the report with reference to the opportunities, tensions, dilemmas and limits of research through participatory action in the Somalia and broader conflict-affected contexts.

2 M. E. Torre defines PAR as "a framework for creating knowledge that is rooted in the belief that the most impacted by the research should take the lead in framing the questions, design, methods, analysis and determining what products and actions might be the most useful in affecting change". Torre, M. E. 2009. 'Participatory Action Research and Critical Race Theory: Fueling Spaces for Nos-otras to Research', *Urban Review* 41(1): 106-120. For more information on LPI's understanding of PAR, please see section 2 ["Applicability of PAR in Somalia"].

3 Carol Gallo and Josaphat Musamba Bussy, "Regional Perspectives on the Liberal Peace: The Great Lakes Region of Africa," in Oliver P. Richmond, Sandra Pogodda, and Jasmin Ramovic (ed.), *Dimensions of Peace: Disciplinary and Regional Approaches*, Palgrave Macmillan (forthcoming); Carol Gallo, Tharcisse Kayira, Murhega Mashanda, and Pieter Vanholder, "Participatory Action Research in the Democratic Republic of Congo: The Case of Fizi and Uvira," (unpublished); Justine Brabant and Jean-Louis Nzewe, La houe, la vache et le fusil. Conflits liés à la transhumance en territoires de Fizi et Uvira (Sud-Kivu, RDC) : État des lieux et leçons tirées de l'expérience de LPI, Life & Peace Institute 2013.

4 Interview with ZZF and LPI Staff, August and September 2015: "Summative Evaluation of CRM Phase 1", Forcier Consulting, November 2015.

5 Luc Reychler and Thania Paffenholz. 2001. *Peacebuilding: A Field Guide*, Lynne Rienner Publishers.

6 The majority of research on the linkages between resources and conflicts have looked at Somaliland (with recent reports being produced by Academy for Peace and Development and Danish Demining Group), but Somali-wide reports are more limited, see "Scarcity of Land in Somalia: Natural Resources and their role in the Somali Conflict", Bonn International Centre for Conversation, April 2009. https://www.bicc.de/uploads/tx_bicctools/occasional_paper_III_04-09.pdf

7 PAR is distinguished from conventional research methods by its 'emancipatory orientation towards the research participants who take ownership of the research'. See Ana B. Amaya and Nicola Yeates. 2014. "Participatory Action Research: New Uses, New Contexts, New Challenges", Poverty Reduction and Regional Integration Working Paper 15-16, The Open University.

Chapter 1

PAR as an incremental and iterative peacebuilding approach

PAR involves more than ensuring participation in data collection. It is a full relinquishing of control of the research process and relinquishing the extractive nature of researcher/researched relations – in the setting of agendas and ownership of results.[8] PAR is complex and non-linear and sits uneasily with more conventional models of research, as well as often with donors' preferences for clearly identifiable accountable persons, the exigencies of tangible research uptake and impact "deliverables"[9] during what are usually relatively short research project lifespans. Yet, given the observed ineffectiveness of top-down approaches to state and peacebuilding, engaging with processes of upstream social change has become not only necessary, but also strongly pushed for by international actors and communities, especially in the context of emerging states.[10]

The premise and applicability of the PAR approach to peacebuilding lies in the "everyday" understanding of peacebuilding, i.e. including survival strategies and perceptions of peace, security and change at the local level in broader programming to ensure local support and broader sustainable change and peace.[11] At the heart of this discourse about peacebuiliding in people's everyday lives are issues of formal and informal convergence, understanding the importance of hybrid peace governance structures. Such structures involve local actors, traditional processes of conflict resolution and the historical memory of past conflict that ensure that such peace processes are context-sensitive and legitimate as well as cohesive, and able to effect change in the wider peacebuilding sphere at the more formal and institutionalised level. The focus on inclusive, bottom-up approaches marks a break from more conventional accounts of peacemaking, traditionally male-dominated and institutional.[12]

1. Building a PAR approach in Somalia

This section briefly synthesises the key processes through which PAR aims to transform conflict in the Somali context. The process leading to the development of a PAR-based project is outlined in-depth in LPI's PAR Handbook.[13] The handbook guided the initial construction of the Somalia programming – providing a theoretical set of criteria for contexts, in which PAR implementation is feasible and justified, as well as good practices for PAR approach to peacebuilding.

It is important to note that the PAR approach has largely been used in post-conflict settings, and that most of the theorising has focused on these examples. Somalia comprises a context of ongoing conflict. Nonetheless, as findings suggest (and previous literature confirms) PAR's conflict-sensitive core, and the high adaptability of its central tenets[14], may actually serve a particularly pronounced

8 Andrea Cornwall and Rachel Jewkes. 1995. "What is Participatory Research?" Soc Sci Med 41, 12: 1667-1776; Ana B. Amaya and Nicola Yeates. 2014. "Participatory Action Research: New Uses, New Contexts, New Challenges", Poverty Reduction and Regional Integration Working Paper 15-6, The Open University.

9 Direct benefits seen by the participants or the organisation from a particular action.

10 Kenneth C. Upsall. 2014. "State Building in Somalia in the Image of Somaliland: A Bottom-Up Approach", Student Pulse 6 (3).

11 Roger MacGinty. 2014. "Everyday Peace: Bottom-up and local agency in conflict-affected societies." Security Dialogue 45 (6): 548-564; Thania Paffenholz. 2015. "Unpacking the local turn in peacebuilding: a critical assessment towards an agenda for future research", Third World Quarterly 36 (5): 857-874.

12 "Key Forums Lack Women's Presence, Speakers Stress during Security Council Open Debate on Conflict Prevention, Resolution in Africa", 7658th Meeting, Security Council, 28 March 2016

13 Life & Peace Institute. "Participatory Action Research for Conflict Transformation: A Handbook Combining Inquiry, Dialogue and Collaboration", 2014, unpublished document.

14 Supporting clearly-defined strategies for engagement and expanding upon existing peace infrastructures, while pressing forward principles of inclusion and a "building-blocks", or incremental, approach. LPI handbook.

and transformative role in conflict-affected contexts.[15] As the finds of this study suggest, in cases of protracted conflict, and particularly in the case of authoritarian or highly-centralised regimes where the public space is limited, PAR programming provides a safe alternative space for reflecting on and dialoguing about identified divisive issues. Such spaces are essentially informal but legitimate, where actors can dialogue about contentious issues even when negotiations stall at the more formal decision-making level.[16]

PAR is distinguishable from other "conventional" research methodologies by virtue of research objective and the process by which it is carried out.[17] It starkly differs from "extractive research" by ensuring all data is fed back to the participants or research subjects.[18] Participatory research is in theory not a specific research method but an orientation or approach to research based on a commitment to egalitarianism, pluralism and interconnectedness in the research process. Thus, a guiding principle of PAR is that "researchers" (i.e. civil society facilitators) and social actors (traditionally the objects of research) join forces in collective research and analysis, whereby both are simultaneously active subjects of the research and the knowledge is analysed and validated collectively.[19] PAR, as Kindon et al. suggests, "emphasises dialogic engagement with co-researchers, and the development and implementation of context appropriate strategies oriented towards empowerment and transformation at a variety of scales".[20]

This approach is based on the assumption that such a collective effort towards research and analysis will reflect reality more accurately and support local ownership of the research. It is expected that this will jointly enhance the applicability and relevance of the research, as well as prospects for successful and impactful programming. The foundational assumption is that supporting participants in a collective research process to see problems from various actors' perspectives leads not only to a more holistic understanding and more integrated response (to reduce conflict) but also increases the chances that it will actually be applied and have an impact.[21] Based on these assumptions, PAR has become a core component of the conflict transformation school of peacebuilding[22], rather than that of conflict management.[23]

The particular focus on "conflict transformation", as implemented by LPI, marks a strategic shift in peacebuilding efforts, and PAR approaches to peacebuilding more broadly. Not only does it move away from the focus on quick impact conflict management or resolution initiatives to more proactive change and conflict prevention approaches, but more ambitiously, it sees PAR as a direct conduit for ensuring more sustained transformation in how communities view and engage in conflict, its eruption, manifestations and resolution. The emphasis is placed on empowering communities and promoting ownership of the process, in order to analyse complex problems and generate sustainable, suitable and legitimate solutions. Providing the parties to the conflict with an opportunity to engage in intra and inter-group enquiry provides them with a safe temporal and physical space for transforming their relationships from oppositional to collaborative. As such, the PAR process gradually builds up a relation of trust between

15 For an introduction, see Johannsen A. M. 2001. "Participatory Action-Research in Post-Conflict Situations: The Example of the War-Torn Societies Project". Berlin: Berghof Foundation; Moore, Kathryn. 2013. "Critical Participatory Action Research as a Potential Intervention and Approach in Conflict Transformation Processes". Working Group on Peace, Conflict and Education. Columbia University blog. Accessible online at http://blogs.cuit.columbia.edu/peace/2013/09/03/156/

16 Jarg Bergold and Stefan Thomas. 2012. "Participatory Research Methods: A Methodical Approach in Motion", Forum: Qualitative Social Research.

