WORKING REPORT ON GOOD, GOVERNANCE, YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY

Las'Anod- SSC-Khatumo State of Somalia- 2024

Workshop Report By
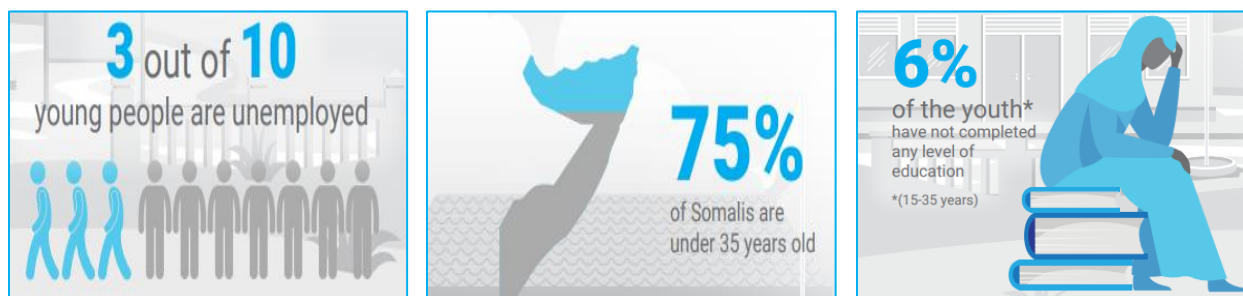
AGENTS OF PEACE
PEACE . JUSTICE . EQUALITY

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Agents of Peace is a youth-focused non-governmental and Non-profit organization dedicated to promoting peace, stability, and community development in conflict-affected regions of Somalia. and Kenya. The organization places a strong emphasis on engaging youth in peacebuilding, good governance, and leadership. The organization conducts workshops and training sessions that focus on youth, peace and security, equipping young people with the skills to participate in conflict resolution and community development. Through lobbying and advocacy campaigns, youth are encouraged to become active in political processes, promoting transparency and accountability. Additionally, initiatives such as leadership forums and mentorship programs foster young leaders who advocate for peace and justice. By supporting young people's political participation, Agents of Peace empowers a new generation to contribute positively to Somalia's future.

National Context

Despite Somalia's having one of the youngest populations in the world, Somali youth have been unable to fully enjoy their rights and achieve their potential as transformative agents due to the continuing conflict, and socioeconomic and political exclusion. Avenues for young people to obtain an education, gainful employment as well as opportunities to engage politically, economically, or socially remain limited. The space is even further restricted for girls and young women. Young people's right to participate in decision-making is hampered by stigmas based on stereotypes and gender, illiteracy, poverty, and traditional norms, including the prominence of elders in the political system. Young people are also disproportionately affected by different forms of violence. Despite these challenges, young Somali women and men are already contributing to peace, development, and resilience in their communities, finding innovative solutions and driving social progress, in urban as well as rural contexts. Improving young people's lives and supporting their initiatives is crucial for building lasting peace and stability in Somalia.

Source: United Nations - Somalia

Las'Anod State Context

The Las Anod conflict is an ongoing armed conflict between the Somaliland National Army and the Khaatumo SSC [Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn regions] forces. Local tensions escalated in late 2022 following the assassination of civil leaders in Las Anod, culminating in fighting that erupted after Somaliland security forces violently cracked down on civilian protests. Las Anod fell into a state of siege, with heavy fighting

between SSC and Somaliland forces whereby the Somaliland Army initiated a prolonged military campaign, aimed at subduing the city leading to indiscriminate shelling by Somaliland forces, which damaged schools, mosques, and hospitals, while also killing and injuring civilians. The conflict has overall resulted in the deaths of civilians and displacement leading to a surge in the number of Internally Displaced People [IDPs] with many residents fleeing to neighboring SSC-Khatumo territories or to Puntland.

Workshop Objective

To discuss modalities and strategies for youth voice and agency as a tool for transitioning from tokenistic youth engagement to meaningful participation in YPS matters in Somalia.

> At the heart of the workshop was the principle that young people are not merely victims or perpetrators of crises, but are key to addressing the grievances they face daily. Moving beyond a framework of panic, participants examined how youth empowerment and engagement can be approached as a unique opportunity to foster intergenerational trust, collaboration, and violence prevention.

Workshop Thematic Areas

During the workshop, the following concepts formed the pillars of deep-dive engagement with the youth.