17 Cornwall and Jewkes, pp. 1667-1676.

18 Ibid

19 Luc Reychler and Thania Paffenholz, "Peacebuilding: A Field Guide", p. 272-280.

20 Kindon, S. L., Pain, R., & Kesby, M. 2007. Participatory action research approaches and methods: connecting people, participation and place. Routledge studies in human geography, 22. London: Routledge.

21 See LPI handbook.

22 Conflict transformation can be defined as an approach "to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships". John Paul Lederach, Defining Conflict Transformation. Accessible online at http://restorativejustice.org/10fulltext/lederach.html. LPI understands conflict transformation as follows: "conflict transformation work is based on an understanding that conflict is a natural part of societies. There is a potential for both constructive and destructive change. It also builds on the premise that peace can only be achieved through the active involvement of the local communities themselves".

23 Jacob Bercovitch. 1985. "Third Parties in Conflict Management: The Structure and Conditions of Effective Mediation in International Relations". International Journal 55 (4); Burton, John W. 1990. Conflict Resolution and Prevention. London: Macmillan.

the conflict transformers, i.e. civil society organisations facilitating the process, and the different stakeholders, through regular communication.

Broadly, PAR in conflict transformation[24] focuses on addressing conflicting relationships at their root – bringing conflicting sub-clans and neighbouring clans to the negotiating table in open dialogue – stressing inclusion and sustained engagement, and seeking solutions for local conflicts at the lowest level in order to address the underlying conflict drivers. The approach builds on the assumption that the focus on such local peacebuilding will not only enhance social cohesion at the local level through increased communication between community actors but also entrench trust between communities and their respective authorities. PAR implementation aims to 1) facilitate sustainable mechanisms to transform a situation of violence into a situation of peace (including a framework for dialogue between stakeholders), and 2) measure and adjust the effectiveness and relevance of the process through an intricate system of feedback. First, the research process transforms mistrust between stakeholders into constructive, cooperative inquiry. Second, the process includes a collaborative design of action plans to ameliorate issues identified by the community as problematic.
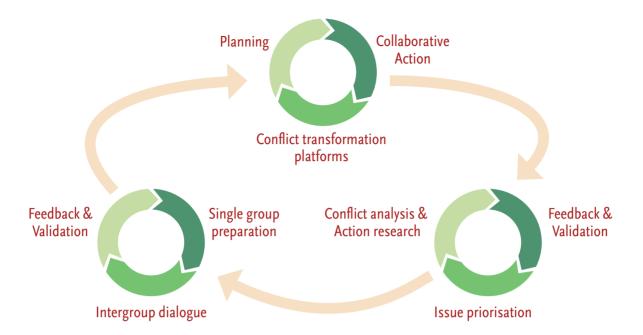
2. A step-by-step process: introduction to PAR's participatory building-blocks

Much conflict resolution/transformation-related literature emphasises the importance of hybrid peace structures, i.e. the integration of customary and formal instruments of conflict resolution and the strengthening of grassroots capacities for peace, as necessary for finding a sustainable solution to local conflicts.[25] The process described below was designed to identify the sources of these conflicts, gather sufficient information for negotiation and planning, organise and empower the parties in preparation for negotiation, and bring the conflicting parties together to seek suitable, legitimate and sustainable solutions.

The initial phase of the project is divided into three stages of process: data collection (and validation), dialogue, and finally agreement formation. Certain aspects of each stage are iterative in order to ensure flexibility in approach to changing dynamics on the ground, moving back and forth between research and action-based programming on a continuous monitoring of the context.[26] A group could go through several rounds of dialogue before reaching agreement, and regular joint risk and security analyses are conducted to inform this process.[27] All parties involved are engaged first separately and then incrementally brought together, in a process of analysing the multiplicity of interpretations of conflict causes, consequences, and the identification of constructive actions for the future.

The skeleton of the process is similar to that which was implemented by LPI in the DRC. In DRC, the cooperation with three local partners (rather than one), and the complexities in terms of security conditions and regional/transnational conflict dimensions, certainly made inter-group dynamics nuanced and multi-layered, sometimes difficult to ascertain interests and conflict triggers. These

24 See LPI's website: http://life-peace.org/approach/conflict-transformation/conflict-trans-formation-concept-intro/. The proposal is to build 'long-term infrastructure' for peacebuilding by rebuilding destroyed relationships, focusing on reconciliation within society and the strengthening of society's peacebuilding potential. Thania Paffenholz and Christoph Spurk. 2006. 'Civil Society, Civic Engagement, and Peacebuilding", Social Development Papers, Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction.

25 Oliver Richmond, "Failed Statebuilding: Intervention, the State, and the Dynamics of Peace Formation" (Yale University Press, 2014); Roger MacGinty, "International Peacebuilding and Local Resistance: Hybrid Forms of Peace" (Palgrave Macmillan 2015).

26 LPI Handbook, p. 27

27 Ibid, p. 2

The PAR process, taken from LPI, PAR handbook 2014.

dimensions – including different local structures, not based on clans, and historical precedent for open dialogue – certainly affected reception as well as efficiency of PAR programming in the Congolese context.

Stage I – Data Collection, Analysis and Validation

> *"We designed the programme to gather information from the community, to return the information to the community and then for the community and project staff to jointly agree on the problems. This is followed by intra- and inter-clan dialogues. The inter-clan is conducted so as to have a common viewpoint by the clan and finally come up with an agreement. The project only facilitates the dialogue, and the clan members develop the agreement".* – LPI staff, male, November 2015

Stage I constitutes the initial stage of inquiry, including rigorous contextual analysis to identify project intervention sites and to understand the operating local mechanism (past successes) and opportunities for local reconciliation, providing the rationale, and introducing the project and scope to the community for buy-in. The process of first establishing local support and then proceeding with data collection[28] and validation, where issues are prioritised, ensures buy-in at all local sublevels. This initial phase establishes community linkages and trust. Data is collected on the local conflict dynamics (the most relevant issues pertaining to resource-related conflict) in the target areas, findings which are then validated and then form the foundation for dialogues between conflicting clans. The selection and applicability of PAR to resource management and resource-related conflicts will be discussed further in Chapter 2.1. This phase is intended to lead

28   Data were collected, by ZZF and LPI staff with the help of research assistants from the community, through focus group discussions and key informant interviews with community members, local authorities and representatives of local civil society. Interviews and discussions were facilitated by a predesigned questionnaire with open and closed-ended questions. The original data collection was done in Somali and then translated to English. Data was cleaned and coded by summarising, synthesising, sorting and labelling key issues emerging from the responses. Data analysis relied on the actors/people, issues/problems, dynamics/process analytical framework.
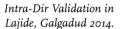
to inclusive interactions between representatives of key clans and authorities, building towards the development of locally-owned agreements on the management of water resources.

Stage II – Dialogue

The next stage of the process consists of holding intra- and inter-clan dialogues in order to generate common agreements and joint action plans for addressing causes of conflict. Based on baseline studies, conflict dynamics construed as "inter-clan" often originated in intra-clan disputes and fractions. During intra-clan dialogues, even small-scale issues – relating to the appointment of clan representatives and elders – became hugely divisive.

Intra-clan dialogues

The focus on solving intra-clan disputes has been vastly overlooked in previous peacebuilding efforts, although it is fundamental for providing opportunities for parties to develop internal consistency, resolve internal differences, strengthen their negotiating positions and balance power at the negotiation table.[29] Prioritising intra-clan dialogues, in particular, urges clans to assess the issues affecting the internal dynamics before engaging more broadly in dialogues with other clans. The assumption is that focusing first on addressing intra-clan issues would have positive effects not only on individual clans, but on their engagement with other clans, and that sub-clans would be more open and willing to talk freely, and engage in heated but constructive discussions The theory of change is as such:

Intra-Dir Validation in Lajide, Galgadud 2014.

16

"If stakeholders, working within their own identity groups, can establish agreement around their understanding of the stakes and the bigger picture of the conflict in question, then they will be better prepared to engage in dialogue and work with other stakeholder groups, because they have had a constructive experience exploring and addressing many of the same issues within the relative safety of their own group".[30]

During the CRM project, nonetheless, sub-clans were easier to convene in part because of the strong sense of the "collective", that the whole clan is branded by the actions of one sub-clan or individual, which motivates people to discuss and take action. One salient point that came out from the research was the sense that revenge killings were usually perpetuated by an individual that often acts on behalf of the clan to instigate or replicate to violence, and that the clan collectively feels obliged to protect individual(s), which would trigger more widespread collective violence. On the other hand, when situations intensify or deteriorate, the clan often has a common overall political vision that brings sub-clans together.

The issue of commonality and family were motivating factors for bringing sub-clans together, as they constitute points of congruence that participants indicated were less present between different clans. The following focus on inter-clan dialogues aimed to draw out these issues of commonality. However, as will be detailed, issues regarding the pre-eminence of elder authority and compensation for clans' offences remained hindrances to dialogue at the inter-clan level. This will be discussed more in-depth in the last section on lasting challenges for PAR implementation in the Somali context.

Inter-clan dialogues

Intra-Habar Gedir dialogue in Mataban: Habar Gedir elders convened to discuss the core and contentious issues that continue to hinder the ongoing dialogue and negotiation processes.

RESULTS: Habar Gedir clan expressed full commitment to the dialogue; the community accepts liability for the atrocities committed by their clansmen against Hawadle and agree that resolution of this issue (including compensation) is necessary for entering further dialogue; the community agreed to refrain from any provocative actions that could create tension; the elders will take the responsibility to mobilise the clan; agreement on inter-clan reconciliation meetings planning.

30   Ibid, p. 37.

Once clans have opened up dialogue on resolving issues affecting them, inter-clan dialogues are held between conflicting clans to explore points of mutual agreement and to devise an action plan for resolving grievances. Such agreements are often reached through the establishment of a shared committee to manage resources and through a conscious decision to cease hostilities, whether through reconciliation, the return of property, demobilisation of clan militias, removal of roadblocks, and the establishment of permanent inter-clan committees. LPI's approach offers communities a sustainable solution by not only equipping them with the skills to resolve a single conflict episode but empowering them through local ownership and observed social change, to address future conflicts in a transformative manner. Inter-clan dialogues proved more difficult in comparison to convening intra-clan dialogues, as it proved more challenging to bring conflicting groups together and ensuring the inclusion of women and youth.

Inter-group dialogue in Jowhar, March 2015: Consisting of 195 clan members (47 clan elders, 36 youth, 26 men, 20 religious leaders, 24 local administration, 23 women, 19 civil society representatives) from different local clans from Jowhar and Mahaday (Abgal, Shiidle, Gal'jel,Mobileen, Makanne, Jarerweyne, Hawadle and Habar Gedir). The clans agreed to:

- form a peace council/committee comprising of all clans and stakeholders that will proactively address all conflict issues among and between communities and pave way for the implementation of peace agreement.

- impose stiffer penalties on those violating the peace, more specifically on all rapists, revenge killers, extortionists, land grabbers, etc.

- establish joint mechanisms for sharing resources by an all-clan committee with the local administration and other relevant stakeholders. Mechanisms will serve the residents, in particular the pastoralists and farmers groups.

- jointly advocate for inclusivity in the ongoing regional state formation initiative and educate their clan members on the negative effect of the ethnic polarisation. Here, community participation would be sought at the grassroots level for more awareness-raising.

- encourage intermarriage between the clans in order to revive it as a means for strengthening and building solid relationships between clans.

Crisis interventions

Crisis interventions[31] proved unexpected additional entry points for LPI and ZZF, whereby dialogues are convened immediately to de-escalate conflict in the event of an unforeseen outbreak of violence, bringing both parties back to the negotiating table in order to cease hostilities. LPI and ZZF only support such crisis interventions in the following contexts: within the target areas, in instances in which intra- or inter-clan fighting occurs regarding a dispute over resource management, and when assistance is directly requested by community elders/leaders. Often such experiences are fruitful, allowing community elders and programme staff to reflect on potential gaps in project activities and re-prioritise issues. The request from communities to support such crisis interventions indicates the degree of community trust in LPI's local partner ZZF.

> **Crisis intervention in Hiran (between January and June 2014)**
>
> LPI and ZZF carried out a crisis intervention in Mataban between sub-clans of Habar Gedir (RerIyow) and Hawadle (Agoon), where conflict was ongoing over the payment of ransom for a clan member. ZZF held talks with the Hawadle and Habar Gedir clans separately in Mataban and Bergadid villages and then convened a joint inter-clan dialogue in Mataban. While the ZZF/LPI team was not allowed in the meeting hall during the actual deliberation, they were invited to the closing ceremony, briefed by the elders, and thanked for organising the meeting and bringing together the warring communities.
>
> RESULTS: Resolutions included an immediate ceasefire between the two communities, and mutual acceptance of liability for damages caused by Hawadle and Habar Gedir. ZZF worked with communities to disseminate the message of peace, and peace delegations were sent to Mataban and Bergadid to raise awareness.

Stage III – Agreements and platforms

Whilst the process is nonlinear, generating common agreement on contentious issues and planning on conflict management strategies constitutes Stage III of PAR. Thus, Phase 2 of LPI's CRM project, following consolidation of the dialogues (and a series of sessions that fed-back the content of proposed action plans to the clan's wider communities), will support the establishment of inter-community peacebuilding platforms and the development of action plans to be implemented, in the hopes of forging an agenda for working towards peace.

Participants are particularly expectant of the resource-sharing agreements[32] having indicated the need for clear and binding strategies.

31 LPI understands "crisis" here as a sudden, time-limited and intense outbreak of violence which requires a quick intervention and solution.

32 'CRM Summative Evaluation', Forcier Consulting, November 2015

"The object was achieved by 50 per cent because clans come together and talk about how to solve the conflicts and made agreements to stop the conflicts, return back the properties. However, they have still not achieved the sharing of the local resources. We are still in the first phase of stopping conflict. The sharing of the resource issue will come after the other issues have been resolved". – Local authority, Balanbale (Galgadud)

Inter-clan peace agreement in Ina-Gibile village (Galgadud):
In mid-December 2014, the project team in conjunction with the local community representatives organised heterogeneous dialogue for Marehan and Dir in Ina-gibile (a strategic village between Balambale, Herale and Abudwak districts). The location was seen as a convenient dialogue site for both clans to access and particpate. The facilitators (ZZF/LPI team) organised separate meetings for the two clans before the actual deliberation as per the Somali custom. Marehan, for example, used this opportunity to rehearse the discussion agenda and resolve some outstanding differences between two of their sub-clans (Eli and Wagardac).

Joint agreement to:

- A permanent ceasefire of revenge killings and livestock raiding, and formation of joint inter-clan committee.

- Accept to live harmoniously under a "Nabad dhab ah" or genuine peace (interact on the social and economic level) and to end the geographical divides between clans. (This includes separation of armed clan militias and absorption of the same in the administration forces of the three districts, as well as sub-clans and families taking full responsibility and leading the implementation of the ceasefire as there are the first victims and perpetrators in case of conflict.)

- Promise to sit down again in three-month time, hosted by Marehan clan in Abudwak district, to discuss implementation of agreement/modalities of sharing resources and compensation mechanisms aimed at restoring the long lost trust with other neighbouring clans in the region and extend the peace agreement to engage others in constructive dialogue to strengthen and develop more collaboration between communities living and sharing resources in Galgadud region.

The absence of legal regulations or local government oversight for how local resources will be shared poses additional challenges for PAR implementation, and will require particular caution and negotiation during Phase 2 of programming.

Inter-clan Dialogue (Marehan and Dir) in Ina Gibile village, Galgadud 2015.

Women from Marehan clan witnessing the agreement and encouraging men to choose peace.

3. Context-tailored challenges and gaps

Some key components of the process have raised issues for facilitating open dialogue and have required further negotiation by LPI in coordination with ZZF. During the CRM summative evaluation, participants questioned:

- The limited length of such dialogues (three to four days), the perception being that such dialogues were too short to deal with the multitude of issues and bring genuine reconciliation. They suggested that such short timelines may prove to be counter-productive in achieving more sustainable peace.

- The applicability of peace agreements (ceasefires) formed between local clans – given the lack of historical precedent and reliance on such agreements – and noted scepticism that they would be respected in the long-term, although others indicated comfort in the tangible nature of such agreements.

- The role of the local authorities, equipped to endorse the agreements, work with the community representatives in publicising and overseeing adherence to the reconciliation agreement, and support the community in its implementation. Also, it should be noted that many participants perceived ZZF as a neutral, third party mediator in such negotiations, rather than just a facilitator or advisor.

Chapter 2

The Somali context: a conducive environment for a PAR-based project

1. Resource-based conflicts, a strategic focus

The initial phase of the CRM project, implemented from March 2012 to September 2015, engaged target communities in a dynamic process of PAR that aimed to transform relationships (attitudes and practices) to enable co-management of local resources. Initial scoping and baseline studies conducted by LPI and ZZF indicated that access to, and competition over, water and other resources are the primary causes of conflict in the central regions of Somalia.[33]

Water Point in Mataban, Hiran.

According to participants of the CRM project, the largest hindrances to local peacebuilding and successful resource management are 1) the lack of effective and equitable systems for local authorities to manage their affairs and share resources, and 2) the incapacity of clans and authorities in these areas to overcome mistrust and join forces to develop such arrangements for a shared, equitable and sustainable management of resources.[34]

Such conflicts largely occur over misunderstandings regarding communal land ownership, and often between pastoralists and agro-pastoralists, as the use

33 "Summative Evaluation of CRM Phase 1", conducted by Forcier Consulting, November 2015.