Theme	Description	Sub-Themes
YPS	Understanding the concept of Youth, Peace, and Security	1. What is YPS? 2. Why is YPS important? 3. What are the YPS pillars? 4. What are the roles of Youth in YPS? 5. What are the factors to consider in YPS engagement? 6. What are the roadmaps in YPS strategic planning? 7. What are the YPS Coordination mechanisms? 8. How can youth influence meaningful participation? 9. What are the forms of youth participation in YPS?
Advocacy in YPS	Application of strategic advocacy in YPS	1. Overview of Advocacy concepts 2. What are the key advocacy definitions? 3. Understanding and conceptualizing advocacy 4. Case Studies: Advocacy Stories 5. Creating compelling advocacy stories 6. Research and Fact-Finding in Advocacy 7. Networking and Allies
Leadership and Good Governance	Understanding the concepts of Leadership and Governance in the context of YPS	1. What is leadership? 2. Emerging issues in leadership 3. Difference between leaders and managers 4. Leadership styles 5. What is Governance? 6. What is Good Governance? 7. Qualities of Good Governance

		8. Leadership and Governance
Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding	Understanding and application of transformative peace building	1. Scenario Building
2. Conflict Transformation
3. Tools in Conflict Transformation
4. Case Studies: Rwanda and Mozambique
5. Peace Building
6. Why is peace building important?
7. Principles, key elements and tools in peace building

Discussions guided by; YPS, Advocacy and, Leadership & Governance

1. Discussions: Who Are Youth?

While there is a Country-specific definition of youth, there is no consensus on precisely who constitutes youth. The diverse and situation-specific parameters by which youth is defined worldwide sometimes include people as young as 15 or as old as 35. However, the Youth, Peace, and Security [YPS] Agenda confines the term to people between 18 and 29 years old. In other words, youth are not children in this context, but young people transitioning into adulthood. Youth comprise of approximately 20% of the global population but tend to account for far more of the population in developing countries and in those marked by fragility and conflict like Somalia. This is significant, given that the years of youth are inherently temporary yet highly formative, shaping individual perspectives that have impacts on a macro scale when they manifest in society, both in real-time and in the future. That said, youth may be united through age but are not a pillar, and represent a diverse cross-section of any population, with different security needs and expectations.

2. Discussions: Why are youth an important part of YPS?

Over the years as a result of diminishing social and economic responsiveness of politics and governance across the world, the specific voices of different social demographics have become more vibrant. These voices have sought to raise the concerns of the specific demographics and unison offered probable solutions. In conflict situations, the role and position of youth in peace and security matters have more so come into focus, with attention being increasingly given to the consequences of conflict on young people in their diversity in society. While children and women have and continue to be affected in disparate ways, youth - based on their huge population and probable demographic political dividend - are disproportionately affected by, and involved in, violence therein becoming national and regional security. For instance, In conflict-affected settings like Somalia, a majority of soldiers, combatants, and members of armed groups are young men, and so it follows that they also make up the majority of casualties of armed violence. Then again, young women face a heightened risk of physical and sexual abuse and exploitation amidst violent and conflict situations. Comparatively, in Somalia states that are emerging from conflict and which are essentially burdened by social, economic, infrastructural difficulties, youth are highly vulnerable to being drawn into renewed violence leading to social and family dysfunction, and overall social exclusion; factors that make them particularly susceptible to violence. This means that youth are often seen as the main perpetrators of political violence, social unrest, and violent extremism, but they are also the group most exposed to violence, unrest, and

terrorism. Nevertheless, Agents of Peace [AoP] recognize and engage this demographic as strong agents of positive change at the center of peace processes and movements for social progress.

3. **Discussions: The concept of YPS**

In 2015, efforts to increase awareness about the importance of youth in peace and security contexts culminated in the United Nations Security Council Resolution [UNSCR] 2250[1], which established the YPS Agenda. This set the foundation for a more intentional inclusion of youth in the extensive work of the United Nations [UN] on international peace and security. Inspired by the success of burgeoning efforts on Women, Peace, and Security [WPS], the YPS Agenda similarly seeks to empower and encourage the meaningful participation of a group that has historically been marginalized from matters of peace and security. The YPS Agenda recognizes that conflict affects youth in a particularly harmful way by disrupting their access to education and economic opportunity and that this can further undermine long-term peace and reconciliation. It also highlights that youth are often disproportionately represented in the populations of countries affected by conflict, and calls for the greater inclusion of youth in preventing and resolving conflict and in sustaining peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts. Indeed, the Agenda underscores the risks of inadequate inclusion of youth in these efforts and the dangers of youth radicalization that leads to violent extremism and terrorism. Importantly, it introduces a framework to orient work in this area, extending from five pillars as enumerated below;