34 Ibid.

of water sources and grazing land is managed and controlled by clans and sub-clans. While not a new phenomenon, experts estimate that Somali conflicts over land turned particularly violent following the corruption of the traditional conflict mediation system (based on respect and reciprocity rather than power or justice) by Siad Barre's power politics.[35]
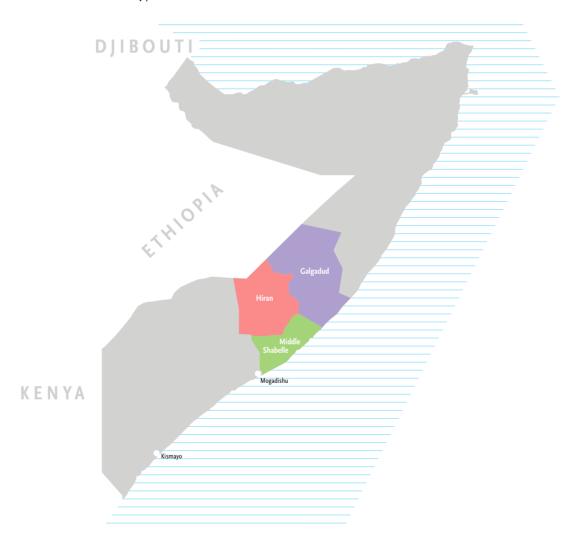

Mataban Town, Hiran.

Since the civil war in the 1980s and the collapse of the Barre regime in 1991, the environment of statelessness, lineage loyalties and patronage politics has led to decades of land grabbing, uneven development (the exclusion of certain clans from land and water rights), and the general neglect of rural economies. Such neglect and exclusionary practices continue to occur in a context of increasing competition over natural resources (water, grazing and farm land) and the increasing importance of the livestock sector for livelihoods (with about 60 percent of the total population dependent on livestock).[36]

Poor demarcation of clan borders and easy access to weapons has certainly exacerbated resource-based conflicts, and the federalisation process risks politicising these conflicts through the new framework for allocating resources and demarcating borders. Yet, now, given limited government capacity and reach, such resource-based conflicts remain largely locally-contested. While resource-based conflicts are particularly contentious and complex in south central Somalia, given overlapping authority structures, the majority of the research has been conducted on land conflicts in northern territories, Somaliland and Puntland.[37]

35 "The Scarcity of Land in Somalia Natural Resources and their Role in the Somali Conflict", Occasional Paper, Bonn International Centre for Conversion, April 2009, p. 8; Ken Menkhaus, "Conflict Assessment in Northern Kenya and Somaliland", February 2015.

36 Holleman, C. F., "The Socio-economic Implications of the Livestock Ban in Somaliland", USAID, 2002; Peter Little, Somalia: Economy Without A State (African Issues, 2003).

37 See for instance, Markus Hoehne, "Resource conflict and militant Islamism in the Golis Mountains in Northern Somalia", Review of African Political Economy, 2014; Tobias Hagmann, "Reclaiming the City: Land Conflicts in post-war Hargeisa". Talk given at the lecture series Violent conflicts over land in contemporary Africa at the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala on 22 January, 2014. Accessible online at http://www.nai.uu.se/events/multimedia/22-jan-2014-hagmann/.

For PAR programming, the intervention point (i.e. resource-based conflicts) was hugely important, as currently apolitical, and where the outcomes were not hotly contested. PAR programming does not work well in highly-politicised contexts, where power, authority and hierarchical structures risk dominating and corroding the community-driven processes. Instead, PAR programming aims to build social cohesion and resilience by addressing the underlying conflict triggers at the lowest level (through incremental dialogue and support to relevant peace-building actions emerging through the dialogues), with hopeful implications for more broad-based influence at the regional and national level processes. Sites in Hiran, Middle Shabelle and Galgadud (central Somalia) were selected as experiencing high levels of local resource-based clan conflicts (consistent in severity and continuity).

2. Zamzam Foundation as a PAR facilitator

The selection of local partners has proved critical to successful PAR implementation in Somalia. LPI's PAR handbook indicates how knowledge of and experience with conflict transformation, training skills in basic third-party facilitation or

mediation skills, access to and mobility within the different stakeholder groups, including the authorities, and ability to assess the conflict sensitivity of different program actions are critical fundamental capacities for facilitating PAR[38]. The Somali context demonstrated the importance of the skills training in peacebuilding given by LPI[39], but the absolute necessity for the local partners' strong links with community actors, especially as NGOs continue to face certain challenges regarding partiality in the Somali context (suspicions that NGOs are either aligned with local or regional authorities or favour certain locations and clans). As one of the largest Islamic charities active across Somalia, ZZF's solid record of development and service provision and strong network in each of the target areas – as manifested through the strong mutual trust that has developed between ZZF and communities – provided the organisation with the necessary foundation for facilitating such PAR processes.[40]

Participants to the project found the relation between ZZF's provision of water services and the organisation's involvement in discussions of resource management pertinent and logical and agreed that ZZF's well-established and respected presence in service delivery, in building schools, livelihood assistance and WASH programmes eased their transition into the peacebuilding sector. There was a strong sense, as one participant indicated, that "ZZF truly means well and really wants peacebuilding to take place between the two clans"[41]. Participants noted how ZZF project successes elsewhere – including the building of sixteen schools so far – provided ZZF with the legitimacy and reputation to peacebuilding (as schools were seen by participants as structures for peace).[42]

In order to mitigate any potential confusion or misconceptions about ZZF's mission and mandate, or expectations of material incentives (food or money in exchange for participation), the project paid particular attention to communicating transparently and consistently with all stakeholders throughout the implementation. A review of the project's literature reveals that ZZF staff disseminated written, concise and clear introductions and ongoing reassurance of the project mandate.[43] LPI and ZZF also ensured community buy-in at every stage of the process, ensuring that a clear line of communication was established and sustained between the staff and stakeholders. At no point did local communities withdraw consent for the project, either disagree to the common action plan or show reluctance to continue to participate.

Local reports and evaluation responses confirm that ZZF's leading role, visible on-the-ground presence and their demonstrated skills in facilitating intra-and inter-clan dialogues, has been essential for the outcomes of the project so far. The aim of CRM is to not only reduce the incidents of conflict in the areas (or at least evidence of positive conflict de-escalation or engagement) but also to increase the capacity of civil society organisations in conducting conflict transformation interventions.

> *"We are now able to independently undertake the PAR project without LPI. However, doing it together is always better. If we could not undertake PAR pro-*

38 LPI, PAR Handbook 2014.

39 ZZF established the peacebuilding unit (currently comprising 14 staff members, in an organisation of 500 staff and volunteers) and has since started mainstreaming conflict assessments and analyses in its WASH and education programmes, a "Do No Harm" approach to its aid delivery projects, such as food distribution or water borehole management that has helped to reduce the potential of conflicts over aid resources.

40 As one of the largest Islamic charities active across Somalia, ZZF is primarily known in Somalia as a development and relief organisation. After struggling to implement infrastructural and development projects in the context of protracted conflict over resources, in August 2012, ZZF collaborated with LPI to conceptualise the scope of the CRM project and integrated peacebuilding components into community-based development efforts.

41 Elder participant's words, quoted by ZZF on August 27, 2015.

42 "Summative Evaluation of CRM Phase 1", conducted by Forcier Consulting, November 2015.

43 'CRM evaluation', Forcier Consulting, October 2015.

cess, going forward, it would mean they have been holding our hands. But this has been genuine empowerment". – ZZF staff, male, August, 2015

"So in a way, ZZF has been the driving force until now, but after the development of the action plan it becomes a community-driven project. More specifically, ZZF has been a driving force in terms of providing schedule and financial assistance to bring it together. But the agenda of the peace is driven by the communities." – ZZF staff, male, August 2015

In addition, ZZF's strong relationships with the authorities in each project site facilitated positive reception of activities by all key stakeholders. One of the key project aims has been to improve lines of communication between local government authorities and clans, and LPI and ZZF staff engaged local administrations at all levels. For instance, Middle Shabelle Deputy Governor of Social Affairs extended his heartfelt thanks to ZZF for demonstrating its support and hard work in bringing conflicting clans together and developing relevant and feasible local solutions. They were the first point of contact. Once approval was garnered from the local administration, LPI and ZZF staff would proceed to the local communities. Also, in certain cases, with the approval of all parties, local authorities would be invited to sit in on dialogues and serve as third party mediators.

ZZF & LPI Team in Shabelle River.

In addition, certain ZZF development programming was rolled out in conjunction with dialogue programming. According to staff perceptions[44], such ZZF activities – developing structures of peace, whether schools, mosques, etc., which built trust between the community and project implementers, and between project implementers and local authorities – led to greater community support, dispelling any suspicions of partiality and providing visible and tangible benefits.

44 "Summative evaluation of CRM Phase 1", Forcier Consulting, October 2015. Patrick Hutchinson, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), p. 8.

"We thought that it would help all districts in the region. We were awaiting a lot of development. Although the foundation has carried out a lot of development work in the region we were awaiting more. We need more mosques and wells. Also, motors for the wells". – Local authority, Bergadid (Hiran)[45]

"The challenges of administration were overcome by giving time to the process of relationship building. The community leaders were used to get the administration on board. In Galgadud, for instance, there was drought and the ZZF gave water to 3,000 families, and we lobbied for aid from other humanitarian organisations". – LPI staff[46]

This has shown positive project outcomes, for instance, Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a (ASWJ) and local communities are currently working together to approach issues of resource-sharing jointly, and the outcomes of agreements are being honoured by both parties.

45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.

Chapter 3

Syncretism between PAR and traditional Somali peacebuilding

Bottom-up processes[47] to conflict prevention or resolution are not new to the Somali context, and indeed are strongly rooted in the clan-based traditional system and approach to conflict resolution (the strong commitment to locally-owned and consensus-based decision-making), something that has been alluded to by academics in discussing 'pastoral democracy'.[48]

In an initial baseline survey[49] conducted in the three project regions of Galgadud, Hiran and Middle Shabelle, respectively 73 per cent, 68 per cent and 64 per cent of surveyed respondents agreed that there was a strong foundation for peacebuilding, that there were routine efforts to bring conflicting parties together and engage in dialogue as a means for addressing and resolving their conflict. In addition, respectively 61 per cent, 85 per cent and 79 per cent of these respondents indicated that traditional practices guided these peace processes. In most cases, elders set the rules and norms that are binding and respected by the community in strict accordance to *Xeer*, the traditional system's focus on oral traditions and dialogue through a set of social institutions and customs. When parties violate *Xeer*, revenge attacks occur.[50] It is evident that while the role of traditional institutions is not as formalised in south central as it is in Somaliland and Puntland with the *Guurti* houses (the Upper House of the parliament consisting of an elders council), they still remain highly respected and trusted, especially in the field of conflict resolution.

> *"Somalis were born under a tree and in our culture peace meetings take place under a tree because it's more comfortable, more convenient and 'enjoyable' when it is done like that"*. – Female participant to Ina Gibile inter-clan roundtable, Galgadud, December 2014

> *"We are the community leaders and peacemakers, we shall never get tired of going to solve issues affecting the community"*. – Male Nabadoon (peacemaker), Middle Shabelle, June 2014

Therefore, it appears that the flexible and conflict-sensitive approach of PAR complements traditional methods of conflict resolution. Traditionally, conflicts were resolved by a series of mechanisms: the convening of elders of the two clans to hold a dialogue and negotiate for middle ground (often the paying of compensation and return of stolen property), the intervention by a third clan to mediate between the two conflicting clans, the mobilisation of security forces by local administrations to stop fighting between clans, fostering inter-marriage between

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47   There are various bottom-up techniques or activities, but bottom-up processes generally refer to the practice of building peace at the grassroots level, through local structures and not through political elites or institutions.

48   I. M. Lewis, A Modern History of the Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa (Ohio University Press, 2002).

49   Baseline data collection was conducted in Galgadud in February 2013, in Hiran in September 2013, and in Middle Shabelle in June 2014.

50   The purpose of this baseline survey was to understand and measure community perception of the conflicts prior to the implementation of the project. A draft questionnaire based on the project's expected results and indicators was developed in English, translated into Somali and pre-tested in the field sites. The key feedback captured was incorporated into the main tool for data collection. The questionnaire (See annex 1) was administered to the respondents in Somali language in all sites. In Hiran, data was collected from 31 January to 3 February 2013 and the survey administered to 104 participants. In Galgadud, data was collected between 14 June and 8 July 2013, and the survey was similarly administered to 104 participants. In Middle Shabelle, data was collected from 20 to 30 June 2014, and the survey was administered to 150 participants. The project core team and research assistants conducted face to face interviews that employed in-depth interviews and key informants interviews with the communities, regional and non-state actors, politicians, religious and opinion leaders at the community level. The data collected from several villages was then analysed and categories into three or four main sites, each dominated exclusively by one of the target clans.

the clans to end the dispute, seeking the intervention of religious leaders, or convening both clan elders and *Culumau Diinka* (religious leaders) to reach a decision that both met standards of *Xeer*, in coordination with *Sharia*.

Furthermore, PAR appears as applicable to the nature of conflict in Somalia, as conflicts are often between entire communities (or clans), not just individual actors, and the key issues (namely, migratory pastoralism, resource management, and armed groups) have important social aspects and the potential to mobilise large numbers of people.[51] Thus, by reconciling traditional mechanisms (clan elder system, clan councils and established peace committees) and liberal theories of peacebuilding and conflict resolution[52] (the focus on legitimacy and informal structures), the expectation is to strengthen local and national resilience to conflict triggers. Unexpectedly, and raising some issues for PAR's focus on egalitarianism within the research process, the majority of interviewed participants lauded, in addition to the practical support offered by LPI and ZZF (to covering accommodation, logistics and transport), the role of ZZF as a third party mediator. Their presence was seen as a crucial dimension in bringing conflicting clans into communication (pushing accountability and expectations of a settlement).

Yet, there were clear challenges for implementing PAR: Somalia's highly patriarchal governance structure, high incidences of localised inter-clan violence and the increasing politicisation of peacebuilding efforts – as peacebuilding has become a prerequisite for state-formation processes – certainly affected reception towards PAR practices. Yet, participants also indicated that increasing levels of clan mistrust and inability to fulfil financial requirements for compensation had stalled negotiations and acknowledged that traditional conflict resolution mechanisms were struggling to bring the conflicting clans to the negotiating table. Baseline reports confirm that while such traditional processes, such as existing clan councils and peace committees, are able to address most cases of conflicts when they erupt, they lack the technical and financial capacities to resolve conflicts in the long-term. In addition, participants discussed the lack of forgiveness in the *Xeer* system, as well as the general unfamiliarity among community members with the concept of peace agreements (its deterrence value, as well as the mechanisms for implementation and follow-up) as challenges but benefits of PAR.[53]

1. Local perspectives on peacebuilding and PAR approach

Participants indicated the dissipation of much scepticism or reluctance as the intentions and value of the programming were made clear. According to a staff member from ZZF[54], clan elders and peace committees were reportedly more resistant initially to the programme than their women and youth counterparts – in some instances expecting payment, and in other cases uncertain about the project's motivations and objections. Some participants were initially sceptical about the ability and willingness of the organisation to conduct a meaningful reconciliation – that they would be ill-equipped to deal with the diversity of conflict in the area. As one participant indicated, "The area is so diverse that some clans

51 PAR Handbook, p. 16.

52 See work by Roger MacGinty (2014), Oliver Richmond (2011) and Thania Pfaffenholz (2015).

53 For example, a Habar Gedir elder remarked, "We have had several peace meetings before with Hawadle, but none of the agreements has lasted long, they were all breached".

54 ZZF's manager of the CRM project, male, August 2015.

are under the threat of al-Shabab. Will you be able to handle al-Shabab?" (male participant to the second buy-in, Middle Shabelle, June 2014).

Others during the baseline survey raised concerns at the start of programming about the organisations' motives, accusing ZZF team of working in tandem with the government (whether local or national), but these were minimal. Despite ZZF's best efforts from the onset, one male city council member in Guri'el stated during the first buy-in: "People in town perceive that CRM team gives money to the local authority, while each time you visit and we do not receive money from you" (March 2013). This was potentially derailing, but was addressed through communication and trust-building efforts between communities and local authorities. Others noted frustration with the lack of tangible project outcomes – the perception being that the project was not providing needed material assistance (service delivery) that could bring peace through other means. This was resolved in large part by using parallel projects, implemented by ZZF, throughout the dialogue process.

Other participants claimed that LPI and ZZF were not "delivering" peace quick enough. In Koragoys, for instance, participants were disappointed with the slow pace of commencing inter-clan dialogues (due to the drought in Lajide area) or unhappy about the level of project support, indicating that project staff should participate in addressing other elements of the conflict, settling the dispute by paying the blood money[55] or resettling IDPs. For instance, in Jowhar, after the August 2013 conflict between the Mohamed Muse (Abgal) and Walamoy (Shidle), participants requested that ZZF assist in resettling IDPs (which was beyond the scope of programming, as it lies outside the scope of crisis interventions and risks politicising ZZF's role and reasserting their power into the process). Likewise, LPI and ZZF did not pay blood money or diya (this will be discussed in further detail in 3.3).