1. **Participation:** The inclusive representation and participation of youth in decision-making at all levels should be increased, to better prevent and resolve conflict. This pillar constitutes the primary focus of the Agenda.
2. **Protection:** Respect for existing international humanitarian and human rights law should be emphasized, and all parties to armed conflict must take necessary measures to protect civilians, including youth, from all forms of violence, just as all states must respect and ensure the human rights of all persons, including youth.
3. **Prevention:** An inclusive and enabling environment should be created to facilitate greater contribution by youth to peacebuilding efforts, and to ensure they benefit from economic and social development.
4. **Partnerships:** Coordination should be improved among UN bodies, and Member States should increase support for the efforts of local communities and civil society to counter violent extremism.
5. **Disengagement & Reintegration:** Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration [DDR] activities should consider the needs of youth and provide appropriate economic and educational opportunities
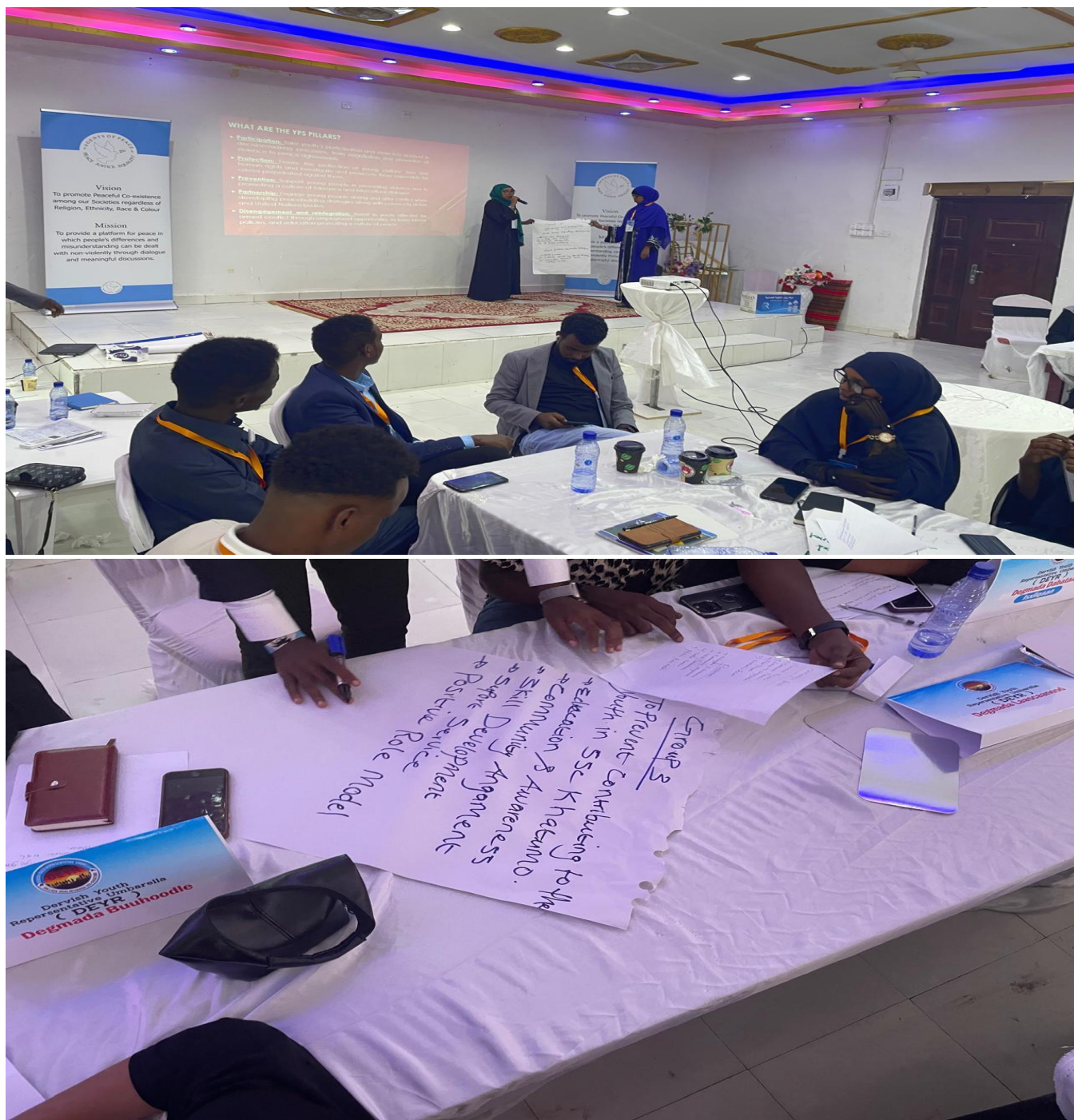
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[1] S_2015_935-EN.pdf

Path Forward

The workshop culminated in a hands-on strategic exercise where participants crafted youth-led initiatives and direct pitches to different policymakers. These pitches focused on a youth-centered approach to understanding young people's grievances and the urgency behind building trust across institutions; establishing a leadership agenda that will lead the application of YPS in Las'Anod State. The workshop also underscored that youth engagement is not symbolic, but essential. Young people are on the verge of inheriting state, national, regional, continental and global challenges, from a rising cost of living and crisis of governance and rule of law, to humanitarian crises, displacement, and rising violent extremism. As such, they are vital to addressing the problems of the present and the future.

For majority of the participants, the workshop was a reminder of the power of community in constructively rising to confront these threats.

Agents of Peace [AoP]
www.agentsofpeace.net
Primary Contact Person
Mohammed Abdirizack Abdullahi.
Founder and Executive Director.
Email: Mohamed.abdullahi@agentsofpeace.net
+254 720 861 131, +254722 449 202 & +252 612223371