Findings from the summary evaluation (at the end of Phase I in November 2015) indicated transformations in attitudes toward PAR programming and high levels of trust and aspirations for the next phase:

> *"We did not think it would work and we would get so much benefit, we were sceptical initially."* – Clan elder, male, Guriel, November 2015

> *"Without this project dialogues cannot happen because the clans do not trust each other, and there is no available money to facilitate. This is what made these project activities important."* – Community Leader, male, Guriel, November 2015

> *"We did not think having people participating would generate so much good will. We are no longer idealists in Somalia – when you bring good thing, they think what's the downside of it? But thanks to repetition and insistence, we are now getting the benefit."* – ZZF staff, male, August 2015

> *"CRM activities have set a new phase in conflict resolution. It is a process that is very good that looks at the causes of conflicts and finds solution, it used to take*

a very long time for clans to even hold dialogue, this has changed and now clans will continue to come together. Secondly, the agreements developed as a result of these talks will be used in the future." – Representative of Local Authority, male, Balanbale

Intra-Clan Dialogue in Mataban, Hiran, 2014.

Participants suggested that CRM's support interacted and expanded upon traditional Somali systems for conflict management, while bringing key transformative mechanisms, peace agreements, greater inclusion and more incremental approaches to conflict transformation. As one participant from Guriel indicated, "Before, we didn't even have communication between clans, but now we have communication to discuss peace, that is the result of project." During the summative evaluation, the relevance and compatibility of such practices were further captured by clan elders and participants to focus group discussions (FGDs)[56]:

> *"It's partially different from traditional modes, as CRM project activities have written agreements. The traditional way of solving does not have this, however both ways are important – one of them can't stand alone, we now use both when you solve conflicts".* – Clan elder, male, Mataban

> *"Although the conflicts are different and the solutions are different, mostly here when conflicts happen we used to solve them by bringing clan elders together, discuss the cause and then determine who is responsible and give the victim compensation".* – Clan elder, male, Balanbale

> *"The best way to solve conflicts is through CRM activities because CRM activities start by understanding the root causes of conflict with different steps towards resolving until a solution can finally be reached".* – FGD discussant, female, Balanbale

Sustained support to comprehensive and multi-layered dialogue processes has made significant strides in building trust and maintaining stability in the catchment areas. Participants estimate that the level of petty/minor thuggery has diminished and that such instances are now handled by the communities through dialogue and more proactive engagement. This constitutes a genuine paradigm shift in the target areas.[57]

"The important issue is before the project if camel or goats of our clans crossed the border to another clan we did not have expectation to get back but now we can normally go get our livestock and that is the result of the project." – Community Leader, male, Guriel

"The clans created agreements for returning back animals taken during conflict, providing compensation for the dead during conflict and halting the digging of water catchments in disputed areas. And these agreements are still active." – Community Leader, male, Balanbale

Marked positive gains include conflict transformation in attitude and practice. There was a sense that nonviolent and proactive community engagement had been normalised, which included broader youth engagement and greater inter-clan engagement in business.

"Recently there have been people building illegal checkpoints which became a community affair in which all stakeholders took part, including elders, religious leaders and other groups and was conducted in a peaceful manner. If the people didn't take the messages seriously this construction of illegal checkpoints would have resulted in serious conflict. So Zamzam took a vital role in creating peace in the region". – Local authority, Bergadid (Hiran)

"The results were very beneficial to the community, for example I have my goats which got lost and was told that they had moved to a different clan territory, since I had a phone number for one of the team members for the dialogue, I called him and told him the situation, I went to their land and brought back my animals without a problems which was never the case before the dialogues." – FGD discussant, male, Balanbale

"Now there are established relations between the clans as a result of the dialogues and community members can now move freely through other clan boundaries". – FGD discussant, female, Bergadid (Hiran)

"The project effects community ability to resolve conflicts like now clans can discuss any issues that come up in the area, because of the communication that has been started." – FGD discussant, male, Mataban (Hiran)

57 For example, during an inter-clan dialogue in Hiran, one of the two warring clans kidnapped a person from the other side. Yet, the peace committees formed in the dialogue quickly contacted each other and made sure the person was released.

2. Inclusivity as a precondition for sustainable peace

Inclusivity has always been a core, yet controversial, component of conventional peacebuilding doctrine, in particular pertaining to the inclusion of those individuals or groups that may disrupt the formal processes.

Intra-clan data collection in Galgadud, 2013.

In the context of intra- and inter-clan dialogues, youth and women constituted two of the primary groups to be targeted to ensure inclusivity of the project, as well as marginalised sub-clans in instances where they were clearly being excluded. It is now commonly agreed among civil society actors, governmental actors and scholars that increasing the participation of women around the peace table, as well as ensuring an engendered discussion at the peace table, stands to secure a more inclusive and sustainable settlement to the conflict.[58] Nevertheless, the role of gender in peacebuilding still remains under-researched, despite a growing literature focusing on why and how gender is critical to analysing conflicts and transforming instances of negative peace into positive peace.[59] International organisations have been criticised for approaches and methods used to engage in gender issues, which tend to view women as separate from society, or as a common group with permanently shared interests, overlooking that women often share societal norms and traditions of immediate interest to a particular group.

58 Marie O'Reilly, Andrea O. Suilleabhain and Thania Paffenholz, "Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes", New York: International Peace Institute, June 2015.

59 H. Myrttinen, J. Naujoks, J. El-Bushra, "Re-thinking Gender in Peacebuilding". London: International Alert, March 2014.

While women have proven to be important voices for building peace (and it is deemed important to support this group as an agent for change), the conception of women as victims has diminished their voice and agency in such debates.[60] Many scholars and practitioners agree that viewing women as victims creates blindness to the multiplicity and complexity of the roles they play in society, both in the public and private sphere and that such exclusions from decision-making processes disregard their role and agency in both peacebuilding and violence.[61] As participants pointed out during the validation exercise, women are strong supporters of conflict as well as of its quick resolution.

> *"When clans go to war, first there is hesitation, negotiation, there has to be a buy in. Before the buy in, women are always against war. When the clan decides to go to war, they have to encourage the men. But then they are the ones who lament the most. They are the ones who complain, have the loudest voice in complaining against the war."* – ZZF staff, male, 27 August 2015

> *"When women provoke men and encourage them to fight based on petty issues, men support them and start the fight. However, when women come together and tell men to stop the fight and drop the guns, nobody listens or supports them. Why is it so?"* – Youth participant in Johwar inter-clan meeting, Middle Shabelle, March 2015

This project (and the PAR approach) avoided preconceived notions about what role women should play. Interestingly, this component of programming responded to calls from local populations, and was not an instance of imposing Western normative values. Initial surveying confirmed a systematic absence of women and youth in decision-making due in large part to cultural barriers related to religious and customary *Xeer* practices. During the baseline survey conducted in Hiran, 89 per cent of participants indicated that they had not been collectively consulted on how to deal with conflicts, and would like to see a greater systematic process of engagement with community actors (64 per cent in Galgadud and 88 per cent in Middle Shabelle).

> *"As mothers from Galgadud, we are 'thirsty' for peace. We are the ones who lose our boys, our husbands and our loved ones. If a man loses his boys or children, he will marry another wife to get children but us where shall we get other boys or children? In conflict, we only lose sons but no son is born out of conflict."* – Female participant to Ina Gibile inter-clan roundtable, Galgadud, December 2014

The project's focus on inclusivity is a core tenet of programming but also the largest deviation from traditional peacebuilding practices centred around the pre-eminence of the clan elders. The focus on inclusivity is two-fold – on the physical participation of groups (spanning gender, age, and minorities) as well as

60 K. Sandstrom. 2013. 'Contextual disconnect: The failure of the "international community" in Somalia' in E. Leonard and G. Ramsay (ed.) Globalizing Somalia, New York: Bloomsbury Academic: 49-69.

61 D. Agbajobi. 2010. 'The Role of Women in Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding', in R. Bowd and A. B. Chikwanha (eds.) Understanding Africa's Contemporary Conflicts, African Human Security Initiative: 233-254.

on different ranges of perspectives, opinions and influence. LPI and ZZF's focus remains to affect thinking through the local realisation that greater inclusion of youth and women is critical to reaching sustainable peace (not on imposing inclusion). Trainings on policy advocacy, gender and peacebuilding aimed to open space for gender mainstreaming, while the project design anticipated women and youth participation in the project at all stages, from data collection to validation and intra-clan dialogue components, thereby ensuring their inclusion in inter-clan dialogues, where the stakes were high.

However, clan elders indicated that female presence could undermine their bargaining power with the other clan. Even in the absence of youth and female presence in inter-clan dialogues, such participants would be interviewed separately and then LPI and ZZF would share the results with the community all together, promoting dialogue and inclusion. As one female participant indicated, the exclusion of women comes down to traditional patriarchal clan customs and clan reputation:

> "Men do not support us when we came up with good and practicable solution or even consider our opinions and advices as far as conflict resolution and community issues are concerned. They are scared of other men because they will simply be told that they have taken women's decision". – Female participant to Johwar inter-clan meeting, Middle Shabelle, March 2015

Armed groups association with disillusioned youth has been a topic of much concern for elders and also affected their willingness to include youth in such peacebuilding processes.[62] Youth participation in armed hostilities in Somalia is well-documented – "youth are directly affected by conflict, and they are the ones carrying the guns and dying".[63] With minimal opportunities across Somalia, many are mobilised by clan militias or other insurgent groups, and clan elders' reservations concerning the role of youth as spoilers were confirmed on a few occasions. During the 2014 intra-Hawadle dialogue in Bergadid village, youth (who weren't invited to send a representative) from the Ali Madahweyne sub-clan came to disrupt the dialogue, demanding a chance to participate in what was considered a high-level meeting. However, elders indicated that critical and confidential clan issues were discussed and therefore "boys" were not allowed to attend.[64] Youth mobilised with arms, firing into the air, which led to the short adjournment of the meeting, while elders sat with the youth.

Thus, youth perceptions of exclusion from key decision-making processes are a great source of contention, and it is expected that bringing them into such processes will channel more nonviolent activities. Youth organisations are also increasingly seen as vibrant actors for change, promoting inter-clan cohesion through sports or other youth interactions that can be used to foster good relations between communities. The inclusion of male and female youth can also be used to create space for wider female participation in the peace process.

62 Ibid.

63 Female participant, Balanbale, CRM summative evaluation.

64 In this instance, elders had not wanted youth to participate. As described in later sections, LPI/ZZF worked throughout the project to make meetings more inclusive.

Participants, as well as LPI and ZZF staff, consider that youth inclusion (particularly that of male youth inclusion) was less of an obstacle during intra- and inter-clan dialogues than the inclusion of women. Thus, despite greater participation of women at the community level in Somalia – as attested by an increased number of women small-scale entrepreneurs, women-led organisations (working with local authorities and mobilising women)[65], and increasing political participation (although still marginal, and largely due to increased influence from foreign donors)[66] – their direct involvement in conflict resolution remains low (often limited to resource mobilisation in times of war or conflict).

While LPI and ZZF ensured women's inclusion, even if not in the formal processes of inter-clan dialogues in separate interview forums, recurrent challenges were reported. Elders were resistant to male LPI and ZZF staff interviewing female participants, and women showed overall lower levels of education that, in certain cases, limited their comprehension and ability to answer questions. These challenges were navigated through the hiring of local female research assistants as well as the pairing of female participants with female staff. LPI and ZZF staff worked closely with female participants to ensure that their voices and views were captured, by giving them the time, space and support to answer.

Despite these challenges, LPI and ZZF staff noted considerable successes in increasing space for women and youth in intra-clan dialogues – at least 15 per cent of participants in intra-clan dialogues were women at each dialogue. Of the 158 participants included during these validation missions, 41 (or 32 per cent) were female and 107 (68 per cent) were men. While the rates of inclusion varied per dialogue, still short of the 30 per cent threshold desired by LPI and ZZF in certain cases, such rates of inclusion are still remarkable, given their widespread absence from such forums in the past.[67]

3. Guiding principles as pathways to overcome the identified challenges

The fast-changing status of elders within the clan system and its repercussions

Working within the scope of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms may jeopardise the relevance and sustainability of PAR in the long-term.

While elders still remain the crux of local stability, it was evident from participant discourse that they have struggled to retain the same degree of authority they used to have. Resistance against the authority of the elders was noted, particularly among youth. Elders are identified as both the perpetrators of violence and the peace negotiators, and the proliferation of elders since the civil war has to some extent weakened their legitimacy among the population. Within clans, certain sub-clans may challenge the authority of elders categorised as Ugaas/Suldan (senior or "crowned" elders at the clan level) or Nabadoon/Samadon (secondary elders at the sub-clan level) and may not recognise the authority of those selected to be in charge of reconciliation or decision-making efforts.

Nowadays different sub-clans have appointed alternative elders, different from the ones appointed by religious groups, al-Shabab, and government and regional

65 Amina Mahamud. 2013. 'Motivational Factors and Performance of Women Entrepreneurs in Somalia', Journal of Education and Practice 4, 17: 47-54, http://www.academia.edu/3080293/MOTIVATIONAL_FACTORS_OF_SOMALI_WOMEN_ENTREPRENEURS_IN_BENADIR_REGION.

66 PRIO, Somali Women's Civic Engagement: Past, Present and Future. PRIO Gender, Peace and Security Update, Issue 1, 2015, http://file.prio.no/publication_files/prio/PRIO per cent20GPS per cent20Update per cent20Issue per cent201 per cent202015.pdf.

67 'Experiences of Somali Women in Civic and Political Engagement', Rift Valley Institute Forum, 6 February 2015.

militias. The appointment of elders in local communities has thus become more flexible, making the number of "elders" increase dramatically, with fractured consensus on which elders are supposed to lead such national dialogue, peacebuilding processes.

Part of the emphasis on intra-clan dialogues (as detailed in previous sections) is to explore internal power dynamics in how conflict manifests itself and who is best placed to sit at the helm of resolving it. While some have raised concerns about the gradual erosion of traditional structures, as has been ongoing since 1991 and through Siad Barre's divisive patronage politics, many still agree that elders serve as critical authority figures, particularly in the resolution of conflict.[68] Most traditional elders who 'practice' tradition are not perceived to be aligned to specific religious groups, and those who are – or try to be religious, associating themselves with certain groups with Islamist leanings (ASWJ, al-Shabab, or government) – are seen as political leaders, which has weakened their authority locally among their constituents.

On the one hand, the degradation of traditional authority has made LPI/ZZF facilitation more difficult and controversial and has increased the necessity of broadening talks. On the other hand, participants keep stating that the traditional system is the only trusted mechanism for rebuilding peace, unlike modern, national-level forums.

Compensation at the core of the traditional conflict resolution system

Certain aspects of intra- and inter-clan agreements – particularly the payment of blood money, or settling of dues for the number of people killed during past conflicts, etc. – has been highly contentious, and is expected to become more of an issue during Phase 2. The issue of compensation – as the incentive system created around peacebuilding in the absence of a state or political patronage – is a critical component of conflict resolution, as it marks the culmination of the resolution process.

In Galgadud, where activities have reached a later stage, FGD participants noted how the issue of compensation remains an ongoing obstacle against progress of project implementation. In the Somali context, participants in the summative evaluation noted frustration with the core practices, as well as uncertainty regarding the compensation/blood money practice, namely, over the inability to often identify the perpetrating/aggrieved parties (difficult given the protracted nature of most of the conflicts):

> *"The problems that came up during the dialogues are disagreements of the number of people claimed to be killed by each side and their requests for compensation. The other clan denies they killed these people."* – Local authority, Balanbale (Galgadud)

> *"The challenge that came up during the dialogue is clans claiming men were killed and needing compensation while other clans refuse to take responsibility."* – Clan elder, Guri'el (Galgadud)

68 See "Somaliland: The Strains of Success", International Crisis Group, 5 October 2015.

"There are no problems coming up during the dialogues except sometimes dialogues stall because of disagreements over the causes of the conflicts, or the damages and number of people killed during the conflicts. Although we agree to postpone these issues until the next dialogue." – Clan leader, Bergadid (Hiran)

The inability to properly resolve a conflict with compensation in many instances has led to stalemate or the recurrence of revenge attacks and conflicts. Clan elders indicate that they struggle to pay compensation and maintain the expectation that LPI and ZZF should cover compensation (a critical component of *Xeer* or customary law) despite firm statements by LPI and ZZF that this lies outside the scope of project and undermines our role.

"The expectations were that they would facilitate for the talks, pay all of our expenses for the functions and create awareness. In situations where someone has been murdered and there is no evidence by one clan to prove that they murdered that person, this brings a problem, as there will not be any reconciliation or resolution. Therefore, in this type of case we expect that the NGO provides compensation to unite the two clans/resolve the issues in order to create peace". – FGD discussant, female, Balanbale

"Those that were unhappy expected to get compensation/blood money for the relatives they lost during the conflicts, but that issue was postponed to talk later between the clans". – FGD discussant, male, Guri'el

LPI and ZZF have maintained a firm line on this issue, clearly communicated to participants. Paying compensation would not only risk jeopardising the project's impartiality, but also undermine the key underpinnings of the PAR approach that aims to directly deconstruct the power dynamics inherent in such research relationships (reminiscent of support secured by civil society organisations through remuneration). Additionally, it would risk external involvement in a newly established institution for social reconciliation.

Compensation is perceived as the fact that the community makes a sacrifice to compensate for damage and loss. Therefore, any compensation provided by LPI and ZZF would weaken the social function of the compensation and its purpose would not be served. Thus, such involvement would prove counter-productive and could even potentially increase the number and magnitude of conflicts and therefore have unintended consequences on the social fabric. In many cases, financial contributions were made by diaspora, and as representatives of the clans, diaspora were better-placed to fill this gap. However, there are also concerns that such reliance on external funding depletes the purpose of compensation entirely. Thus, when possible, LPI and ZZF have supported communities in reaching agreement on moving forward, not on settling old scores (which has proved effective in a few cases). In a few instances, through CRM programming and reconciliation efforts, conflicting clans were willing to call a truce and move forward without paying blood money.

Ensuring the project's impartiality

Navigating competing authorities, while maintaining strict impartiality throughout the different stages of programming, was not always easy but critical for ensuring smooth implementation of the PAR approach. Any concerns around impartiality were often mitigated by the presence of a third party (agreed upon by all clansmen) – often a member of another clan or the local administration – to oversee the dialogue process, or clans asking to negotiate among themselves without LPI/ZZF presence. Local ownership of dialogue activities required approval of local authorities (whether al-Shabab, ASWJ, or regional administrations), and ZZF ensured that channels of communication were open with representatives of the authorities in the Somali Federal Government and other local authorities (ASWJ in Hiran and Galgadud and in Middle Shabelle).

Changes to the local authorities/governance structures throughout programming (from project design and initial buy-in to implementation) often meant that consent would have to be secured anew. In some cases, where the issue of mistrust between clans or between clans and local administration was acute, clans would only agree to convene with the provision of separate security forces by both parties to support the dialogue process. ZZF's strong reputation in the project sites and their networks and connections with community elders and other individuals was fundamental to the successful completion of the research. The staff are skilled in handling security and logistical challenges, and assisted in minimising the overall risk and maximising data collection opportunities.

Throughout the process there were reported individuals of the communities that were not interested in peace, as one participant indicated, "Our interest is for us (Hawadle) to live with them (Habar Gedir) like this in continuous con-

Inter-clan Dialogue (Habar Gedir-Hawadle) in Mataban, Hiran, August 2015.

flict."[69] According to participants, particular individuals, namely businessmen like traders in weaponry (firearms), as well as owners of water points, who may have benefitted from conflict, were not always supportive. With the politicisation of such dialogues under the new federalisation process, certain dialogues also saw the attendance of high-level politicians and businessmen. The provision of financial assistance for logistics and accommodation for programme, by LPI and ZZF staff, aimed (in part) to mitigate the role of potential external benefactors looking to support such peacebuilding processes for personal gain. Given that the state formation processes were ongoing throughout the duration of the process, there were also often significant delays as community elders were called away to engage in the state formation processes, but this was accommodated as it was important to ensure consistency of participants.

> *"Currently, there has been the statebuilding processes, especially for the Galgadud region where elders have been away for long periods of time and therefore have been unable to attend the inter-clan dialogues. Yet, their presence is very crucial to the formation of agreements. Their absence has been a setback in this process".*
> – LPI staff, male, Mogadishu[70]

Building on the local knowledge

While the project did not intend to directly link such local peacebuilding process-es with statebuilding processes, LPI and ZZF maintain that rather than detract-ing from/or conflicting with statebuilding initiatives, the dialogue platforms created by PAR programming at the community level were valuable additions to regional and national initiatives. Indeed, the bottom-up focus on incremen-tal peacebuilding and consensus-building, and the skills learned by elders, can contribute to the statebuilding efforts at the national level, facilitating bottom-up knowledge sharing.

> *"The CRM project has had a very important or critical role in statebuilding, for it addresses issues from the community based levels going upwards. In fact, the other regions like Hiran and Middle Shabelle are predicted to enjoy the fruits of the dialogue just as Galgadud has."* – ZZF Staff, male, November 2015

> *"This programme has been very significant to statebuilding in the whole of Somalia because it fosters both intra- and inter-clan dialogues, which helps in statebuilding since the clan problems have been resolved and the possibility of creating proper governance like the Galgadud State is increased. The statebuild-ing commences only after the clan disputes/conflicts have all been resolved using the inter- and intra- clan dialogues."* – LPI staff, female, November 2015

69 Elder participant in intra-Habar Gedir dialogue in Mataban, 2014.
70 'CRM Evaluation', Forcier Consulting, October 2015.

And, despite this congruence between such locally-driven peacebuilding efforts and national processes, LPI maintains the sanctity of local processes, of depoliti-cising the discourse and holding peacebuilding initiatives separately, in a neutral

space, ensuring that local processes are not overshadowed by national agendas, and that the processes remain locally driven at all stages through ongoing assessments and engagement with community leaders, youth and women. Building up local resilience through such locally-rooted peacebuilding processes is even more critical during this transition period, as the state formation processes show growing pains in this current period (ahead of the 2016 August elections), and it is hoped that the skills provided by PAR will carry communities through this transition.[71]

4. Lessons learned from operationalising PAR in Somali context

Certain lessons can be learned for future programming, as well as PAR implementation in fragile/conflict-affected contexts more broadly:

- The focus on solving intra-clan disputes has been vastly overlooked in previous peacebuilding efforts, and addressing sources of contention at the intra-clan level (for instance, over elder selection and compensation) is critical before engaging in inter-clan dialogue.

- Inter-clan conflicts are often instigated by collective action behind individual actions – that the clan collectively feels obliged to act on behalf of the individual – which requires first critical engagement and re-conceptualisation of conflict and its prevention at the intra-clan level.

- Local partners are critical to programme successes for navigating such complex dynamics, and the sustained and multi-layered role of ZZF in the community (their implementation of parallel development projects alongside facilitation) has established ZZF as a trusted and necessary third party actor.

- While the PAR process supports certain deviations from traditional practices – an incremental dialogue process, and broader dialogue and participation (among women and youth) – participants suggest that such aspects are relevant, solve weaknesses in the existing systems, and have increased the efficiency and effectiveness of conflict resolution mechanisms.

- Increasing space for women and youth in intra-clan dialogues was easier than in inter-clan dialogues, where the stakes for such inclusion (regarding community perception) was too high. Thus, emphasising the critical role of women particularly to the inter-clan dialogue process is crucial for future efforts.

- While the parallel state formation processes led to certain delays and raised critical questions about the politicisation of the process, these are not mutually-exclusive but inter-linked processes, and PARs focus on bottom-up knowledge brought increased skill-sets for regional and national peacebuilding processes.

71 Jason Mosley. 2015. "Somalia's Federal Future", Chatham House, 2 September 2015; Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, "Federal Somalia: Not If But How", Mogadishu, Somalia: HIPS: 3.

Conclusion

Findings from LPI's Community Resource Management project in south central Somalia indicate that PAR can be a critical component of local peacebuilding efforts in conflict-affected areas, as the process contributes to developing an in-depth collaborative understanding of the conflict's causes, dynamics and symptoms and has proved to be successful in bringing conflicting clans to the negotiating table at the local level.

By building up inclusive dialogue processes within and between conflicting clans/sub-clans through a multi-staged process of research and action aimed over conflicts associated with access to (and competition over) resources, LPI's PAR approach in Somalia has contributed towards (re-)building trust and community relations with each other and local authorities, encouraging nonviolent forms of communication, and transforming current practices of crisis intervention/management into long-term strategies of conflict prevention and sustainable peacebuilding.

Initial findings indicate that supporting incremental dialogue processes and ensuring broader inclusion/buy-in at the community level in dialogue processes has 1) maximised the bottom-up potential for such local peacebuilding efforts, namely the transfer of knowledge from local to regional and national processes, and 2) fundamentally transformed the ways in which community actors approach the prevention and resolution of conflict.

While further monitoring and impact assessments are needed, in order to gauge the extent and durability of such change, preliminary findings suggest change in the ways in which community actors influence and engage with conflict that will guarantee future positive transformations beyond the scope of this project. Evidence of increased proactive engagement following the conclusion of Phase 1 (increased engagement and interaction in the business realm, as well among youth) are both the results of PAR programming and critical components of its ongoing success. Critical challenges remain for Phase 2, especially regarding the issues of compensation, the authority of elders, and changing regional authorities, and further efforts will be needed to enhance the inclusion of women and youth. Notwithstanding these challenges, the strong community support and high levels of enthusiasm from LPI and ZZF staff leave the project in good stead to relevantly and effectively address these issues.

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The Life & Peace Institute (LPI) is an international and ecumenical centre that supports and promotes nonviolent approaches to conflict transformation through a combination of research and action that entails the strengthening of existing local capacities and enhancing the preconditions for building peace (www.life-peace.org). LPI brings a range of participatory approaches and methodologies that have proven to be effective tools for creating space for dialogue and action across Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan in the Horn of Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi in the Great Lakes Region. Through its Addis-based Horn of Africa Regional programme (HARP), LPI is also able to link the local peacebuilding initiatives and structures in its country programmes with policy debates taking place at regional level.

The Zamzam Foundation (ZZF) was founded as a non-profit charitable organization in Mogadishu in 1992, by a group of educated Somali volunteers who responded to the humanitarian plight that existed at the time. Due to the deteriorating humanitarian conditions of the populations and the rising needs of the vulnerable communities, ZZF expanded its humanitarian relief work to include, water & sanitation, orphan and child care, education, health care, seasonal charities, construction & development and income generation (www.zamzamsom.org).